

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

I praise you today for sending your precious Son to die for my sins. He suffered “outside the gate in order to sanctify me through his own blood,” and I gladly choose to join him outside the camp and bear the reproach which he so patiently endured (Heb 13:12–13). All praise and honor and glory to my suffering Savior!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the last part of Hebrews, an anonymous letter to the Christian community in Rome. Having shown that Christ and his covenant are superior to the Mosaic covenant and its priesthood, the author urged his readers to draw near to you and hold fast to their faith. How tragic it would be if they threw away their confidence in Christ after suffering persecution and loss for his sake! This teaches me the importance of endurance, for it is only when I have done your will *to the very end* that I will receive what has been promised (Heb 10:36). The author followed this admonition with a warning from Habakkuk: “My righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him” (Heb 10:38; Hab 2:4). This teaches me that you are only pleased with those who *live* by faith. Saving faith is the *attitude of a lifetime*, not merely the act of a moment. My life must be characterized by a present, living faith. If it is not, I will be counted among those who shrink back and are destroyed (Heb 10:39). “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the people of old received their commendation” (Heb 11:1–2). What a stirring statement of what it means to live by faith! Living by faith means living as though things which haven’t happened yet will surely come to pass. It means living as though things which cannot be seen are really there. Faith is *not* imagining what I want to happen and then convincing myself that it will. Instead, faith is believing what you have said, obeying what you have commanded, and trusting in what you have promised. In a world of confusion, uncertainty and doubt, you can recognize the righteous because they *live by faith*! The many OT Christians mentioned in Hebrews 11 testify that it’s possible to live this way. Many of them lived far longer than I will, yet they endured to the end and died in faith. Because of their faith, you testified that they had your approval, and even though they did not receive what was promised, they went to their graves convinced that what you had said was true. I stand here today surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, all of whom testify to me that it’s possible to endure to the end by faith. My task is to lay aside anything that would slow me down, to reject any sin which would entangle me, and to run with endurance the race set before me. I must keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, the founder and perfecter of my faith. His example of obedience and steadfast endurance will keep me from growing weary or fainthearted. His training and patient discipline will refine my character and produce in me the peaceful fruit of righteousness. *But only if I persevere!* I must “strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord” (Heb 12:14). I must not be like Esau, who squandered a precious birthright for a single bowl of soup! For I have not come to the mountain of Moses, but to Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to his sprinkled blood. I should be grateful that I am receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and I should offer well-pleasing service to you, in reverence and awe, for you are a consuming fire! Hallelujah!

Reflection

In Hebrews 13, the author described the kind of service which is pleasing to you. It is a service of brotherly love and hospitality to strangers. It is a service of remembering those in prison and empathizing with those who are mistreated. It is a service of honoring marriage and abstaining from immorality. It is a service of contentment and trust in the One who will never forsake me. It is a service of obeying my spiritual leaders and submitting to their authority. In light of these commands, am I offering well-pleasing service to you?

Request

Father, I ask that you would equip me with everything good so that I may do your will. Work in me that which is pleasing in your sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever! (Heb 13:21).

Thanksgiving

Thank you for the assurance that comes from knowing that Jesus is the same yesterday and today and forever! How wonderful to follow the great shepherd of the sheep! Praise the Lord!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[The Old Rugged Cross](#)” – George Bennard.

Meditation Verse: Hebrews 13:16.