

Q1 L13 - **"Let Brotherly Love Continue"** - 2022-03-26

Shawn Brummund: Hello, and welcome to another edition of the "Sabbath School Study Hour," as we come together again, in the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh-day Adventist Church, to study the Word of God, and we are here again to be able to study our last lesson in a book that all of us have enjoyed tremendously, which is the book of Hebrews in the quarterly that's entitled "The Message of Hebrews."

So we're going to be looking at Lesson Number 13, which is our last study. It's one of my favorites. It's one that I pray that we will take to heart as we consider the truth that God gives to us in concern to brotherly love, love that we have for one another as believers, as church members, and this is no small topic. So we're going to be looking at that as our last topic in the message of Hebrews. I trust that you have enjoyed it over the last three months as we have looked at one of the most powerful gospel books in the entire Bible.

I also want to invite you to take advantage of a special gift offer that we have, which is a little booklet entitled "Tiny Troublemaker," written by Joe Crews, the founder of Amazing Facts, and, so, again, this little book is entitled "Tiny Troublemaker," and if you want a copy of this, you live in North America or the different various U.S. territories, all you have to do is dial 1-866-788-3966. Go ahead and dial in, and we'll be happy to be able to get that to you.

Now, if you'd like a digital copy of this, as well, and you're in the U.S., you can also get a digital copy of this by just simply texting the code "SH133," and you want to dial that towards 40544, and you'll be able to hook up to a digital download copy. Now, you'll also notice that there is a website on the screen as well which is study.aftv.org/SH133, so if you're anywhere in the world and you have access to the internet, go ahead and take advantage of that, and I know that it'll be a good read. It's something that we all need, that we make sure that we're not one of those tiny little troublemakers in God's church and that we're working in harmony with Him.

So before we get into our study lesson today, which is going to be taught by Pastor Luccas Rodor, we're going to invite our singers out as they lead us out in worship and song.

♪♪♪

♪ Now is the day of salvation, ♪

♪ today, today. ♪

♪ Sinner, without hesitation, ♪

♪ pray. ♪

♪ Christ will hear you, Christ is near you, ♪

♪ though you've gone astray. ♪

♪ Now is the day of salvation. ♪

♪ Let Him wash your sins away. ♪

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Luccas Rodor: Happy Sabbath. It's good to see you all, to be here at church, to study the Word of God. This quarter has been a blessing to me. Studying the book of Hebrews has been such a motivation, such an encouragement. I mean, if there's one--I mean, there are--I feel that there are many words that you could really use to sum up the book of Hebrews, but one of these main words, in my opinion, is the word "encouragement." It is such an encouraging book.

As, you know, I've stated previously before in the previous lessons and as some of the other pastors too, Hebrews is all about Jesus being better, Jesus being better and offering better things, and so just studying this lesson and understanding more about Him and more about what He can do or what He does do for us and what we can accept through Him has just been so motivating in my life.

You know, sometimes we'll read these lessons, these quarterlies. We kind of get used to it. It becomes a habit, but I don't know if this happens to you. With me, sometimes, I just go through it. I go through the motions. You know, I think that's part of the Christian life, but this is one of those topics that you just have to take it at face value, you have to. You can't let that happen in your life.

The memory verse for this lesson, we're in, you know, Lesson 13, as pastor Shawn mentioned. It's the last lesson of the quarter. The title is "Let Brotherly Love Continue," and the memory verse comes from Hebrews chapter 13, verse 1. It's a very short verse, but it has a very deep, very profound message, and the message is "Let Brotherly Love Continue." So the title of the week's lesson and the memory verse are one and the same.

Now, the author of this quarterly's lesson, he has interpreted the author, or he has run with the story or run with the belief that Paul is the author of the book of Hebrews, and that's what the Seventh-day Adventist Church believes. And what's beautiful about this is not only do we have what Paul writes here in Hebrews, which is really a sermon. But we have everything that Paul, in the New Testament, writes about brotherly love, about the fellowship kind of love that we find in the Bible, and so we can mix and match what Paul says here in Hebrews. And we can find what else he says about this same subject throughout the rest of the New Testament.

Now, when you look at the New Testament and you see the concept of love, you'll find a lot of descriptions, a lot of analysis on what love is. But Paul, he writes one of the most, you know, well-known descriptions or anatomies of love in the world, one of the most well-known texts or poems in the world, and this is--this comes from 1 Corinthians chapter 13. In this classic passage, the apostle, he really puts forth love in three divisions.

He has three categories in which he analyzes and, you know, describes love. The first one is where he compares love and so, basically, love compared to other gifts, highly valued virtues in his days and in ours, for example, the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, science, knowledge, charity, but from what we find in 1 Corinthians 13, without love, these gifts are truly worthless. They're empty, as empty as, in his words, "sounding brass or clanging cymbal," emitting empty, hollow sounds.

And so he compares love to other gifts, and he comes to the conclusion that, without love, all other gifts that we can aspire to that are good gifts, they're empty. And this is, you know, this is where it starts becoming real to us because, well, what gifts do you ask God for? Do you want the gift of prophecy, or do you want the gift of speaking in many languages or, you know, the gift of knowledge or wisdom?

Do you know that all of these things that, while they are good, without love, they're empty? The second division is when he analyzes love, and so he starts speaking about what love is, right? He describes it here, and so, in his words, "Love is patient. It's denying. It bears all things. It believes all things. It hopes all things. It endures all things."

Not only does he, you know, relate what love is, but then he also goes on to relate what love is not, right? "It does not parade itself. It's not puffed up. It does not behave rudely. It does not seek its own. It is not provoked. It thinks no evil, does no evil. It does not rejoice in iniquity," and so on.

These are--this is a classic text that we all know of, and so here he analyzes what love is and what it is

not. Now, friends, again, this is so real to us today because--I don't know if you see this--any person with a critical mind sees that, in the world that we live in, there are a lot of wrong ideas about what love is and about what love is not. You see that in media. You see that in songs. You see that in modern poems and literature. You see people finding love to be something that it could never be.

Love nowadays is a lot more about the person than who he or she is loving. Love has become self-centered. And so here, the apostle, he defines what it is according to the agape love, God's true, unconditional love, and what it is not, what it has become in our world today. And, finally, after he compares love, after he analyzes love, he defends love. That's what you find in 1 Corinthians 13.

He sets forth the basic reason as for why he chooses love as the supreme gift. And this is really a moment where we need to sit back and analyze why is love the supreme gift. Why is it the gift that from everything else or all the other things stem from it or rooted in it, and it's simple, it's because love endures forever. Love endures forever. It is eternal. All others will pass away, will fail, and will cease. That's what the text says. Tongues, prophecy, all these things pass, fail away, and cease, but "love remains forever aside faith and hope, but the greatest of these is love."

And so, this week's lesson, which is the last one in the quarter, it zeroes in on brotherly love. What does it mean that we should love one another? You know, you find this saying, "Love one another." The term "one another," in the New Testament, it appears more than 70 times, "love one another," "endure one another," "be patient with one another," "carry one another's burdens," "forgive one another," so you find this more than 70 times.

You can't really miss the point of what these biblical authors are trying to transmit, but it's easier said than done, isn't it? It's a lot easier said than done. And so, here, this lesson, it finishes with this beautiful anatomy of love where we need to let brotherly love continue, and that's what we're studying this week. What we find is that all believers are invited not only to demonstrate it in their lives but allow God to transmit it through their lives, otherwise it will be false, it will be empty, it won't be true, it won't be real.

Now, Sunday's lesson already starts well. The lesson starts beautiful. The title is "Caring for God's People," and, again, this is based on Hebrews 13:1, that refers to God's love, and it refers to the love that we must have towards each other. "Let Brotherly Love Continue." And here we'll find--I'm going to read a series of Bible texts, and I want you to see what is--I want all of you to be truly listening and paying attention to see what is the constant, what is the one or the gift that is mentioned in all of these verses that I'm going to read.

So, for example, the first one, which is Romans chapter 12, verse 13, that says, "distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality," so what happens here is the emphasis of the importance of sharing with others in their times of need and to practice hospitality. That's the first verse, all right?

The second is 1 Timothy 3, verse 2, that says, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach," and so, again, you find the same subject. Here is you find the characteristic of a Christian leader, but these are all things that all Christians must set forth, wouldn't you say so? Would this only be for Christian leaders, for pastors, or for elders, or do you think that, these qualities, they speak to all true followers of Christ, to be blameless, to be faithful to their spouse, temperate, sober-minded, good behavior, able to teach?

Now, you might say, "Well, I'm not able to teach." Friends, every Christian should be able to teach in one capacity or another. I'm not saying that everyone has to preach up front. Not everyone has to teach a Sabbath School, but you should be able to give a reasonable reason for your faith, reasonable reason for your faith. Do you see what I'm saying? But in the text here, you do find the continuation of what, you know, the author is driving home.

In Titus chapter 1, verse 8, it says, "Be hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled," and then, finally, 1 Peter 4, verse 7 through 9, it sums it all, and it says, "But the end of all things is at hand. Therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. And above all things have fervent

love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.' Be hospitable to one another without grumbling."

So what is the quality that is being repeated through all these verses? Hospitality. Now, what's curious, that when we observe the three classic lists that appear in the New Testament that are mentioned by the apostle, you know, the lists of the fruits of the Spirit, none of them mention hospitality, and there are three classic lists in the New Testament of, you know, all the gifts, the fruits of the Spirit. They don't really mention hospitality, but nonetheless, it is certainly a gift, and it's added later on to the list of gifts as new realities and needs appeared in the first century church.

Here we have to understand that that first century church, it was a dynamic church. It was growing, not growing only in number but growing in its service, growing in what it had to do to be able to serve a chaotic world. You know, it begins with the apostles. It begins there in the Upper Room. It begins, you know, with that group of people. Then you have the baptisms of thousands, and it starts going out from Jerusalem to Judea, to Samaria, to the ends of the earth, and we see that not only the quantity but the quality of the disciples, of the Christians, they expand. And so that's why hospitality, while it's not mentioned in the three classic lists, it's mentioned through and through the New Testament because, friends, all Christians must be hospitable.

Now, I'll tell you, it's easier for some people than for others, and I'll tell you that it's not one of those that comes naturally to me because I am a natural introvert, all right? Now, some of you might be surprised because I don't seem to be an introvert, but I am. I'm not shy. You know, you have different personalities and all that kind of stuff, you know, so I'm not a shy person, but I'm an introvert, and sometimes introverts have a hard time being hospitable, but it's something that all of must be.

We're called to be hospitable. Hospitality, friends, it's exercised not only to those from within the faith but also to those that are outside of the faith, and this is indicated in multiple examples in the Bible. A reference is made especially to those that are in prison, those who are isolated, alone and excluded, many of them that are tormented by shame and by guilt.

You know, I was very pleasantly surprised when I found out this week--I didn't know this reality, but I found out that the Bible school here at Amazing Facts, about 70% of their correspondence is with inmates, and I find that's such a beautiful ministry. When I was a pastor in Texas, we had a brother that was very--I was a pastor in the city of Beaumont, Texas. It's a beautiful town and one--a beautiful church, you know, the best people, and we had a few brothers there, brothers and sisters that were very passionate about their work with prison ministry, and I was able to observe it, you know, a bit more closely than I ever had, and that's a big ministry.

We find that repeated again and again in the Bible, to these, not only the prisoners, but those who live lives of exclusion, lives of, you know, staying on the sidelines of the world, the followers of Jesus are called to manifest sympathy and relief. In this, Jesus followers will be acting in obedience to the words of their Master in Matthew 25, where Jesus said, "I was in prison and you came to Me."

Now, according to this text, about the scene of the final judgment, we serve Jesus in the person of the people that we serve and the person of those that are in need, be them of the faith or not. Sometimes, you know, the Bible speaks about this. Jesus Himself talks about this. We are oftentimes tempted to serve, to minister to those that we love, to people that are nice, to people that are okay, right? It's easier, it's easy to be nice to someone that treats you well, that treats you kindly, but it's a whole other matter to deal with someone, to treat someone, to demonstrate love to people that--maybe they don't even treat you bad, but maybe they're people that you don't know, they're strangers. Sometimes, people that seem offensive to the senses, it's difficult, but, friends, that was Jesus's life.

Before the presence of the great white throne of the universe, the question coming from the King sitting upon the throne, here in the Bible, in this description in Matthew 25, the question coming from the King sitting on the throne, it is not "Did you believe?" The question is "Did you love?"

Now, I'm not saying that it's not important to believe. Please do not understand me incorrectly. It is important. It's vital to believe. Of course, it is, but the true question, the heart of the matter, is "Was what you believed in capable of transforming your life?" Do you see?

The question isn't primarily "Did you believe?" The question is primarily "Did what you believe in or was what you believed capable of changing your life?" Because there are a lot of people that believe, but it doesn't change them, and the reality, friends, is that faith or belief becomes faith at the point of action. That's what Jesus is revealing here. Faith--or belief becomes faith at the point of action. That's why what Jesus is talking about is service.

I'm not talking about salvation by works, but I'm saying that salvation is revealed in our works. Does that make sense? You're not saved by what you do, but what you do does reveal your status. It reveals where your heart is at. Jesus cared for those in need. He demanded no conditions that they must follow Him in order to receive His help, and those who decided to follow Him, to become His disciples, His followers, they did so as a result of the love that He demonstrated to them, not as a condition of that love.

And that's another big thing because sometimes we feel that we must take a step so that then God can take a step. Have you ever felt that before? First, I must demonstrate initiative, and then God will meet me halfway, and sometimes, we feel that other people that we're ministering to, they must reveal the same thing. They have to take--they need to want it, right? They need to take a first step, and then I'll take a step and meet them halfway.

But let me ask you something, did Jesus mostly go to people or wait for people to come to Him? Jesus mostly went. Jesus met people. He encountered them. He meets Nicodemus in the middle of the night. He meets the Samaritan woman at a well. He meets a blind man in a tank. Jesus went. Friends, the truth revealed in the Bible is that God always takes the first step. "We love Him because He first," what? "Loved us."

Now, here's the catch. It's not really a catch, but here's the detail, if I'm imitating Jesus Christ and I should be more like Him, should I be waiting for people to come to my church, or should I be going to meet them? Because, friends, the reality is that the church must leave the building. The church must leave the building. Yes, this is our home base, but we become the church, the arms, the hands, the feet of Jesus, when we step out of the building, out of our comfort zone.

The church must leave the building, and that's also something that I learned from a lady called Gloria in the Beaumont church. She preached a sermon once, called "The Church Must Leave the Building." It was a beautiful sermon, "The Church Must Leave the Building." Observe the scene in the judgment in Matthew 25. The items that are listed as the final test, they have to do with hospitality. Matthew 25, verse 35 and 36, "for I was hungry and you gave Me food. I was thirsty and you gave Me drink. I was a stranger and you took Me in. I was naked and you clothed Me. I was sick and you visited Me. I was in prison and you came to Me."

Friends, the final test has to do with the practical things of life. Why is love so important? Why does it seem here that love is the only important thing? Friends, it's because God is love and because "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love," as per 1 John chapter 4, verse 8. He who does not love is not found in God. It doesn't matter who they are. It doesn't matter what status, what office, what position they hold. Their lack of love is the final evidence that they never knew Him. That's why love is the only thing that matters because everything else that you will do, everything else that you will believe in your Christian experience, it all comes down to my relationship with Christ, your relationship with Him, and what that produces in your life. You can believe whatever. You can do whatever.

That's why, when we find that encounter that Jesus proposes in the Sermon of the Mount, where people come to Jesus and they say a whole bunch of things, they say, "Lord, Lord--" only believers will say, "Lord, Lord," but did their "Lord, Lord," matter? And then there are others that did a whole bunch of things, miracles, signs, cured people, prophesied, expelled demons. Did all these works of faith matter? "Depart from Me, you who practice iniquity, for I never knew you."

Monday's lesson, the title is "Covetousness and Sexual Immorality." Now, you know, in the texts that are related most frequently to the common evils that we must avoid in life that you'll find these texts throughout the New Testament, we find that covetousness and sexual immorality are mentioned almost always. These, according to Paul, are the signs of the times, and for example, 2 Timothy 3, verse 2 through 5, it says, "But know this, that in the last days, perilous times will come. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power."

And here's a whole list, and, honestly, when you look at the world around you right now, this is exactly what you'll find. But it's curious that throughout, through and through the New Testament, you'll find that covetousness and sexual immorality, they're woven through in all these lists of what the world has always been, unfortunately, after the fall, and what it will fall into more and more towards the end.

Covetousness is the cancer of our materialistic society, where everyone is seeking to be the number one, the first, and the soul of materialism is competition.

Now, competition, you know, you could speak about it in many ways, but in this context, in this context of materialism, it destroys our capacity of serving others wholeheartedly since, in competition, we see others as rivals to ourself, rivals to be overcome, annihilated and destroyed, only stepping stones to our success. Materialistic competition, it destroys sympathy, compassion, and the spirit of mercy and unconditional service, and so this is one of those things that we must be careful with.

How competitive are you? I have to be careful because I can become quite competitive person. That's why I don't play many--I don't play that many games or sports because of what it does to me, you know, competitive things because I am very competitive.

Now, that is one of the items that's mentioned on this day's lesson. The other, it has to do with sexual morality. That is the trademark of modern culture, the culture of sex that has invaded every layer of society. It has become a part of every segment of modern, secular culture in the office, in meetings, in trips, in airplanes, avenues, roads, restaurants, billboards, car dealerships. All of these things reveal the sad reality that sex sells.

Some time ago, "Time Magazine" had a cover article entitled, "Pornography: The Moral AIDS of Our Time." Pornography is one of the darkest depths of fallen humanity. It destroys people. It destroys their ability to give and to receive love. It destroys families. It acts as a drug, creating what the experts call "the law of the decreasing or diminishing return," where, over time, more and more doses, more and more stimulation is needed to achieve ever-decreasing results. Pornography opens the door to the prince of darkness.

What is considered by many as just mere entertainment, a fun passing of time, it's nothing less than one of the most powerful satanic instruments for the degradation and the destruction of God's beautiful creation. Pornography reduces people to mere body parts, a few pixels of skin without any merit or worth, and as Christians, we must remember that human worth is defined by character and not the body, by what God deems us to be worth and not what we deem ourselves or others to be worth. We remain by the spirit and not by the flesh, and our constant prayer should be the prayer of the psalmist in Psalm chapter 51, verse 10, "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew in me a steadfast spirit."

Now, interestingly enough, the verb that's used in this text for "create," the Hebrew verb is the verb "bara." Now, that's a very technical, very specific verb in the Hebrew language. It's only used in the context of the Creator, of God. Humans cannot "bara." This designates an action of pulling things into existence, where God, He can create out of nothing. In Latin, they use the word "ex nihilo," creation out of nothing. God pulls things into existence. And so what the psalmist is saying is "Lord, pull into existence in me a clean heart, because I cannot do it, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Only God can do that, friends.

Tuesday's lesson, "Remember Your Leaders." Now, I like this date. It's an important date. The letter of Hebrews, it exhorts the church to honor and to obey the leaders of the congregation. This is what verse 7, Hebrews 13, verse 7, it says, "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct." And then, verse 17, ten verses later, it says, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable to you."

Now, this exhortation, it begins as an invitation, an invitation to remember the leaders of the past, those who had communicated the Word of God to the believing Hebrews, those to whom the letter was addressed. Now, many of these leaders already--were already asleep in the Lord, already awaited the promise. They had left behind a faithful legacy of a life following God, a legacy of faith to Him, and now they awaited the fulfillment of His certain promise to raise them up.

So some of these leaders were these that already rested in God. Some had been persecuted. Some had lost their homes, lost their possessions. Some had been martyred because of their faith. These first-century Hebrews to whom Paul is writing, they certainly knew this reality. They certainly knew what it meant to face persecution. It's what they were going through, but some of these leaders here, they pertain to a more distant past. Some of them listed in the chapter 11, the lists of the Hall of Fame, the Hall of Heroes of Faith.

Now, these heroes, they are part of the great cloud of witnesses that you'll find in chapter 12. "These are the ones that had not received the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us." But the remembrance of their faithfulness served as an encouragement and a challenge for the believers that now found themselves fighting the good fight that had already been overcome by these old heroes.

Friends, the communicated message here is that we shall all celebrate together the feast of the ages. The believer here is exhorted to honor their leaders, in this case, the elders, the bishops is what you'll find in the original Greek. But what is spoken of, regarding the leaders, clearly suggests that they, contrary to the false leaders, had not been negligent in their task, so that's what Paul is saying, "Obey them, honor them, respect them." They are described as shepherds that are the ones responsible for the well-being of the congregation that they serve.

Now, this is certainly applicable for today. The leaders here are described as sub-shepherds, sub-pastors, the servants of the great pastor and his representatives as they faithfully obey his charge of caring for the flock.

You know, perhaps the greatest privilege of a Christian leader is being considered a servant of the Most High. I know that I certainly take this charge seriously with a very big sense of awe that God would use someone like me and of unworthiness, but I do understand, you know, "Pastor Luccas, servant of the Lord," that chills me. That's something that never fails to humble me and still fills me with joy.

I remember the first time I was called "pastor." It was in Brazil, and I wasn't even a pastor yet. I was studying at the seminary, and we went to do an internship at a little church, and the brothers and sisters, they were calling me, "pastor," and I was like, "Whoa, me?" The reference here in this text is the leaders, and it reminds us of the essential virtues of leadership, such as integrity, truthfulness, patience, so many other things, and so the text is telling us to honor, to obey these leaders, not for the sake of their worthiness but for the sake that they are sub-shepherds of the great one, the great Shepherd, caring for the flock, loving the flock. That's what the good pastors do.

Wednesday, "Beware of Diverse and Strange Teachings." Now, the main text here is Hebrews 13, verse 9. It says, "Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them."

Now, this exhortation here is extremely profitable and valuable for today, where winds of new doctrines

appear here and there, and church members that have a weakness for any novel idea that aren't content with what has already been revealed, are always in search for the latest new light. They're almost always based on false teachings and baseless theories, and I might be a little bit harsh, but this is the reality, friends, because Jesus told us that the end would be marked with the presence of false prophets and their teachings, with the appearance of piety.

Ellen White spoke of the great reform and revival that will happen among God's people towards the end, however, the prophetic voice to the Adventists also warned against the counterfeits, the obstacles of this time, strange doctrines, twisted and absurd demands such as the ones of the Pharisees in Jesus's day with their traditions and outdated rituals.

There are--and you'll relate to this, you know, not that I'm saying that you're doing it, but you'll relate to this in the sense that you most likely know people like this, the mathematician Adventists, who seem to never learn and continue, even today, coming up with all sorts of bizarre and ridiculous calculations and theories, trying to determine the indeterminable date of Jesus's Second Coming, the day and hour that no one knows.

There are also the chronic fanatics--or fanatics. The chronic fanatic--that's a hard word. Where's the--"fa-na-tics" or "fan-atics"? "Fa-na-tics," okay, well, there's my Portuguese trying to come out. The pathological periphery of the church, scandalizing outside observers and strengthening the incorrect notion that we are a cult, these that usually bring no one to the feet of Christ.

If you want to know if someone is good in their theology, you know how you determine that? Determine if they're bringing people to Jesus's feet. Check and see. Usually, when people are talking too much, too many of these weird theories, they're not introducing Jesus to anyone. They just want to be right. Some time ago, one of these showed up in Brazil, claiming to be the Messiah. The police found him sometime later, robbing a car, and then, when they questioned him about his incoherent claim of identity, he responded, "Well, the Bible does say that Jesus would come as a thief." Comical if not tragic.

Now, unfortunately, in the church, we find an enormous amount of representatives of fanaticism condemned in the Bible. Ellen White went as far to say, as saying, that these teachings only made it that much harder for the world to see the truth in the church, but despite all of this, as the lesson puts it, "In Hebrews, 'grace' comes from the throne of God. This grace, mediated through Christ, is an 'anchor,' 'sure and steadfast,' that is fastened to God's throne itself. It is this grace, that we receive through the sacrifice of Christ, which provides stability and assurance to our hearts. When the heart has been 'established' in this way, it will not be 'carried about' by new doctrines, nor will it 'drift away.'"

And, finally, the last day of this week's lesson, in my opinion, the most beautiful of the days this week and, honestly, the best way to end this quarter's lesson, "Go to Jesus Outside the Camp." Hebrews 13:12, tells us that Jesus suffered outside the camp. Now, friends, "Jesus Outside the Camp," again, is the best way, a beautiful way to finish this lesson. He is a priest, and that's what we learn through Hebrews.

Jesus is a priest, however, a priest that is not connected to Aaron's lineage--the priest-King, an outsider. He is a High Priest better than the Levitical priesthood. He is from the order of Melchizedek. He is the great High Priest, and, yet an outsider. He was born in a stable, for there was no place for Him in the inn, Emmanuel, "God with us," an outsider. He had no fixed home as He was an itinerant teacher, entering only when invited. The architect of the world, an outsider. He died outside the limits of the city, indicating the universal nature of His sacrifice, just as His priesthood extended to all, an outsider. He suffered on the cross, outside of Jerusalem, also indicating the shame that was cast upon Him, outside the camp, as someone impure, someone contaminated, an outsider.

Here in Hebrews, believers are encouraged to follow Jesus outside the camp and follow Him even in His shame. And sure enough, Paul himself cries this out, proclaims this truth in bold words in Romans chapter 1, verse 16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for the salvation of anyone that believes."

Now, curiously, Paul also suggests that now the presence of Christ is outside the camp. His sacrifice represents the path to shame and to suffering at least here on this side of eternity, but it also represents the path of God's glory, the straight and narrow path. And so, just as Jesus was technically disqualified, according to the Jewish traditions and laws and rules, the cross also apparently disqualified Him from being our Redeemer. At least that's how Paul initially sees this. That's how he initially understood the whole matter.

A crucified Messiah was a contradiction of terms, an oxymoron, a stumbling block, an impossibility. As a specialist of the Old Testament, he knew the text of Deuteronomy chapter 21, verse 23, that said, "He who is hanged on the tree is accursed of God." It was only later that Paul understood that the Messiah had to be hung on the tree. 2 Corinthians 5:21, my favorite verse in the Bible, "For He made Him, who knew no sin, to be made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

From then on, the apostle did nothing but glory himself on the cross of Christ. Galatians 6:14, "But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Friends, every major religion in the world is represented by a visual element of its history. Buddhism has the lotus flower. Judaism has David's star, the hexagram with overlaid triangles. Islam has the crescent star. Marxism has the scythe and the hammer. Nazism has the swastika, an appropriated symbol of the Aryan race. Christianity could have illustrated its history and did in some occasions, in some places, in many ways: a fish, an ark, a lion, a shepherd, a manger, a carpenter's woodwork, a boat, a stone removed from the grave, a dove, a sheaf of wheat.

And, again, these were used in many occasions, but there is no other symbol, no other sign in history that best describes the Christians and who they are: a simple cross. The Christians, despite the mockery of the pagans, chose the cross so the world could know who they were. The central symbol of the Christian faith is a cross, a cross that was created to instigate horror, shame, and pain, invented by the Phoenicians in the periphery of the Roman Empire as an instrument of torture. It was adopted due to its capacity of prolonging pain, the cross that was reserved for the worst of the worst. A Roman citizen could not be crucified, however, Christians, in spite of the mockery, in spite of the ridicule, in spite of everything else, they held onto the cross, the cross of Christ.

You know, friends, Jesus preached from pulpits, boats, hillsides, beaches, the atrium of the temple, mountains, synagogues. He preached during trips, but Jesus's greatest sermon was preached from the cross, where great metal spikes immobilized Him to the wood, and, yet His message was never clearer, never louder or more beautiful.

Friends, in eternity to come, there will only be two signs, two things that remind us of sin, physical things, the marks of the nails on Jesus's hands and feet, that also remind us of two things, how evil and bad sin is and how good, how loving, how merciful God is. May that forever be in your heart and in your mind throughout eternity, only two things, how bad sin is and how good God is. May He bless you in your growth as a Christian, in your journey as a Christian, a follower of Jesus. May these marks always be represented in your life, and may you be a demonstration of how good God is. May He bless you. May He guide you.

Please don't forget to study your lesson. We're starting a very good lesson starting next week already with Pastor Alden. He'll be leading us on that.

Also, please don't forget to take advantage of this free offer, "Tiny Troublemaker." This is for anyone who wants to read this and learn more about this topic can call 866-788-3966, ask for Offer Number 196. If you're in the United States of America or in the Continental North America, you can text "SH133" to the number 40544, or if you're outside of North America, you can go to study.aftv.org/SH133, and you can get a digital download of this material. I'd like to pray with you right now as we finish.

Dear Lord, I thank You so much for being who You are. Thank You for the revelation of Your Son in the

Bible, for everything that we have about who He is and what He has done and what He is doing for us in the heavenly sanctuary. Lord, we want to be a demonstration of how good You are. We want to let brotherly and sisterly love continue in our church, not only here at the Granite Bay Hilltop Church but, Father, in the church around the world that we may all be demonstrations of Your beauty, of Your kindness, of Your forgiveness.

Allow us to understand, Lord, that belief truly only becomes faith at the point of action, and that, at the end, the reality, the truth, the question will be not primarily, "Did I believe?" but "Did what I believe in change me into having or create in me a servant's heart or having a servant's heart?"

Please bless this church, Lord, the worldwide church. Allow us to be a manifestation of Your kindness to those around us, ministering to them in their times of need. This world is broken, Father. Allow us to be healing cure to those going through suffering and pain. I ask you for these things, and I pray in the name of Jesus, amen and amen. God bless you.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the key word on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen, and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want, and most important, to share it with others.

Bill: I went to church as a child, I think, more out of because that's what you did. So I became an altar boy because it looked cool. It was very ritualistic, which was fascinating to me. There was a pattern and a process to it, and you got to be out in front of all those people and just do something. After that, we moved away. I never really went to church again as I became a teenager. Drifted away from church. Never believed in God. Never thought about God.

Got through high school. Did pretty good but, again, hanging out with the wrong people, doing things I shouldn't have been doing. Just involved in doing drugs, doing recreational drugs, sometimes more than recreational drugs, and from that, I knew I needed some discipline in my life, and I joined the U.S. Navy, and I thought that would change my life, and in some ways, it did, but I still had that big hole. I was still looking to fill it. I now have direction, and I have discipline in my life.

I learned a trade, but I never found God. It's just the circumstances never led me to God. I got married while I was in the Navy. I married a naval officer. We married, and we had a son together. We didn't go to church. God was not a part of our lives and it reflected in our lives, and it ended up in a failed marriage for a lot of reasons. Got in a second failed marriage. We didn't have God in that marriage and then met my current wife. From a career perspective, I was doing what I loved. I had found this job, it was great, I loved what I did. I felt I was good at it, and that filled part of the hole, but there was still a big hole in there that was empty, and I didn't understand why it was empty. I just knew there was an emptiness inside of me.

Package showed up one day, and I opened it, and it was a bunch of DVDs and a Bible study guide, and it was Doug Batchelor. And we had nothing else to do, so we started watching the DVDs, and I was absolutely engrossed in it. It was fascinating to me. I was hearing things I had never heard, and I learned more in that two or three weeks it took us to do those than I had in my whole life, and it was amazing. Nobody talked about prophecy. Nobody talked about revelation. Nobody really talked about the Sabbath, and so it was fascinating to me, and as I learned more, I wanted to know more.

The Amazing Facts website was phenomenal. I was able to go through that. I could find studies on the Sabbath. I could find studies on prophecy, and taking this journey hand in hand and going through it together, it was amazing for us in what it did for our marriage and for our life. And then, the next thing I know, I'm getting baptized. Then I became the Sabbath School leader for that class, and continue to teach through this day. I'm able to take that information, the resources, the links, and provide that to others and start multiplying that effort out. Without Amazing Facts, I don't think I would've gotten to this

point. My name is Bill. Thank you for changing my life.

Gary: Early 1980s, all the Baby Boomers were turning 21, and the nightclub scenes were exploding, and I started a entertainment lighting company.

Female: I was the president, and there were six divisions, doing the raves in the '80s and '90s, you know, in some warehouse where you're setting up lighting and fog and, you know, who knows what's going on in there, and nightclub installations. I loved it, and it was who I was.

Gary: Bought a new house out of town, and we moved about two or three times, but we were always going into different churches. We were in a Lutheran Church, and then we were in a Methodist Church. I think we were in three different Baptist churches. My wife was raised Catholic. I was raised Methodist. Currently, I've been up, reading all the Hal Lindsey books and watching all the "Left Behind" movies, and so I really wanted to understand what the book of Revelation was all about, but nothing really ever made sense to me.

Female: One day, Pastor Lloyd Logan came knocking, and he had that Net '99 flyer.

Lloyd Logan: We were preparing for an evangelistic series, and different people were going different directions with handbills to invite people to the meetings.

Female: I saw that coming at me, you know, all the colors, and I thought, "Oh, no, this is some kind of cult thing."

Lloyd: And she said, "Thank you very much, but I'm not much interested myself, but my husband likes that kind of thing." F

Female: And Lloyd said, "Would you give it to him, please?" And I said, "Okay, I will." So I took the pamphlet, and I put it on the calendar. Gary came home, and he walked by it.

Gary: Ran to the kitchen to quickly eat and take a shower and go back out and work a show.

Female: Two, three days went by like this, and I had moved that brochure from the calendar, put it on the dining room table, put it back on the counter, and I actually threw it in the garbage. As I threw it in that garbage can, I could hear him and see his face saying, "Would you give it to him, please?" And I actually took the garbage out. And that night, lying in bed, I kept seeing his face and hearing his voice, and thinking, "Oh, boy, I got to get that brochure out of the garbage." And I took that, and I put it right underneath the remote control. Bright colors. He'll see it.

Gary: I finally sat down in my living room, and I picked up the remote, and I saw that angel holding out that scroll.

Female: "Whoa, cool. What is this?" And I was in the kitchen cooking, and I thought, "Oh, no."

Gary: And I looked at it, and I turned it over, and then I saw a little building, a little church building, and it wasn't too far away. It was about six houses down, and it said, "Friday night."

Female: And I certainly wasn't going. I mean, it wasn't my intention to go.

Gary: I didn't have any shows going on that night, and so I thought it was a one-night deal. I went, and as I heard about the millennium man, I was just blown away, I didn't want it to end. I knew what I was hearing was all from the scripture, and it wasn't based on Hollywood movies or other books that were written. They said, "Come again tomorrow night," and I thought, "Wow, great, two nights." So I tried to tell my wife about it, and she still wasn't interested, and then she decided to come.

Female: I started to hear the truth, you know, and I started to get fed.

Gary: Every night, after the seminar, they would hand us an Amazing Facts study guide. I couldn't do those fast enough.

Female: The business kept us going seven days a week, and it was night and day.

Gary: Crews working all around the clock, and so, when we finally heard the Sabbath message, you know, so far, everything's been true, right from the Bible.

Female: Church on Saturday, no work. Anyway, it all clicked.

Gary: Both our heads turned at each other. Our jaws dropped open.

Female: I said, "We can't do that."

Gary: And the first thing that came out of my mouth was "We have to."

Female: I knew that it would be a sacrifice, and I was in fear about it.

Gary: We didn't know how we were going to do it, but we talked to the pastor about it, and the pastor said, "Well, just pray about it, and God will open doors."

Female: I didn't want to give up all the connections I had made, all the networking, all the money, all the investment.

Gary: We went to the board and ask them if they would consider closing on Saturday, and they agreed to, so we closed the storefront on Saturday, but we were still doing productions, and that kind of bothered us, so a couple months later, God opened the door for my wife. She exited the company. I prayed about it, and God opened the door for me too.

Female: Gary, shortly after, was offered a job being paid more money than he made as an owner of the company.

Gary: He said, "I'll give you a thousand-dollar raise, and you will never work another weekend."

Female: And we were able to keep the Sabbath and enjoy the wonderful blessings that God had for us on the Sabbath day.

Gary: My kids never again had to say, "Quit talking about work." After the seminar was over, my wife and I, and my children were all baptized into the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Even if I gave up everything, I knew that God would have something better.

Female: I have much more understanding, and there's much more depth in my Christian walk with the Lord.

Gary: We started an Amazing Facts Bible School at a church that allows anybody to understand the scriptures and to understand the end times. Church changed my life dramatically, and I'm very happy and excited to be a part of it.