

Making much of Jesus

present-day lessons from the letter to the Hebrews

Although written to Jews who had trusted in Jesus, and although drawing regularly on Old Testament references, the letter to the Hebrews has a very pressing contemporary significance.

This series of studies is intended to stir in our hearts both a deepening delight and a growing confidence in all that Jesus is and has done, imparting to us the fortitude and strength we need to serve Him faithfully in today's world.

You can find the background to this short series [here](#).

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15. Love in action (Heb.13.1-25)

[w/b Sunday 8th December 2019]

“.. offer to God a sacrifice of praise ..”

This final study sees the writer exhorting his beleaguered people to live lives characterized by love. Facing pressure (which the recipients of the letter were) it can be easy to focus on ourselves and to forget others. (Note, in that regard, how often in this chapter the writer says ‘Remember’ or ‘Do not forget’).

The previous chapters have addressed the themes of faith (chapter 11) and hope (chapter 12): this chapter now completes and culminates the writer’s very practical and very thorough application of the truths expounded earlier.

[Before attending your Community Group try to consider all 7 questions - even though your Group may not have time for them all. Key questions in this study are probably 2, 4 and 6. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]

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1. **Read Hebrews 13.1-25.** The chapter is something of a ‘liquorice allsorts’ of urgent exhortations! Together they point to the various different ways in which our love will find expression.

If as a pastor you had just five minutes to give your people some final exhortations, what would you want to impress on their minds and hearts?

What parts of this chapter do you find difficult, either to understand or to apply (or both)?

2. Read Hebrews 12.28-13.3. This chapter needs to be seen in the context of the closing exhortation of chapter 12: this is what worshipping God thankfully will look like.

What might it involve for you in your own situation, and for us as a fellowship, to 'show hospitality to strangers'?

If you were in prison (in the context, probably unfairly) what would you most value from your fellow believers?

3. Read Hebrews 13.4-6. Promiscuity and materialism were as much of an issue back at the time the letter was written as they are to this day: love puts the lid on self-indulgence and greed.

What motivations does the writer give for the purity and contentment which he advocates?

What has helped you learn contentment in your life?

4. Read Hebrews 13.7-8. The example of others, particularly those who have been instrumental in our coming to faith, can be an on-going inspiration to our living in love.

Who are the people whose testimonies and lives continue to be a source of inspiration and strength to you?

What was it about them which has helped you?

In what ways do you think you can be providing that sort of lead for the next generation(s)?

5. Read Hebrews 13.9-16. While the spiritual vibrancy of some can be a help, there are others whose teaching (whether formal or informal) effectively throttles the life of love.

What is the main contrast which the writer is drawing in these verses?

How might the exhortation of vv.15 & 16 find expression in your life - not least over the next few weeks, for instance?

6. Read Hebrews 13.17-19. As the writer concludes this call to live in love, he highlights the important role which leaders play in promoting such living.

How would you describe the challenging responsibility with which leaders in Christ's church have been entrusted?

What might the teaching of these verses mean for you? Are there attitudes which need to change? Is there action you need to take?

7. Read Hebrews 13.20-25. The letter (and this present series of studies!) ends, very fittingly, with a heartening prayer and warm greetings.

V.25 is both a greeting and a prayer: in what ways is the fuller prayer of vv.20-21 steeped in 'grace'?

The prayer of vv.20-21 is in some ways a summary of all that the writer has been teaching in this letter: how would you summarise the teaching of the letter to the Hebrews?