



GO! CHRIST'S COMMUNITY

Session 1 – Out of Complacency
into Christ's Saving Adventures (Part 1)
Hebrews 13: 10-16 (NRSV)

Key Verses: *Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. Hebrews 13:12-14 (New Revised Standard Version, NRSV).*

INTRODUCTION

Session 1 focuses on Jesus' role as head of his community based upon His sacrifice and selfless love in fulfilling God the Father's steadfast and everlasting love for the world. Before we move to Session 2 to discuss our role in Christ's community, let's turn to God's holy word once again to glean insights into the head of our lives, our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. [The NRSV of the Bible is referenced in the study other translations are encouraged to be used.]

INTERPRETATION OF HEBREWS 13:10-16: (Have Scripture passage read aloud)

The author of the letter to the Hebrews is writing primarily to Jewish Jesus-followers, who are struggling with their Jewish roots, culture, traditions, and heritage in the face of changes and inclusion of non-Jews into their newly evolving community founded on faith and belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ (Messiah) for the world. The entire letter reflects the connection between the Old Testament heroes, heroines, their stories, and how they fit into God's redeeming plan for Jesus to enter the world as the ultimate atonement for the sins of the world. Jesus is both sacrifice and High Priest redeeming and sanctifying humankind by his blood. The Old Testament image of the blood sacrifice taken outside the camp is recalled in the New Testament memory of Jesus taken outside the city Jerusalem to be hung on a cross, beaten, broken, bleeding, and bearing the sins of the world. The author of Hebrews thus summons, exhorts, even rallies the believers to join in Christ's example of loving sacrifice, reminding them that earthly living is temporary, yet real. Just as the eternal "city," which God has promised to come, is real. Jesus-followers are to prepare for their eternal "home" with sacrifice of praise, confession of faith in Christ, doing good deeds, and sharing with others to please God.

Exploring Other Texts: *Divide the group into 4 smaller groups/pairs and assign one scripture text and questions to each group/pair. When everyone has had a chance to read and respond bring the whole group back together. As each group/pair to read their scripture passage and share their insights.*

- **John 3:16-21** – *Who is Jesus? Why was Jesus born? What should be our response to Jesus?*
- **Hebrews 12:2-3** – *Who is Jesus to believers? What did he endure? How did he respond? Why should believers consider the way Jesus endured? What was the result of his endurance?*
- **Matthew 23:37-38, Jesus as Mother Hen** – *One of the feminine images of Jesus in Scripture is being a mother hen. What are the circumstances and the emotions generated in this text? Why are the emotions so strong? [Take a moment to read and reflect on Ann Weem's poem "Jesus Weeping Over Jerusalem."]*
- **Matthew 27: 32, 39-44, The Crucifixion of Jesus** – *Describe the various emotions Jesus experienced as He suffered on the way to Golgotha and the cross. Emotions can be heavy burdens to bear. Reflect on all the emotions revealed in these Scripture passages. How would you feel if you were in Jesus' sandals? What would you do if faced with the emotional negativity of others toward*

you, even as you strive to live good, kind and helpful lives? What have you learned from Jesus that helps you through those times?

Thomas Coke, in his "Commentary on the Holy Bible Hebrews 13:13," prepares us for Session 2 by reminding us by whom our community is founded, shaped, and to whom we should be conformed.

"Hebrews 13:13. Let us go forth therefore— This practical conclusion is drawn from the words immediately preceding the apostle's argument, and may be thus expressed: "Since, as I said, Jesus suffered without the gate of Jerusalem as a propitiatory sacrifice to atone for the sins of all mankind, and to consecrate them as a peculiar people unto God, let us go forth out of Jerusalem to him, and not think ourselves any longer obliged to observe the ceremonies and worship of the Jewish temple of Jerusalem; but let us adhere to Christ alone, and patiently bear the reproach of trusting in a crucified Savior, as he bore the reproach of crucifixion."

Coke, Thomas. "Commentary on Hebrews 13:13". Thomas Coke Commentary on the Holy Bible. "http://www.studylight.org/commentaries/tcc/view.cgi?bk=heb&ch=13". 1801-1803. Copyright Statement: These files are public domain. Text courtesy of BibleSupport.com. Used by Permission.

Jesus Weeping Over Jerusalem

There is but one face
whose holy eyes
won't turn away,
but focus on us
and weep...

Jesus, you!
like a mother hen
yearning to gather us to you,
but we would not ...
for we have killed the prophets
and stoned the messengers.

Now abandoned and empty,
the stones of the temple
waiting to fall
around our ankles,
we still do not come
to you, and, even now,
you weep.

Ann Weems, *Kneeling in Jerusalem*
(Nashville: Westminster John Knox
Press, 1993), 70.
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Closing Thoughts

The Session hopefully will generate some deep feelings of gratefulness, humility, and forgiveness of sin and complacency in our faith walks because of who Jesus is in our lives and in the world. Hopefully we will feel encouraged and empowered to withstand the negativity that may come our way as we live our lives totally sold out to Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Savior. Each Session's closing prayer is the benediction found in Hebrews 13:20-21. Please read the NRSV translation aloud together. Then invite participants to either read aloud one by one OR aloud as a whole group the modified benediction provided below. You may want to write the modified benediction on newsprint or print copies for the group. May it be your affirmation of faith and commitment to live out these words to the glory of God.

BENEDICTION

Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our [my] Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you [me/us] complete in everything good so that you [I/we] may do his [God's] will, working among us that which is pleasing in his [God's] sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. (NRSV) – Hebrews 13:20-21