

## 36—Hebrews 13:4-6—Living as the Family of God—Part 2

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### I. Introduction

- A. Monday night, the Tennessee Vols baseball team won the College World Series. They played some great teams in Omaha, Nebraska. They had a team that was more talented in 2022 but they didn't even make it out of the regionals. Why was that?
  - 1. For one, baseball is uniquely hard. In football, barring injury your QB will be playing four quarters of every game. In baseball, your best pitcher cannot pitch every inning nor game. His arm will not allow it. Hitting a baseball and shooting a basketball takes skill but getting in a slump is very easy. The same is true of kicking extra points and field goals in football. The best of them can miss it when they've done it thousands of times.
  - 2. The 2024 baseball team was less talented but they were a better team. They have players who sacrificed their normal role to do what was necessary for the team. They weren't selfish. Talented players can carry a team a long way but a talented team can win championships.
- B. So, what does that have to do with our text today? I believe we are still talking about continuing brotherly love and living as the family of God but we are talking about how it relates to marriage and the marriage bed and money and contentment.
  - 1. In sports, your teammates can do all the right things on the field and in practice but that's not enough.
  - 2. If those talented players like to party or get into trouble outside of practice and games, then it won't be long before they find themselves in trouble with the law. Do you know how hard it is to replace your starting LB while he's in jail or suspended? His selfish actions have harmed the team.
  - 3. Here's my point. The things we do outside of the gathering matter to God and the church. You are continuing brotherly love when you treat your marriage as you should. You represent the Lord and us in this community. You can do that well or poorly. To do that poorly is to not continue in brotherly love.
  - 4. It's not the end of the world when you do but you must repent. You must want what's good and right for the church and most importantly what God says is good.
  - 5. We uniquely harm the name of Christ and his church when we do not continue in brotherly love on and off the field.

### II. Main Point

- A. The main point remains the same—If we are in a relationship with God through faith in Christ and are guaranteed the promises of the new covenant then we should continue in brotherly love in marriage and with money.

### III. Outline

- A. Why is marriage so important to God?
- B. Does God Care how we spend Money?
- C. Is Jesus Enough?

### IV. Exposition

- A. As we continue to unpack what it means to love like the family of God, we find ourselves encountered by a couple of topics that have effected everyone of us in some really difficult ways. None of us—directly and indirectly—have escaped the sins associated with marriage, sex, money and contentment. These topics are in some ways very easy to talk about because they are so obvious. The challenge is to speak clearly about them while not talking about them in a way that is disrespectful. But we must hear what God expects of us and how we ought to regard marriage and intimacy as God's family.
  - 1. Verse 4 speaks to us about marriage and the marriage bed. The seriousness of how we are to think about these things shows up in the last part of that verse—because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.
    - a) Our discussion about these things involves something we need to be reminded of once again.
      - (1) So many things about marriage and intimacy and fornication and adultery have this tug of war going on inside of us. We have feelings and emotions. Indeed, God made us this way.

But you all know that you cannot simply decide something is right or wrong merely by the way you feel.

- (2) God created us with desire but those desires must be regulated by God's truth. I'm sure to some degree you are like me—my feelings are fickle and ever changing. I cannot let feelings determine what is right and good. Only God can do that.
- (3) In the beginning, God created the world and everything in it was good. It was as it was supposed to be. But he didn't create robots that are programmed. He created human being in his likeness.
- (4) One of the creation mandates was "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth."
  - (a) This is a command and a blessing.
  - (b) When God created the world, he designed it to work a particular way.
  - (c) To fill the earth with children involves intimacy. We were designed for this but it is only right and good in the context of marriage.
    - i) That's why in the beginning, God states in Genesis 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.
    - ii) After the fall, there is a new enmity between the husband and wife and the blessing of filling the earth with image bearers will now be painful.
  - (d) God cares very much about marriage and how intimacy happens.
  - (e) We all know that within almost everything we deal with each day, there is good and evil in it.
    - i) The marriage bed can be defiled or it can be good.
    - ii) To say the internet is completely evil is not true. But nor is it completely good. It must be used appropriately. I use it everyday but if it uses me then I have done evil.
    - iii) This word used in verse 4 describing sexual immorality is the word we get our English word, porn from.
    - iv) Porn is evil. It is not good for us.
      - (1) Maybe I need to pause here and state this very clearly. God commands us to do or not do certain things because he loves us.
      - (2) Do I need to unpack how painful broken marriages are because of sexual immorality?
      - (3) Shall I describe to you how adultery has wrecked the lives of countless people and the most harmed are usually the children.
      - (4) The sentiment that if it feels good do it cannot in the slightest make any logical sense when you are ripping a family apart. Seriously, does that feel good? Have you watched the pain and have been apart of the chaos, you know it doesn't feel good.
      - (5) God loves you and those kids by telling us to let marriage be held in honor among all.
2. So, lets hear what God is saying to the church family about marriage.
  - a) He exhorts us to hold marriage in honor among all. The emphasis is on honor.
    - (1) Honor is a unique word that normally gets used in the Bible as precious or rare.
      - (a) It is usually describing a stone—that of a precious gem.
      - (b) The word is used to describe the souls of men in Proverbs 6:26.
  - b) So, what would it look like if you found a rare diamond? How would you treat it?
    - (1) You would guard it with your life.
    - (2) You would think of it as very valuable.
      - (a) The more rare a gem is the more it is worth, right?
    - (3) You would enjoy it, too!
      - (a) Whatever you hold as honorable and valuable you also enjoy the most.
  - c) God's design for the world was for a man and woman to join together in marriage for their good.
    - (1) It says in Ephesians that marriage puts on display the relationship between Christ and the Church.

- (a) Do you want one way to show the world who Jesus is and what his relationship with his people is like? Let marriage be held in honor among all.
- (b) The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.
- (c) The husband is to be the head of the marriage like Christ is of the church.
- (d) The wife is to submit to her husband, gladly. If the husband is loving his wife like he should, then this is her greatest joy to be led in righteousness.
  - i) Obviously, if the husband leads in unrighteousness the wife is to refuse all the while wanting her husband to lead them in that which is right and good.
- (2) My initial question was—why is marriage so important to God?
  - (a) Well, because it does what Ephesians 5 says—it makes this profound mystery of the gospel known.
  - (b) The church is to submit to Christ. He will NEVER lead her in unrighteousness.
    - i) How are we led by Christ? It can only mean by objective truth from the Scriptures, not our feelings. That's not to say we should have no feelings. Indeed, we worship the Lord in spirit and in truth.
    - ii) Our glad submission to Christ like in marriage is to be held in honor.
      - (1) You will guard it with your life.
      - (2) You will see it as supremely valuable.
      - (3) And you will enjoy this relationship with Christ!
  - (c) I've shared this before but it's worth mentioning again. While in Nicaragua, I was sharing the gospel with a man and he admitted to only loving God sometimes.
    - i) Now the culture in Nicaragua expects the men to be promiscuous. It's like you are not a man if you remain faithful to your wife.
      - (1) However the wife was to remain faithful even while the husband was not.
    - ii) I think this man thought the same thing about the Lord. I asked him if he was married and he said yes. I asked him if it was okay for his wife to love him sometimes and love someone else sometimes. He said no. I then asked if he thought that God was okay with him loving something else more than him? He said I guess not.
- (3) Our relationship with the Lord is like a marriage. We are to be fully committed to him as long as we live.
  - (a) Indeed the book of Hebrews has stressed that over and over again. Keep trusting and loving the Lord to the end.
  - (b) This is what is good for you.
  - (c) Indeed, that's what God will judge. That's what God has always judged. If you go after other things and other gods and commit spiritual adultery with him then you will be judged for that.
    - i) If you have a relationship with God through repentance and faith in Christ and you have failed in sexual immorality—porn, fornication, lust, adultery or any other form that is contrary to God's good design for you then you must repent.
    - ii) There is hope. You can draw buckets of forgiveness from the well of God's mercy in Christ through repentance.
    - iii) They were not the unforgivable sins. However, you cannot go on living in them as though there's nothing wrong with them. You have walked away from God's gracious and merciful salvation he freely offered to you that cost him the death of his only Son.
      - (1) Let me say it like this—if your spouse commits adultery with another person, will your relationship survive? Maybe it does if you seek forgiveness. I've seen it happen several times. But if you think there's nothing wrong with defiling your marriage bed with another person and you continue in it, that relationship is over.
- 3. A brief word about the sexual immorality of the world.
  - a) I think it's very easy to talk about what's wrong with the world. Sexual immorality has increased drastically in my own lifetime.

- (1) I believe in a very clear and historical ethic when it comes to sexual immorality. I expect our church to believe what God has said to be right and good and what is wrong and evil. God doesn't change and his truth about this hasn't changed.
- (2) With that said, I expect the unbelieving world to act like who they are. They are lost just like I was and you were.

(a) Paul says 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 <sup>9</sup> Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

(b) What we needed and they need is the gospel. Only the work of the good news can change them. Laws in this country cannot change them and even if they would they are still lost without the gospel.

- i) I don't want to imply that we should not seek to pass laws that are morally right. Laws teach and they have consequences.
- ii) However, that will not save them from the judgment of God.

(c) We must be a people who love those who do not believe and seek to make Christ know to them.

b) The focus of this text is pointed squarely at the church. Brothers and sisters, these things should not be happening among those who are in God's family and the numbers really aren't that much different than the world.

(1) If so, we need for them to repent. We need to help them walk in the good ways of the Lord.

(2) I suppose we often talk about these things as evil and rightfully so. But they are not how we were meant to live. God created the world good and Christ's salvation has come that we might be a new creation. A redeemed people. A people who image Christ.

(3) If you have committed or are now committing fornication (sex outside of marriage) or adultery, you must repent. If you do not, you have walked away from the faith.

(a) For the new covenant people, this is not limited to merely a physical act. We know very well how Jesus instructs those who have his law written on our hearts.

- i) Matthew 5:27-28 <sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
- ii) Marriage is to be held in honor among us all.
- iii) The marriage bed is to be undefiled.
- iv) This is continuing in brotherly love.
- v) This is living as the family of God who redeemed us out of slavery to sin for us to walk freely in his good, good ways.

B. We now turn our attention to how we are to continue in brotherly love in how we understand money and contentment. These are part of how we continue in brotherly love.

1. Like the previous two, money and contentment are connected. Both are a battle that all of us face.

We must admit that we haven't always done this well and it's also a thing for which we must continue to be aware of and seek to continue in how we ought to live as the family of God.

a) The Scriptures exhort us here in verse 5 to keep our lives free from the love of money.

(1) There are things in this world that we must have to survive and money is one of them.

- (a) If I have an addiction to drugs or alcohol, that's different. I do not need them to survive.
- (b) Money is similar to food. You can't distance yourself from food like you could from the bar.

(2) We need resources to provide food and clothing for ourselves and our family.

(3) And God provides the resources through labor to accomplish that.

b) So how do we use money to purchase what we need but not find ourselves loving it?

(1) First, we must realize that we all love things differently.

- (a) To differing degrees we say we love God and we love pizza but I hope we mean something very different.
  - (b) However, you cannot have two ultimate loves. That's impossible. There's only one center and we were created to love God ultimately.
  - (c) Jesus says Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.
    - i) In this context, money can be described as that which we have confidence in.
    - ii) Money is pictured here as a slave-owner. We are called to be free from loving it.
    - iii) Our confidence and love should ultimately rest in Christ alone.
    - iv) Don't make the mistake that you can have both as the treasure of your heart. It doesn't work like that.
- 2. The opposite of loving and trusting in money is to be content with what you have.
  - a) Contentment means to have enough.
    - (1) I noticed the parallel word for contentment in the OT describes this idea of enough or as having reached or found what I was looking for.
      - (a) We should have found Christ to be sufficient for us. God made our hearts to desire but our hearts will never be satisfied until they are satisfied with Christ.
    - (2) Fighting to not love money was a serious and persistent topic for Paul when he was instructing young Timothy on what to teach in the pastoral epistles.
      - (a) Paul said this in 1 Timothy 6:6-10 <sup>6</sup> But godliness with contentment is great gain, <sup>7</sup> for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. <sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.
- C. This ending is perfect! If this reality is true and it has certainly been my experience that Jesus is enough. Money cannot do this. It promises to do so but it always fails.
  - 1. In the context of love of money and contentment, we hear there at the end of verse 5 the reason why we should be content—Hebrews 13:5 for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
    - a) When your kids go out to eat or go on vacation with you, does money even cross their mind?
      - (1) Why, no! Their parents are there! They have no concerns!
      - (2) Not in a take-advantage-kind-of-way but I want that kind of trust and love and awareness that God is with me and if he provides then he provides. If he doesn't then I need to trust that he knows best.
  - 2. Therefore, verse 6 can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"
    - a) I don't know about you, but some people take offense at the title of helper.
    - b) Yet, God humbly takes that title of himself!
    - c) Indeed, this is the same title God gives Eve in Genesis 2.
    - d) I'm sure you can think of a lot of things that man can do you but man cannot ultimately do anything to your soul if you are in the family of God.
  - 3. Are you in God's family through repentance and faith in Christ? Are you representing Christ and his church through holding marriage in honor and not loving money?
    - a) Are you content with Christ?
    - b) Do you need to repent of sexual sin and love of money?
    - c) Please know that God is merciful and gracious and he wants what's good and right for you.
    - d) Will you have him? Will you gladly follow God's good ways! Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus.