

Hebrews 13, Part 2 (Conrad Bowman) (July 3, 2005)

I will give you some concluding remarks on Hebrews, and we'll close the book on that. So I'm in Hebrews chapter 13.

I'll tell you this, so you will get it first hand. The infusions have resumed at Methodist. I'm taking those every two weeks. I haven't seen them take effect yet, but hopefully it's moving into that time when they will and it will stop the spread of this thing. It doesn't offer anything curative, but it does stop the spread of it. Which is real good, because right not it started in my toes, and it's moved to right here. And I haven't got much left, you know, so we'll see. But the Lord knows that. He's there every night when I go to sleep. First thing in the morning when I get up. I've found out things that would have stopped me dead in my tracks a year ago, can be a matter of routine today. That grace is sufficient. It's better than any anesthesia you can take. It's the best narcotic you can get your hands on. So you wrap your heart around it. So,

1. Let love of the brethren continue.

And I've sustained over this past year on the basis of the prayers, love and concern and expressions of this class. Primarily of you people. It's been an amazing journey, and it continues. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

2. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers

This is the first part of Paul's concluding remarks in this letter to the Hebrews.

3. Remember prisoners, as though in prison with them [and you certainly have been with me every step of the way], and those who are ill-treated [have not been], since you yourselves are in the body.

4. Let marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge [and He certainly will].

6. So that we confidently say, THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT CAN MAN [or anything made of man] DO TO ME?

All it can do is go after the body, and we're going to get a new one. In an instant. So we don't need to be afraid of that.

7. Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith.

This came home to me a month or so ago in a very remarkable way. When he was in high school, I met Danny Harris. I was an elder, and he was just looking. And he used to visit, and certain attachments that came to us. I stayed a mentor of his through his college years. And then like other young men in that church – Riverwood at Jackson – he committed his life to the Lord in a very personal way, and decided he would go to Dallas. He was an artist. And he and I talked in these times – you can be an artist if you want to. You can do water colors if you want to. But learn how to paint signs. Because you never know when you're going to have to make a living. [Laughter]. And he took that into consideration. When it came to stewardship, the lesson we taught on stewardship was right here. Remember those who labor in the Word. Honor them with your substance. The other thing is, with regard to stewardship, God doesn't expect ten percent (10%). He expects an option on 100%. That's it. On the first day of the week, according to how God has profited you that week, lay aside along side of you – is what Scripture says. Put aside along side of you, as God has prospered, so that when the time for need comes, there is no gathering necessary. Now Danny came down to visit me, because he was concerned about my physical condition, and he's kind of retired. With his industry, he was real good with slides and slide programs. And he joined two young men, named the Alfred brothers, and they started a company that did slide shows for corporations. If you're ready to have a big company meeting, they put together the slide show. And Danny was remarkably good at this. Remarkably good. He and the two boys eventually became – he dropped out of Dallas after two years. That wasn't his thing. He studied and he learned, and he got everything he could get out of Dallas in two years. And then he dropped out and then went into working for this slide company. [Conrad said that the slide company became very successful, and that Danny helped out him and Norma financially].

He (Danny) said, all I want to do is honor in faith the things that I was taught by you guys when I was just a kid. Because I found them to be true over the years. It's remarkable. That's really remarkable.

I've had dozens – I've had dozens of contributions from people in this church. I go to my mailbox and open the mailbox, and there'd be an envelope in there with several hundred dollar bills. He's slip in my hand – by people who just casually drop by the office and said, oh, I came to just give this to you. You guys don't know how blessed we are. Then about a month ago, Brenda gave me a book by Louie Giglio. Some of you know Louie. Some of you know of him, and I've mentioned him. As a ministry to kids, we volunteered for three weekends with the youth conferences that went over the New Years' weekend. And we volunteered to kind of be super adult threatener, I guess. [Laughter]. Like they needed it. Six thousand to fourteen thousand at the last one we attended. And Louie has written his second book. The first one was called, *The Error*, I believe. And it's marvelous. Louie is a visionary and he can express himself in some marvelous ways. And his second book is called, *I Am Not, But I Know I Am*. If you think about this, if God is the "I am," then everyone of us is named, "I am not." And if I know that "I am not," but we know "I am," it doesn't get any better than that. That's theology at it's most simple but most profound level. And he goes on with his book to explain that. It's a marvelous, marvelous story. A marvelous story.

And I've got another book. Betijean. Betijean thinks that I'm just laying up reading all the time. [Laughter]. She's given me four so far, since last month. And I have a whole set of American History magazines, for heavens sake. It's interesting how they all tie together, because one of them was, 1776 *The Story of the American Revolution*. Just at it's beginning. What a boring read that was. [Laughter]. But it was remarkable in what it said about George Washington, and how God picked so improbable a man to lead this revolution. Bumbling. Fumbling. Hesitant. He was not a strategist. He pulled some of the worst boners. Lost New York completely. Pennsylvania. Bailed out of Pennsylvania, running from an enemy that didn't exist. He got trapped by one that did. And then, the remarkable victory that came after that. That was 1776. The next one I read was *The Faith of George Bush*. The guy that did the analysis on that – we've got a President who's a real hard-head with regard to what he believes. God bless him. Okay. The third one I read was *The Faith of Our Soldiers*. I told Phil the other night, I was talking to Phil about this. I read that thing, and then I re-read it. The same guy that did the analysis of *The Faith of George Bush* wrote the one on *The Faith of Our Soldiers*, and went to Iraq where he is dealing largely with what he calls the Millennial generation. That's the young fathers, the young fathers of this generation that's over there today, fighting in Iraq. They're the baby-boomer's kids. They weren't given any concept of God whatsoever. None. They had to make it up on the fly, with no acquaintance of Scripture. And it's amazing how

God is reaching out. You know, they said in World War II, there're no atheists in fox holes. Well it's amazing what's happening in Iraq. Here they've got a chaplaincy corps that's prevented by the rules of the army from mentioning anything what-so-ever about God's influence in their lives. He can't participate in that. He can't participate in religious things. He can only participate in ceremonial things. Okay. That's the chaplain. So when a guy is hurt, or fearful of his life, or senses the danger, the last person he can get help from is his chaplain, if the chaplain's doing what's right. You know. So they're forging their own definition of faith and worship. And he describes some of those meetings, and worship meetings, and things that they do to prepare themselves to go into harms way, and may not come back. Our church has chosen to aim itself at that generation by statements we have decided we want to attract the younger generation. And that reaches right down into the heart of that group of people who are the parents of young families. That's who we want to reach. Let me encourage you to read that book. *The Faith of Our Soldiers*. Okay. It's secular, written by a man who knows the Lord, and knows the difference in Bible based doctrinal foundations and non-Bible based. I encourage you to read that. If you tie those two together, that and *The Faith of George Bush*, you'll realize that he has made a connection with that young generation. And they are fiercely supportive of him for the most part. Okay. It would give us some sense of direction. If we're going to reach that generation, guys we're going to have to be ready to turn loose of a lot of things we're comfortable with, and wrap our hands around a lot of things we're uncomfortable with, in order to draw them closer. I'm not saying give up teaching what we know the Word says. That's been deposited in us as a sacred trust, and we have been prepared to do that. That's our generation. But, we can't let our call hinder our outreach if we in fact want to reach that young audience. And that's the choice our Church right now is trying to make. Whether we state it that way or not, that is the choice we're trying to make right now today. Okay. Some of us are comfortable with it. Some of us are uncomfortable with it. But I don't think any of us really see it for what it is, because we don't have any of those kids here. We have one or two, and that's it. That's not a representative – that's not a sample enough to draw a conclusion on the basis of. We've got to watch guys like Louie Giglio who's reaching back into the next group that's moving into that generation. We'll watch what he's doing to be effective. Watch some changes that are being made. I don't want to go to First Baptist Church. There's too much cereal there, and not enough steak. That's the reason I'm here. Okay. I want a richer diet than that. Everybody does not want that. Very few – fewer and fewer people want that. Let's put it that way. Okay. So we can either be an entrenched body, digging in and trying to hold our ground, or we can be an aggressive body. Which means we're going to have

circles within circles. Okay. That's the way the Body works. All in our hands. All in our feet. All in our arms.

So it starts out in Hebrews 13

1. Let love of the brethren continue.

And that's an all inclusive term. And then right down in verse 8, which is the last verse on the next page,

8. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

He is unchanging. That is a statement of his nature. Now,

9. Do not be carried away [the admonition] by varied and strange teachings [so let what you understand of the Word be rock solid]; for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, through which those who were so occupied were not benefited.

Foods represents legalism. Grace represents latitude.

8. ... it is good for the heart [that's your mind, what you think with] to be strengthened by grace, not by foods.

Or legalism. Okay. "All things are lawful unto me," he'll tell the Corinthians. Then verse 10.

10. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

If anybody ever dared consider toying with the pageantry of Israel and moving it into the Church as a means of enhancing our services, let them beware of exactly what this verse says.

10. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle do not even have a right to eat.

The altar is the altar of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the altar of commitment. It's the altar of joining in His suffering. It's suffering for righteousness. A sharing the fellowship of suffering, which what Christ was all about. If we're to be joined to

Him, we're going to be self-sacrificing – individually. Tolerating whatever He brings in our life for His glory. Unwavering in what we teach. And we don't want to let our suffering affect what we know to be true. We start out on the basis of what we know for our guide. And then our circumstance is measured against that, not the other way around. The whole of the Pentecostal movement says let your experience validate what you believe to be true. And if it doesn't, change what you believe. That's not true. Your experience simply – your experience has to be measured and understood by what you know the Word of God says.

He's the same yesterday, today and forever.

That's the foundation rock on which the whole is built. Okay. God does not change. He doesn't change. We live in a different time than our forefathers. He is the same. C.H. Mackintosh believed in the same Christ that I believe in. F.W. Grant is the same man who wrote the *Numerical Bible Commentary*, and Christ is the same for him as He is for us. These guys wrote by gasoline lanterns. Okay. We don't. We have electric lights. We've got flashlights that you can shake and you get light out of. You don't even have to have a battery in. What kind of amazing nonsense is that? It's doesn't have a battery. You shake it and it lights up. This is ridiculous. Okay. They used gasoline, whale oil lamps, not that long ago.

10. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

Those in the Tabernacle could never come to Christ, become one with Him through union, and therefore be related to God forever. That never happened to the Jew. Do you want to be an Messianic Jew? Go right ahead. The minute you do, you're under prescription here.

10. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat.

You can't serve a Tabernacle in form or in substance and approach the Lord Jesus Christ as your food for your spiritual life, which He certainly is. When we take that Lord's Table and we take that small wafer, that little crumb of bread, and you put it in your mouth, it's in recognition that at some point in your life you approach the Lord Jesus Christ as He embraced you. And you took Him as your sole substance forever. And for that, He drew you to Himself and you became

one with the sacrifice. How many times did Israel see that done? When their priest took the priest portion of the sacrifice, and ate it for their substance. And they never saw the reality of the picture. When Christ came, they took Him outside the camp and crucified Him. Outside the camp! Can you imagine? They walled Him away from themselves and did away with Him. There's no such thing as being a little bit Jewish. There is not Judeo-Christian ethic. That's a misnomer. At its very heart, it's a misnomer, according to what Hebrews is teaching us right here. Okay? It was a term that was conjured up in order to explain an affinity we have for Israel because we read in this much of Scripture that they are God's chosen people. And He is not through with them yet. **But believers – He didn't just join us to Israel. We are a new creation.** Everything we've studied now – and as I've gotten into Matthew and began to study Matthew as a follow-up to Hebrews. Everything I've gotten into, especially as I went back and studied Matthew – you get Matthew and you realize the prophecy of Christ's coming is here. In Matthew, what we get is His rejection by Israel by those to whom He came. Now we get His grace from James through Peter through Hebrews. We get God's grace in not just throwing Israel away, but continuing to pursue those Israelites; and continuing to offer, and beg them, and entreat them to come into the Gospel of Grace, that's right there staring them in the face. And most of them still put it aside, put it aside, put it aside. But until we get to the Pauline epistles. In Romans, in 1st and 2nd Corinthians, and Ephesians, and Galatians, and Colossians. And the language changes. We're no longer called the Flock of God. We're called the Body of Christ. There's a lot said about the Flock. But you don't get it in the Pauline epistles. In the Pauline epistles, it's the Body of Christ. What a sweeping change that is. We are so unique. How can we not trust the God we serve, for every challenge and every circumstance in our life. How can we not just throw ourselves on Him, and not accept the fact, that if we have something in our life that's challenging us or facing us, He knows about it. God is so very, very big. And we are so very, very small. But that connection is from the smallest on earth to the biggest thing the whole created world and beyond. He knows every, every thing we do. Every challenge we face. Every heartbeat that beats. Every pain that we feel. Every joy that He gives us and stirs up in us. He knows everyone of those. If He knows the sparrow that falls, how could He not know that 2 o'clock in the morning I woke up and had a pain here. Okay. And couldn't go back to sleep. And I put Gather on my head set and turned it up so that it just drowns everything else out. And before the tape goes off, I'm back to sleep. That's not the marvel of electronics. Not by a long shot. That's the marvel of grace. Same tape. Same song. Over and over again. New every time. Because we have an altar from which we eat that those of Israel who serve the Tabernacle have no right.

11. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy place by the high priest as an offering for sin, are burned outside the camp [just like Christ was].

12. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people through His own blood, suffered outside the gate.

13. Let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

That doesn't sound like the prosperity gospel to me. That doesn't sound like the world is just going to beat its path to our door and reward us for faithfulness. God will reward us, according to our needs, and according to our ability to spread the Gospel of Grace. And bear His reproach. He'll give us the strength to do that.

15. Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name [our number one job right there].

16. And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

My Lord smiled at Danny Harris who as a young man tucked away a lesson and blessed me immensely with it. How do you do that? How do you do that? How do you do that? Just make that decision. Just bingo. Here he comes around the corner – bam, and you make a decision. How many of us are ready to act that impulsively in response to what we know to be true. It was true doctrine then. That was thirty years ago. It was true doctrine then. It was still true to him today. Haven't wavered. There's a good lesson there. Man, there's a good lesson there. And it reminds us to honor those from whom we learn of Him. I urge you all the more to do this.

18. Pray for us, that we are sure that we have a good conscience, desiring to conduct ourselves honorably in all things.

20. Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord,

21. equip you in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

What an amazing, amazing study. We are the Father's own workmanship. Okay? I will say this, and I mention the charismatics often because of my opinion that they're the killing field of the Christian Church today. Because they're basing their relationship to the Lord and what they teach, on their experience – collectively and individually. And that's dangerous. That's dangerous. Because the enemy of God has the ability to reward. And you have to be careful with that. Who can sort out the difference. You pray for something unduly, and the answer will come, but it doesn't come from God. And you're off base. We are to hold true to what we know to be true. To what we believe to be true. To what we have been taught. Honor that. Honor that. And your pastors, and your elders, and your leaders. And God will be faithful, and take care of us personally and individually in our area of need. I covet your prayers. Norma and I both do. Thank you. And thank you so very much for your faithfulness.

[This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others].