

DISCIPLESHIP DURING THE WEEK

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. What spiritual practices tempt you to take your focus off Christ and instead focus on them? Why? Pray this week for God to refocus you on Christ and His grace that is sufficient for all that you face in life.

2. Which false teachings are prevalent today? How do those teachings tempt you to believe them? What Scripture passages would help you refocus on Christ and His grace this week?

3. Compare Hebrews 13:13-14 to Hebrews 11:25-26. What did Moses give up by following God's call for his life? What does it look like for us to go to Christ and "bear the reproach he endured"?

4. Ask God to reveal how you should repent this week, specifically in seeking strength from things other than Christ. Discuss how you can seek Christ this week for your relationships, your job, your family, and for your free time or hobbies.

5. What would it look like to live with our focus on the coming hope of eternity with God and His people in the new heavens and new earth? How would that future focus change how you live in the present?

"Pastoral discipleship from the pulpit for you through the week.
Each of our pastors has designed content with you in mind."

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

If you want to connect with our family ministries, contact Pastor Ken (kenc@fpcrome.org)

1. Hebrews 13:9 mentions not being "led away by diverse and strange teachings". Talk with your children about the importance of knowing the Bible well enough that you could determine when something you hear is not Biblical. This is particularly important when watching TV shows or movies.

- a. If your children are younger, then play the game where you sit at a table and tell everyone to pay attention to everything on the table. Then have everyone close their eyes and you take one item off the table. Then ask your children to open their eyes and see if they can notice what was taken off. Give everyone turns to take something off the table. Then talk about how we need pay close attention to what is in the Bible, so that we can figure out when somebody teaches something that is not in the Bible.
- b. If your children are old enough to discuss the concept of a Biblical worldview, then ask them to talk about a show that you have watched recently. Ask them if the show taught anything about God or humanity or about the Biblical concept of family. Discuss that with them. Talk about how a Biblical worldview means living based on the Bible.

2. In Hebrews 13:9-12, the author once again is comparing religious practices from the Old Covenant that were fulfilled in Jesus and the New Covenant. Specifically, the author brings up meals and food from the Old Covenant. The author points us towards being "strengthened by grace, not by foods". Can you explain to your children what that means?

- a. Talk with your children about the reason we do our religious practices like prayer, worship, and Bible study is to connect us with Jesus and His grace.
- b. Talk about how you all can remind each other this week to stay focused on Jesus and His grace.

3. Read Hebrews 13:14 and ask your children if they know what it means to "seek the city that is to come". Ask them how looking to our future hope of eternity with Jesus changes how we live today.

Scriptures for further study:

Exodus 19 to study more on Mt.Sinai

Revelation 21-22 to study more on Mt.Zion.

Big Idea

Because of the sufficiency of the grace of Christ, we may be strengthened for our faith journey by looking to Jesus.

Outline

1. Strengthened by Grace, Not Foods (Hebrews 13:9-12)

2. Go to Christ, Not This World (Hebrews 13:13-14)

Gospel Applications

1. By the Spirit's power, seek spiritual strength from Christ.

2. By the Spirit's power, seek to take up your cross daily and focus on "the city that is to come".

"Strengthened by Christ Alone"

Hebrews 13:9-14 ESV

9 Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. **10** We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. **11** For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. **12** So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. **13** Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. **14** For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

Historical Context

"This is what the Book of Hebrews is about –the supremacy of Christ along with the sufficiency of his work and the necessity of faith in him for salvation...the writer warns Christians not to fall back from faith in Christ in the midst of trials and exhorts them instead to press on to full maturity."- Richard Phillips, Reformed Expository Commentary on Hebrews, 6.

"Virtually all agree that the grand theme of this epistle is the supremacy and finality of Christ."-R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word: Hebrews, 15.

FOR STUDENTS

If you want to connect with our student ministries, contact Pastor Jimmy (jimmyl@fpcrome.org)

1. The "foods" referred to in 13:9 are the sacrifices that were being offered by the Jewish priesthood in the first century AD (13:10-11), and likely those being offered by Greek religious groups. However, it is not by the sacrifice of food that we are strengthened, but by Christ's grace. The author's logic here is quite simple: Look at the outcome of what someone is doing. If the religious people are not getting closer to God, what does that tell you? Grace overcomes (13:9). Sacrifices and religion enslave. How can you break out of the mold of religiosity in your life and seek Christ's grace?

2. Why do the Jewish leaders – still serving the old religion based in legalism, instead of Christ who perfected grace – have no right to be at the altar Christ was offered upon (13:10; compare 1 Cor 10:14-22; Isa 53:10)?

3. To whom are we called to go, and who is our model for suffering when we are persecuted for our beliefs (13:13)? Why should we do this (13:14)? What lasting things are we seeking (13:14)?

**Selected questions borrowed and adapted from Hebrews: How Jesus speaks into everything by John D Barry.*

Scriptures for further study:

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Mark 8:27-38

Colossians 1:15-20

John 6:35

Philippians 3:7-8

Scriptures for further study:

1 Corinthians 10:14-22

Isaiah 53:10

FOR NON-BELIEVERS OR NEW BELIEVERS

If you want to know more about Jesus and Christianity, contact Pastor Jonathan (jonathans@fpcrome.org)

1. Verse 9 warns us not to be led away or carried along by all kinds of strange teachings. There certainly are a diverse number of strange and false beliefs being accepted by our culture today. We must be more discerning than ever! And we must make sure we are “established” in God’s truth so that we can identify and reject what is false. If you encounter any teaching that is not consistent with Scripture, and that does not teach salvation by grace through Jesus Christ alone, then it is false.

2. The “altar” here (verse 10) refers to the sacrifice of Christ and his work of atoning for our sins on the cross. This alone is the means to our salvation, the only “altar” we need. Having been saved by his grace, the proper response from us is to offer our sacrifice of praise (verse 15), and to do good unto others (verse 15), for “with such sacrifices God is pleased” (verse 15). What are some specific ways you can live your life as a pleasing sacrifice to God? A life that says, “thank you God for what you have done for me!”

3. Once again (verse 14), the author refers to the city that is to come (which is enduring). As one commentator asks, “How does this help us hold lightly to the material goods, position, prestige, accomplishments, family or other sources of self-worth we get in this world?” (Wright)

Like Christina. But even more so...we need something to fix our gaze upon...we need a home to pull us forward...and according to Hebrews, that is Jesus Christ...like the home on the hill in the painting, Jesus is the pinnacle of God’s plan of redemption...so considering this painting and background, here these words afresh from Hebrews chapter 12, verses 1-2:

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so, church, let’s begin this journey in Hebrews together...which is not disconnected from our humanity and our struggles...for we to live in Christina’s world...a world of suffering, pain, and hardship...but we are in a relationship with the savior, Jesus, who has overcome the world...and because of His supremacy, calls us to fix our eyes on Him in order that we might persevere in faith. -Tremper Longman, EBC, 23-25

About the artwork

Andrew Wyeth is perhaps the most famous American artist of the 20th century. He, along with John Singer Sargent, are the only two American artists invited into the Academy of Fine Art in Paris, France. President Kennedy awarded Wyeth the presidential medal of freedom, the only visual artist to receive such an award. He was also awarded presidential medals from George H Bush and George W Bush.

His art is connected to his humanity. He was a man that experienced loss and grief in this broken and fallen world and often expressed his pain in visual form through art.

His most famous work, and the one that best expresses his struggle with pain and grief, is a painting called Christina's World (1948). Christina is a friend of Wyeth and had a disease that left her unable to walk. Instead of choosing a wheelchair, she preferred to crawl using her arms. The painting is a picture of her struggle...but it is also a picture of her hope...in the painting her hands are gripped to the ground portraying her daily suffering, yet her body is leaning towards the farmhouse, which was her home. Life was a struggle, but her gaze and hope were on her home, which kept her moving forward and not giving up.

The book of Hebrews has a very similar theme...the writer expresses the hope and gaze of home in the person and work of Jesus Christ...the struggle to give up or turn back was very real for the audience...most scholars believe the original audience was Jewish Christians who were facing persecution...it would have been a struggle for them to keep moving forward in the profession of Jesus Christ because with that profession came pain and hardship.

ADDITIONAL NOTES



What is Pulpit Driven Discipleship?

Discipleship from the pulpit to communities therein pressed into the head, heart and hands of image bearers of God every day.

Pulpit Driven Discipleship is the name of a process of discipleship. Discipleship begins on Sunday with the sermon faithfully preached by our pastors then the message of sermon is digested and pressed into the heart throughout the week through prayer reflection and discussion in the home or in smaller discussion groups. It is in this context that life transformation and growth occur.

The pastoral leadership team and the Adult Discipleship Ministry Team are excited to walk together through the Book of Hebrews. Please prayerfully consider incorporating PDD as your primary means of discipleship. We believe that PDD is appropriate for individuals, couples, families, and groups of all kinds. This great resource can be found in the bulletin on Sunday, and will be available on-line and via email each week.

Director of Adult Discipleship Rob Davis welcomes discussion, questions, and comments of all kinds. Rob Davis 706-252-5216, RobD@fpcrome.org

PULPIT DRIVEN DISCIPLESHIP



Andrew Wyeth, Christina's World, 1948 ;

Perseverance by Promise ***A Study of the Sermon to the Hebrews***

June 26, 2022
Hebrews 13:9-14 ESV