

Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Peter 4:8-11

January 21, 2024

Hebrews 13:20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹ equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. ⁹ Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: ¹¹ whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

CONNECTION

- **Can you think of an example from your walk with God where he gave you exactly what you needed, right when you needed it?**
- **From your own experience, are you more satisfied when you are serving others or when others are serving you?**
- **How is our spiritual health affected by our service or lack of service?**

The writer of Hebrews closed his letter with a prayer for God to equip believers with “everything good” so they could carry out His will. As part of His plan, God provided us with a risen Shepherd, Jesus Christ, to guide us through life, and an eternal covenant to serve as the foundation of our relationship. As we carry out God’s work, God works as well: He works through us to accomplish what is pleasing in His sight.

OBSERVATION

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ HEBREWS 13:20-21.

- **How does Jesus, as our Great Shepherd, help us carry out God’s will?**

God not only supplies the equipment we need. He also provides us with a solid foundation to stand on and a fearless leader to follow. God is the one “who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant” (Heb. 13:20b). God provided us with a Shepherd and an eternal covenant, so we can do His will.

As Christians, we have the immense privilege of following “the great shepherd of the sheep.” He has already passed through death and was raised to life again, so we can never lose our shepherd. And this shepherd has perfect knowledge and unlimited power, so he will always lead us to the right place, at the right time and will provide exactly what we need, when we need it. Consequently, we are able to carry out God’s will.

- **What gospel promises are mentioned in these verses that guarantee we will be equipped to carry out God’s will in our lives as we serve others?**

The fact that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead confirms that God is all-powerful and always keeps His promises. The death of Christ provided an eternal covenant that ultimately leads to Him receiving all the glory. One of the ways He receives this glory is by equipping us to serve His Kingdom.

- **What resources has God given us to carry out his command to “make disciples of all nations”? What resources has he given us so we can love our enemies and lay down our lives for others?**

God equips us with everything we need to do His will. The tasks God has assigned to us are impossible to do on our own: “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19), “love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44), “lay down [your] lives for the brothers” (1 Jn. 3:16), and on and on. But according to Hebrews 13:20-21, God will “equip you with everything good that you may do his will.” He gives us an impossible job, but then provides what we need to get it done.

- **Has God ever used you to supply something for someone just in the nick of time? Have you ever had someone tell you, “I was just praying for this,” when you did something for them?**
- **How does it make you feel knowing that God works through you to carry out His will? How does that encourage you to do more for God?**

We carry out God’s work with the equipment and power God provides, but at a higher level, it is really God who is carrying out the work through us. God is “working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever” (Heb. 13:21). As we carry out God’s will, God works through us to carry out His purposes in this world. Simultaneously, we are working and God is working too.

As we feed the poor, God is feeding the poor. As we care for those who are sick, God is caring for them in a tangible way. As we share the gospel with the lost, God is speaking through us to a soul that desperately needs Him. God is indeed working in the world today. He works through His people to carry out His will.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 PETER 4:8-11.

- **How can our serving of others and the church help show the love of Christ?**
- **Usually when we think of being good stewards we think of financial stewardship. However, what type of stewardship is commanded in v. 10.**

The stewardship mentioned in this verse is described as “...good stewards of God’s varied grace.” What this is referring to is the grace God gives as He gives gifts to His church. Our involvement in serving the church and the kingdom of God is only possible by God’s grace. Therefore, we must be good stewards of the gracious gifts we have been given to serve other, God, and His church.

- **While there are many reasons to serve, what is the primary one given in verse 11.**

Everything we do is to bring glory to God. We serve primarily for God to receive glory through our serving.

RESPONSE

- **Is there an area of ministry that you feel God is calling you to serve in?**
- **How does serving in the way God has called us give us further opportunity to share the gospel with others?**

COMMENTARY

Hebrews 13:20-21

Heb. 13:20-21 Benediction. Following a common practice in NT letters (drawing on OT examples), the author invokes God’s blessing on his readers. God of peace. Cf. Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23. from the dead. See Heb. 5:7; 7:16. shepherd. Cf. John 10:1-18; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4. blood. See note on Heb. 12:24. eternal

covenant. The new covenant (see note on 7:22) has been established forever. equip. The purpose of this equipping is that God's will might be done (cf. 10:36).

1 Peter 4:8-11

1 Pet. 4:8–9 Enduring love for others testifies that a person is living in light of the future. True love covers a multitude of other people's sins (Prov. 10:12). Where love abounds, offenses are frequently overlooked and quickly forgotten. Hospitality, much admired in both Greco-Roman and Jewish sources (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8), was much needed in an era when inns could be dangerous and unpleasant.

1 Pet. 4:10 All believers have received at least one spiritual gift from God, and they are not to hoard these gifts but use them faithfully as stewards of God's grace (cf. 1 Corinthians 12–14).

1 Pet. 4:11 whoever speaks ... whoever serves. Peter divides spiritual gifts generally into speaking and serving gifts (for more detailed lists, see Rom. 12:6–8; 1 Cor. 12:8–10, 28–30; and Eph. 4:11). Those who speak must not propound their own ideas but faithfully declare God's words (oracles). Similarly, those who serve must not depend on their own strength but draw their strength from God, so that God alone may be glorified through Jesus Christ.