

Your Duties as a Church Member (Part 2)

Hebrews 13:7-9, 17

Introduction

Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready you for the Word of God? Last week we had our special service: Round-Up Sunday and I want to thank everyone who attended, those who showed hospitality for our guests and especially those who got their hands and feet dirty to make it a success: from preparation – cooking – setting up tables and chairs – providing child-care, stepping up to serve in the kitchen, and cleaning up. My prayer is that our love for the Lord and one another was made evident before all those who attended. May we bring that same passion we had to serve our Lord from now on and I am confident God will continue working in us and through us.

Today's message is a continuation from 2 weeks ago from the same book and chapter: Hebrews 13. Our duties as a Church member. In that text from verses 1-7, we saw plenty of applications we can take: Our love for another to continue and be consistent, our hospitality to shown and are care for those suffering adversity. The three main points were to: I. Love one another consistently, II. We are to honor with God honors, III. Live with awareness of the Lord's presence in your life. In this next section now, the author of Hebrews is now challenging to readers to be loyal to the One who makes all that possible and how that loyalty is demonstrated.

Purpose/Theme:

1. To encourage the readers as they went through intense persecution to hold fast to their faith and live righteously in light of Christ's superiority (12:1-13:20).

2. To exalt Jesus Christ and His superiority over all things. He is superior to angels (1:4-2:18). He is superior to Moses and Joshua (3:1-4:14). He is superior the Aaronic priesthood (4:14-7:28). He is superior to the Old Covenant (8:1-10:39).
3. To warn the readers the dangers of falling back into the Old Testament system (3:12-19).

Scripture

Hebrews 13:7-17 (7) Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. (8) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. (9) Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. (17) Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

Outline

I. Remember and Regard your spiritual leaders, vv. 7, 17.

A. What we are to do:

(7) Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. (17) Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves...

1. Human nature seems to have an issue with authority. Afterall, it's no surprise even since the garden, sin always creeps in with the mindset "I know better."
2. God calls and puts people in authority even into His Churches.
3. If you're looking at this as a "Wow, just another someone to tell me what to do" then you're on the wrong track.
4. The word "them which have rule over you" is a single word here in the text: it means "Leader." – To lead means "to go before" A leader is someone who goes before his people to give them vision, direction, and goals.

5. “Who have spoken unto you the Word of God” this tell us the context is referring to spiritual leadership. Earthly leadership such as government is also still to be obeyed according to other passages but that’s not the focus here.
6. Biblical leadership comes from the authority of the Word of God. Therefore, the leader’s appeal is to communicate what God says. This is the central role of the leader. So, it’s not this “someone telling me what to do, but someone that God appoints to tell you what He says to do by His Word.
7. It first says “Remember them. It’s those who minister the Word in season and out of season. Remember those who have poured the Scriptures into your life over the years, remember them with thankfulness and pray for them.

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 (12) And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; (13) And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

8. Assuming their character and conduct is consistent with what they teach, you take example and learn from the way they walk their faith.

1 Corinthians 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

Philippians 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

9. If you’re looking for the perfect Pastor or leader, you’re going to have to find someplace else cause it’s not here or anywhere I know. There are no perfect preachers or people but that are characteristics and standards to which God holds them to and they can follow.
10. Next we read “Obey and submit yourselves to them” in verse 17. This means to yield themselves to their leadership.

11. Sometimes the question is then asked: What if they're doing something against God's Word or teach you to sin? Here's the answer:

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

Acts 5:29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

12. If there is indeed no power but of God, then no one has the authority to make you sin. So yes, in these cases, you wouldn't submit yourselves to sinning or anything against the Word. However, I think you know good as well as I do that majority of the time, when people choose to oppose their Pastor, it hardly ever has to do with regarding the Word or them teaching you falsely.

13. The application here is simple: We are told to obey those who rule over us.

When speaking on the authority of God's Word, leaders do have a right to tell us how to live and walk after God.

14. This doesn't mean you're going to always agree but we need to be teachable. If you disagree with an application or doctrine then all right, there is room for disagreement for non-essential things. But if you are going to disagree, but sure that you do so on the basis of Scripture, not the basis of your intuitions, thoughts, feelings, or emotions.

15. If you though this verse seemed self-serving to for a Pastor to preach or if a preacher got a little puffed-up, the next statement answers that one. It's why we do this.

B. Why we are to do it:

(17) ...for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

1. Pastors, elders and leaders are held to a higher accountability to the Lord. Not only do they give an account for themselves, but they will also give an account on your behalf – on how they shepherd the flock.
2. A highly honorable position but not one to be taken so lightly.

1 Peter 5:1-4 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: (2) Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (3) Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

3. Your leaders' duties are not for themselves to be served, but for them to serve the Lord by leading you and living as an example before the flock.
4. Both leaders and followers need to understand this clearly: We don't get to just preach what we feel like: we are charged to preach the Word. We are accountable to a much higher power and ought to be far more concerned in pleasing the head of the church rather than pleasing man.
5. You should want to your Pastor to preach the hard truths. I've never understood why someone who claims to be a follower of Jesus would ever want anything different. You wouldn't want your doctor to tell you all the things you want to hear, so why wouldn't you want your Pastor to do so?
6. It burdens my heart to see more and more Pastors leaving the ministry. Many leave because they just can't take the stress or burden anymore. Lately an unfortunate trend is through moral failure. It is not a light position and Satan is always on the attack. The ones Satan will use often to attack the Pastor are the members of the church. Not just the Pastors are to be on guard but also

the flock to be on guard for their leader.

7. This passage to remember your leaders is also applicable for those in current leadership. If you're going to become a good leader, you first must become a good follower. Everyone in leadership can still remember and regard their leaders at one point. I plan to continue learning everything I can through Pastor Dill.
8. Our Pastor here at Lighthouse is retiring from lead, but he isn't leaving the ministry. He kept going until his body no longer allowed him and he still plans to give Lighthouse Baptist Church his all as long as the Lord gives it.
9. The common practice from churches is for requiring the previous Pastor to leave the church so that no confusion of leadership happens or attachment to the previous Pastor occurs. Yet, I don't see the need for that or being a problem at Lighthouse. Some organizations require it. We as Lighthouse Baptist Church are an independent church and not in subjection to a higher organization to tell us what to believe or what our policy is. Our authority comes from the Lord and decisions not laid out in Scripture are decided by us as a church. When the previous Pastor retires and leaves, so does all the wisdom accumulated over the years. If it be the Lord's will to be the new Lead Pastor, I don't want Pastor Dill to leave and I recognize that I can still lead and be mentored.
10. Lastly from this point: Verse 17 tell us: that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Cooperative conduct is not only a joy to leaders, but it is profitable for the whole body. The Lord tells you to do things for your sake. The Lord establishes leadership in His church because pure

democracy only leads to chaos. We do decide as a congregation, but we are led by proven godly men elected by the church as elders. Elder-led, congregational rule is the form of church government we have here at Lighthouse Baptist Church.

II. Remain loyal to the Unchanging One, vv. 8-14.

A. Remain loyal to the Person, v. 8.

(8) Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

1. Jesus has never changed and will not change. It's been described as the immutability of Jesus.
2. Why is it relevant to consider the faithful lives of our former spiritual leaders and to ground ourselves in the traditional Christian doctrine which they taught? Because Jesus is unchanging. Our spiritual walk should be consistent as theirs and our doctrine should be the same as they taught. We serve an unchanging Savior.
3. Earthly leaders come and go, and even Pastors and leaders, but He is always there, unchanging from time to time, He never needs to be replaced, and nothing can be added to His perfect work.
4. From His Person to His plan to His Purpose and to His Promise, He is unchangeable. Culture may change, our methods may change, but Jesus Himself will not and neither will His Word.

B. Remain loyal to His Word, v. 9.

(9) Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

1. The message of Jesus remains forever the same therefore, we should reject any other message, especially teachings foreign to the truth as it is in Jesus.
2. Grounding yourselves in the Word with consistency is how this starts.
3. In Ephesians 4: this is the same paragraph in where we see God giving Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers: we see this is purpose of God wanting us to be matured, edified, and united.

Ephesians 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

3. This starts with His Gospel: Anything contrary to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for our sins and nothing but faith and trust in Him for salvation needs to be immediately rejected.

Galatians 1:6-10 (6) I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (9) As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (10) For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

4. After the Gospel is mastered, you then move unto doctrine. The amount of resources you can use to study your Bible is overwhelming. You are privileged to be able to do such a thing.
5. If you stand for something, you'll fall for anything.
6. Our hearts are also to established by grace and not by the legalistic system these readers were tempted to fall back into.

Conclusion

This just may have been the last sermon I preach at Lighthouse as the Associate Pastor. If you didn't get the memo, there's a notice on the wall as of last week for a special business meeting to be held in voting. Part of your duty as a Church member is to vote. Attend those meetings and vote. Part of protecting the doctrines of the Church is by participating in this. I can't just move into the role of Lead Pastor by choice of one person or a few. Sometimes I'm left pondering as the Lord gives me messages to preach as to why. This and the previous sermon were being prepared prior to my knowledge of being transitioned in. Once it was decided, things clicked as to why the Lord has had me in Hebrews 13. I believe the church needed it and I needed it too. I have believed for a long time that God called me here to become the Pastor here someday. I've desired but what counts the most is if the Lord wants it. The Lord calls for loyalty to Him, to your spiritual leaders and to His church He places you in. He never changes. Leadership may change at Lighthouse, but the One who truly is in charge around here will not I can assure you.