

HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

XXIII. Our Moral Duties In Our Lord's Church

(Hebrews 13:1-6)

I. Introduction

- A. We live in an era of great need for an encouraging word amid man's discouraging spiritual failure, so a word from God on the infinite supremacy and sufficiency of His Son Jesus Christ is both desirable and fitting.
- B. The Epistle of Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 13:1-6 presents our moral duties in our Lord's Church. We view the passage for our insight and edification (as follows):

II. Our Moral Duties In Our Lord's Church, Hebrews 13:1-6.

- A. In our Lord's Church, we are morally bound to uphold brotherly love, Hebrews 13:1:
 - 1. The author's command involves letting brotherly love "continue unchanged; be permanent," the command being in the present imperative (*meneto*) of *meno*, "remain, abide," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 776; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 263).
 - 2. Brotherly love is the foundation of our Christian witness before the world according to Christ in John 13:35, and this love is sustained by the believer's dependence on the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:16, 22-23.
- B. In our Lord's Church, we are morally bound to show hospitality to God's traveling messengers, Hebrews 13:2:
 - 1. The word "strangers" in the Early Church referred to traveling evangelists and teachers who relied on the support of local churches where they would minister. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, ftn. to 3 John 5)
 - 2. This was "the more difficult and therefore the more praiseworthy form of hospitality" (Ibid.), but it was the believers' duty to support these people in order to promote Christ's Matthew 28:19-20 Great Commission.
 - 3. Today's missionaries would fit this description of "strangers," so we are morally bound by the Lord to support them by prayer, hospitality and financial support. (3 John 5-7)
- C. In our Lord's Church, we are morally bound to minister to persecuted believers, Hebrews 13:3:
 - 1. Imprisoned and mistreated believers were those who suffered for the Christian faith, so they were actually part of the local body although they were often unable to attend its meetings, cf. Hebrews 10:32-34.
 - 2. We believers in the local body are thus morally responsible before the Lord to minister to alleviate what sufferings these believers face as if they were actually attending the local body, Hebrews 13:3.
- D. In our Lord's Church, we are morally bound to uphold Biblical sexuality in the Church, Hebrews 13:4.
 - 1. Marital bonds should be honored by all believers, and the marriage bed, a reference to sexual activity in marriage, should be viewed as undefiled, so we must honor sex in Biblical marital unions in the Church.
 - 2. The reason behind this rule is that God will judge the adulterer who commits immorality while he is wed and the sexually immoral who commits immorality while he is unwed, so every effort must be made to keep the believer's indulging in sexual activity strictly within Biblically honored marital bounds.
- E. In our Lord's Church, we are morally bound to handle material possessions righteously, Hebrews 13:5-6:
 - 1. The Greek noun *tropos*, "way of life, conduct" (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 835) indicates we believers must keep our way of life free of the love of money, be it in attitude or in action, Hebrews 13:5a. We need money to function in this world, but we must not *love* it as a way of life.
 - 2. The right contrast to loving money is being content with what we have (Hebrews 13:5b), and 1 Timothy 6:8 clarifies this right amount as consisting of (a) *diatrophe*, "the means of subsistence" (Ibid., p. 189) and (b) *skepasma*, "a cover" and hence "clothing" or "a house," Ibid., p. 761. We need to build a big enough nest egg to provide for our future needs (retirement, etc.), but aiming to be rich as an end in itself is wrong.
 - 3. God's help in acquiring this correct attitude is His instruction that He will never leave us nor forsake us to financial destitution, that we can thus claim that God is our Helper so that we will not fear what even wicked, abusive man might do to make life financially difficult for us, Hebrews 13:5c-6.

Lesson: *We believers in Christ in our Lord's Church are morally bound to continue to uphold brotherly love, to show hospitality and provide prayer and financial support for God's traveling messengers, to minister to persecuted believers, to uphold Biblical sexuality and to handle material possessions righteously.*

Application: *(1) May we view as our moral obligation in the Church our need to uphold brotherly love, to show hospitality and support for God's traveling messengers, to minister to persecuted believers, to uphold Biblical sexuality and to handle material possessions righteously. (2) May we rely on the indwelling Holy Spirit of God for the power to perform these duties (Galatians 5:16, 22-23).*