

Hebrews 13 “Gospel-inspired instructions for a church under trials”

Intro: The body of Christ has often faced times of increased persecution and sufferings- and, while God’s commands remain the same- yet, certain seasons of trials bring into further focus the things necessary and helpful to persevere while keeping an eye on the gospel.

- 1) V1. The church is directed to the love of the fellowship. While we are commanded to love everyone including our enemies- in trials, the love of the fellowship is a steady and constant source of comfort, nourishment, and help. God has a universal common grace love for mankind but a special electing and saving grace for the church; likewise, we should prefer one another.
- 2) V2. The church is directed to entertain strangers. While our love should not play favorites and thus extended to all- in trials, the displacement and turmoil that may affect the body requires open arms and resources to those we do not know but are members of the universal church. Because we were also strangers, we should readily identify with them and receive them as God has received us in Christ.
- 3) V3. The church is directed to identify with and help prisoners. While our compassion should drive us to relief all who are mistreated, those bound for the sake of the gospel need immediate priority and relief. Because we were all bound to sin, death, and Satan, we ought to be moved with compassion for those in prison as God has come to our deliverance in Christ.
- 4) V4. The church is directed to marital fidelity and conjugal obligations. This command may not relate directly to a time of trials, but remains a constant need of the church to keep families strong and not provide further cause of offense to the larger family of Christ under attack. Service and fidelity in the marriage covenant is a great type of the Lord’s service and fidelity to us as His bride.
- 5) V5-6. The church is directed to trust the Lord for their daily needs. While, it is wise to save and have good stewardship of resources- in trials we may suffer the loss of goods and we are not to despair, but rather trust the Lord for provision. As those who were naked and poor spiritually and have trusted God through Christ for spiritual needs, we should also trust God for our daily bread and provision.
- 6) V7-8. The church is directed to submit to elders who govern well through the word of God. While we should submit to all authorities, the word of God delivered from the mouth of God’s appointed elders provides sustaining food, comfort, and guidance for His people. V 17. Elders are not infallible or perfect but insofar as they are faithful to the word and obedient to Christ, they are worthy to be honored and obeyed as from God. The God who saves us by the authority of Christ has endowed the ministry/ministers of the word with the power of the gospel to save.