



# JESUS

Up Close and Personal

A Study of Hebrews | The Pastors' Bible Study 2013-2014

## Hebrews 13:15-25

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### A SHORT REVIEW

Over the past number of months, we've taken a look at Jesus, up close and personal, through the eyes of the author of the Book of Hebrews. And now, in Chapter 13, we find the answer to the question, "If we believe that Jesus wants to be Lord of our lives, then what does He specifically expect us to do?" The good news is that this chapter gives us examples of those expectations. Chapter 13 is full of practical advice on what God, the Father expects of us, with Jesus as Lord of our lives.

Last week, Vicky Jones led us as we examined the first 14 verses. We learned that God, in Jesus Christ expects us to live a life of love and purity. It's expressed in the way that we love each other – our hospitality and generosity. It's expressed in our empathy for those in need, in how we reach out and share Christ's love with those around us, even strangers who might be "angels in disguise". It's expressed in our attitude and our contentment with life. So, there are certain expectations that God has of all of us when we accept Christ as our Lord and Savior.

In the author's final exhortations to us, he continues sharing God's expectations and then he prays for us followed by some personal salutations. So, with these final words, the author once again proclaims that Jesus Christ is superior to anything mere religion has to offer. All the pomp and circumstance of religion pales in comparison to the Person, work, and ministry of Jesus Christ. When a person accepts Jesus Christ into their heart and life, it changes their life **FOREVER!** The old creation has passed away and a new creation is born. Lives change as a result of God's love and grace!

### THE TEXT: HEBREWS 13:15-25 (NRSV)

*<sup>15</sup> Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. <sup>16</sup> Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. <sup>17</sup> Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls and will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with sighing—for that would be harmful to you. <sup>18</sup> Pray for us; we are sure that we have a clear conscience, desiring to act honorably in all things. <sup>19</sup> I urge you all the more to do this, so that I may be restored to you very soon.*

*<sup>20</sup> Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, <sup>21</sup> make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. <sup>22</sup> I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. <sup>23</sup> I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been set free; and if he comes in time, he will be with me when I see you. <sup>24</sup> Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy send you greetings. <sup>25</sup> Grace be with all of you.*

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What kind of sacrifices should we offer to God?
2. What are the benefits of obeying one's spiritual leaders?
3. What did the writer pray would happen to his readers?
4. Why do you think it's so difficult to be content?
5. What, to you, is best part about knowing the fact that Jesus never changes?
6. How can we draw contentment from God's unchanging nature?
7. What Christian leaders do you look up to and consider worth imitating? Why?
8. Why do you think praise of God is so important for us to practice?
9. What are some practical steps we can take to avoid temptations to immorality?
10. What one action could you take this week to practice contentment with what you have?
11. How can you encourage a Christian friend or friends to continue walking with Christ even in the midst of discouragement?

## **LESSONS WE LEARN FROM CHAPTER 13:15-25**

1. Praise God continually.
2. Never overlook opportunities to do good and share God's love and grace.
3. Trust your Christian leaders to guide you.
4. Remember Christ said, "I will never leave you or forsake you."
5. Remember that the Lord is our helper and we don't have to be afraid.
6. Remember that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.
7. Remember that we have a responsibility to pray for one another.
8. A good conscience and good conduct puts us on praying ground.
9. Prayer moves the hand of God to accomplish His purpose for our lives.
10. God is the God of peace because He has everything under control.
11. The resurrection demonstrates the Father's stamp of approval on the work of Jesus Christ, His Son.
12. Jesus is a "Great High Priest" and He is a "Great Shepherd."
13. Jesus is the foundation for our redemption, reconciliation, and our relationship with God is found in the "blood of the eternal covenant".
14. The "God of peace" will "equip you . . . to do His will."
15. God's resources are totally adequate to accomplish His will for our lives.
16. God is working in us and through us to change our world.
17. God monitors our every move!
18. God wants to bless you abundantly!

## **CLOSING COMMENTS**

In the Book of Hebrews, the author makes it clear that Jesus Christ exceeds all other people, pursuits, objects, or hopes to which human beings offer allegiance. Hebrews pictures Jesus as better than the angels, as bringing better lives to humanity through salvation, as offering a better hope than the Mosaic Law could promise, as a better sacrifice for our sins than a bull or a goat, and as providing a better inheritance in heaven for those who place their faith in Him. Jesus is indeed superior to all others. This message of the superiority of Jesus would have been particularly important to Jewish Christians in Rome, who were struggling under Nero's persecution and were considering moving back toward the Mosaic Law. The writer of Hebrews showed Jewish Christian believers that, though they faced suffering, they were indeed following a better way and they should persevere.

The ancients created idols fashioned of wood and stone. Modern society has set aside that type of idol in favor of new idols—idols of fancy gadgets, material wealth, a comfortable lifestyle, and even our children. Human beings have seen and experienced the limitless bounty of idolatry, where we place some created object or person in the place of the one true God. What idols do you hold dear in your life? The letter to the Hebrews makes clear that only one Person deserves to hold the primary place in our lives. While we are busy idolizing our move up the corporate ladder or placing all our hopes in worldly things, Jesus offers us a better position, a better priest, a better covenant, a better hope, and a better sacrifice.

# NOTES AND THOUGHTS