



Sermon-Based Study Guide
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Good Shepherd Church - March 18, 2012

Sermon Title: Shaping a Continuing Pattern

Sermon Text: Hebrews 13.9-16

Related Texts: Colossians 2.6-23; Leviticus 4.1-12;
and John 19.17-20

I. Start It – Connecting With One Another

Have you ever had to break a bad or destructive habit? What was that experience like? What things helped you form new patterns of behavior to replace the old?

II. Introduction

From the encouragement "to offer God true and acceptable worship, reverently and with fear" by being people of gratitude (Hebrews 12.28), the Hebrews author contends that every dimension of life is to be an act of worship. True worship flows from grateful hearts and is expressed in holy living. In this passage the author continues to develop this theme by urging the Hebrew Christians to develop some positive and continuing patterns in their lives.

III. Study the Text – Read Through Hebrews 13.9-16

- 1) In order to catch the author's concern look back at Hebrews 13.7-8 to see the immediate context.
 - a. The word "remember" (verse 7) can also mean "be concerned for." What other two specific things are the Hebrew Christians called to do in verse 7?
 - b. What are some ways you can develop and demonstrate a pattern of concern for your leaders?
- 2) In verse 9 there is a stern warning against being "carried away by all kinds of strange teachings."
 - a. What are some "strange teachings" Christians might be carried away by today?
 - b. What seems to be the nature of the "strange teachings" according to the second half of verse 9? Turn to Colossians 2.6-23 and scan through these verses to get a better picture of this "strange teaching."
 - c. What kind of continuing pattern does verse 9 suggest?

Note: The Hebrews author returns to the idea that the newer covenant established in and through Jesus is not like the older covenant initiated on Mount Sinai. The new covenant relationship with God is fostered by grace and not by adherence to the old rituals and rules

about foods that are ceremonially clean or unclean. To see more about his look at Mark 7.1-23, where Jesus makes it clear that ceremonial foods and rituals have no effect in making a person right with God. Verse 10 reinforces the idea of verse 9 by alluding to the cross of Jesus as "an altar" and contrasting it to the priests in the Tabernacle rites who could not eat the meat offered there.

- 3) Let's look at verses 11-14. At first glance it is a very confusing section. However, there is a simple and profound contrast found here. Verses 11 and 12 describe the remains of the sacrificed animals disposed of "outside the camp" (away from the Tabernacle and camp of the Israelites in the wilderness) as described in Leviticus 4.1-12. Jesus suffered "outside the city gate" (See John 19.17-20).
 - a. So, there is a contrast between "inside the camp or city" and "outside the camp or city." What place of ceremonial sacrifice lies "inside the city" (of Jerusalem) in the middle of the first century?
 - b. Can you state the point the author is making in verses 11 and 12?
 - c. What would it mean for a Hebrew Christian to "go outside the camp" where Jesus suffered (Verses 13-14) in order to be made at one with God? What risk is involved? What disgrace might they experience by doing so? What new pattern is being shaped?
- 4) Verses 15 and 16 call the Hebrew Christians - and us - to another pattern of living.
 - a. The pattern to be shaped in us in verse 15 is:

 - b. The patterns to be shaped in us in verse 16 are: ----- and

 - c. Why do you think these things are called "sacrifices that are pleasing to God?"

IV. Apply It – Reflect and Respond

- 1) As you reflect on the patterns that are to be shaped in your life 1) concern for and imitation of the faith of Christian leaders; 2) turning away from strange teachings; 3) continually trusting Jesus for atonement; and 4) offering the sacrifice of praise and doing good, how have these been developed in your life? How do they need to be developed further?
- 2) There is a saying, "Preach the gospel at all times... use words when you must." What do you think of this saying with regard to "doing good and sharing with others?" How important is it to use words to share with others about the love of Jesus? How important are actions in this same vein?
- 3) How can you further develop the practice of continually offering the sacrifice of praise to God?

God wants people who will name the name of Jesus in prayer, worship, actions, and testimony, even if it costs them dearly. Their witness will bear fruit. The common life of a generous

hearted Christian community is itself a "sacrifice," an act of worship. God is delighted with it. Never allow yourself to think that just because nothing you can do can earn God's favor, that God isn't pleased with what you attempt in his name. Precisely because love cannot be earned or deserved, it is always delighted when it receives answering love. This too is the work of God's grace.

N. T. Wright