

Better Hebrews 13:1-6

Intro

Who are some great leaders from American history?

What qualities does a great leader have?

Transition

Some qualities that people have mentioned are: humility, integrity, compassion, wisdom, courage, flexibility.

We named some amazing people and some great qualities of a leader. But there is one that is better than all of those people and has all of those qualities and then some.

Sticky Statement: Jesus is Better!

Passage

7 Remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you. As you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith. 8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Hebrews 13:7-8

Our author starts off with an encouragement to remember our leaders.

Leaders change over time, they retire, move on to other ministries, or pass away.

Just like everything else in this world our leaders are temporary.

This would have been poignant for the original audience of this text.

It was common for leader to be arrested, exiled, or executed for their faith.

The last part of verse 7 instructs us to imitate their faith.

Paul says it like this:

Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.

1 Corinthians 11:1

We are to look at the faith of our leaders and learn from their faith in Christ.

We are not only to learn from the words our leaders say but also from how they live.

The life they live should back up the words they proclaim.

If I'm going to proclaim that husbands should sacrifice for their wives then this should be visible in the way I love my wife.

I'm not perfect at it but I hope that I do well in that department.

I want my daughters to see how they should be loved and my son to see how he is to love.

Verse 8 reminds us that we imitate their faith because they will one day be gone but the Christ they follow will always be.

Christ has, is, and will always be!

We follow leaders not because they are great but because the One they serve is great.

While our leader will change over time our God never does.

Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever!

Look at verse 9:

9 Don't be led astray by various kinds of strange teachings; for it is good for the heart to be established by grace and not by food regulations, since those who observe them have not benefited.

Hebrews 13:9

Here our author is pushing the reader to be careful in the teachings they follow.

Not all that call themselves Christians are, and not all those that call themselves teacher are truthful.

If they call themselves pastor but teaching anything contrary to scripture they are not a pastor.

If they claim to teach God's Word but say parts of it are wrong they are not proclaiming God's Word.

False teaching is not always teaching something that is obviously wrong.

Sometimes it is refusing to teach certain parts of Scripture because someone might not like it.

Sometimes its only 0.5 degree off from what Scripture teaches.

The truth is if we deviate from Scripture any, for any reason, we are no longer teaching God's Word but our own.

The author never directly tell us what these "strange teachings" are but we can guess from the last part of the verse it had to do with Old Testament dietary laws.

The sermon of Hebrew is written to Jews that became Christians.

It seems that maybe some were having a hard time not looking to the rules of the Old Testament, in this case food laws, for justification.

They had forgotten that our heart is redeemed by Grace not by following external rules.

Jesus is better!

Pick back up with me at verse 10:

10 We have an altar from which those who worship at the tabernacle do not have a right to eat. 11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the most holy place by the high priest as a sin offering are burned outside the camp. 12 Therefore, Jesus also suffered outside the gate, so that he might sanctify the people by his own blood. 13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing his disgrace. 14 For we do not have an enduring city here; instead, we seek the one to come.

Hebrews 13:10-14

Verse 10 the author immediately draws a contrast between the old sacrificial altar and the altar of Christ.

This new altar where Christ was offered as the perfect sacrifice is the cross where He died.

The author tells his reader that if they cling to the altar of old they are unable to join in the New Covenant of Christ.

It is not by the blood of imperfect animals offered by an imperfect priest that brings salvation.

It is the perfect blood of our perfect and forever High Priest, Christ.

The writer compares Christ the animals sacrificed in the Tabernacle.

After the blood was drained and sprinkled on the altar they carcasses had to be carried outside the city walls and burned.

Just as those sacrifices were carried outside the city gates, Christ was taken outside the city gates to suffer.

Jesus death outside the city is being used here to symbolize His rejection by His own people.

Look back at verse 13:

13 Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing his disgrace.

Hebrews 13:13

In order to bring us salvation Christ choose rejection by others.

For the original audience this verse would mean being cast out from temple worship, teaching in synagogues, and even rejection by friends and family.

We are to join Jesus in His suffering.

Verse 14, however, reminds them that it is worth it to be received in to the everlasting city of the living God we read about in chapter 12.

Application

Jesus is better!

We may know some great leaders but the best ones always point to One that is better, Jesus.

We can trust in all the rules we want but Jesus is better!

We can look for safety and security inside our city walls but Jesus is better!

Challenge

Do you really believe Jesus is better? If so how does your life reveal that to those around you?

Commentaries Used in Preparation

Christ Center Exposition: Exalting Christ in Hebrews

The Gospel Coalition Commentary on Hebrew by Dennis Johnson