

Hebrews 13:1-6

Living in the Unshakable Kingdom

Please turn to Hebrews 13

earthquake,

5:32 am on April 26th 1966 a massive earthquake hit the city of Tashkent behind the then Iron Curtain in Uzbekistan

According to Soviet news, there was minimal loss of life but massive housing loss

It was estimated that in mere minutes, 300,000 homes were destroyed

It took years and years to rebuild

On 10th anniversary in 1976, a statue was unveiled in remembrance of the quake

In typical cold war Soviet style, the statue conveys a stoic courage amid the earthquake and its aftermath

This statue was meant to communicate...

We survived...

We will rebuild...

By brut determination...

We will continue to live even though we have been shaken

❖ Brothers and sisters...

- We live in an unshakable Kingdom!
- A Kingdom that cannot be destroyed
- A Kingdom where the Gates of Hell will not prevail
 - That's what 12:28 tells us
 - Look @ v. 12:28
 - Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable

worship, with reverence and awe, ²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire

- Through Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection...
 - We have received an eternal, everlasting, unshakable Kingdom
 - That is where the author has brought us after 12 chapters

❖ Given that...

- How should we live?
- How should we conduct ourselves?
- What are the new ethics in this unshakable kingdom?
 - That is what chapter 13 is all about
 - Living in this unshakable Kingdom

READ 13:1-6

- ❖ The author has extolled the greatness of Jesus for the last 12 chapters
 - He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature
 - He is God incarnate
 - And because of that he is...
 - Greater than the angels and patriarchs
 - Greater than Moses and Joshua
 - Greater even than Melchizedek and the Levitical priesthood
 - That is chapters 1-8
 - But what Christ has done is Greater as well
 - He has created...
 - A Greater covenant
 - In a greater Heavenly Tabernacle
 - With an infinitely greater sacrifice...Himself
 - Providing us a greater city to live in...Heavenly Jerusalem

- A greater Kingdom to inhabit
 - An unshakable Kingdom

- ❖ And now in the closing moments of his letter he turns to how a Christian should live in this Kingdom
 - 3 ways the believer is to live differently than the world around them
 - We will cover two today and one next week

First, we are to have a different kind of Love...

A Different Type of Love

OVERHEAD

- ❖ V. 1 – Let brotherly love continue
 - We are to have a different kind of love for each other

❖ A Brotherly Love

OVERHEAD

- 1 Peter 1:22-23
 - love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable
- Rom 12:10
 - Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor
- ❖ Stuart Olyott
 - The Christian church is not an organization, a society or a club. It is a brotherhood. All believers, even the ones we do not like, are our brothers
 - We are to have a different love for each other
 - A familial love
- ❖ Jesus said this in the upper room in John 13
 - “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

- LOVE is the mark of a true Christian

❖ We live in a tattoo-crazed culture today

- People love to mark up their bodies with all kinds of numbers, images and ancient symbols
 - I have been asked on more than one occasion if a Christian should get a tattoo?
 - I am not going to answer that except to say that I think Paul answers it in 1 Cor 8-11
 - But I will say that there is a mark that we are explicitly told to have in Scripture
 - The mark of “phileo-delphia”...That’s the Greek here
 - Brotherly love

❖ Francis Schaeffer began one of his books...

- Throughout the centuries men have displayed many different symbols to show they are Christians. That have worn marks in the lapels of their coats, worn chains about their necks, even had special haircuts...but there is a much better sign...it is a universal mark that is to last throughout the ages of the church until Jesus comes back...LOVE
 - That is the Christian tattoo...LOVE

❖ The apostle John in his 1st epistle spends most of his time explaining the marks of a true Christian

- A Christian believes that God came in the flesh
- A Christian walks in the light...not darkness
 - An open, transparent life
- A Christian claims to be a sinner
- A Christian does not love the world...

- A Christian loves truth
- A Christians perseveres
- A Christian hates sin
- ❖ But the main theme that John hammers home over and over again is...
 - A Christian loves his brothers and sisters!
 - 2:9-11...3:11, 14, 16, 23...4:7, 12...and in v. 20-21 he writes...
 - Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God... No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us... If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother
- ❖ And that is what Hebrews 13:1 is saying
 - The mark of one living in God's unshakable Kingdom is that they Love their brothers and sisters

There were once two brothers who shared a field and a mill, each night they divided the grain they had ground together that the day. One brother lived alone; the other had a wife and a large family.

Now, the single brother thought to himself one day, "It isn't fair that we divide the grain evenly. I have only myself to care for, but my brother has children to feed."

So each night he secretly took some of his grain to his brother's granary so that he was never without.

But the married brother said to himself one day, "It isn't really fair that we divide the grain evenly, because I have children to provide for me in my old age, but my brother has no one. What will he do when he's old?"

So every night he secretly took some of his grain to his brother's granary. As a result, both of them always found their supply of grain mysteriously replenished each morning.

Then one night they met each other halfway between their two houses. They suddenly realized what had been happening and embraced each other in love.

❖ That's what brotherly love looks like...

❖ But we are to show another kind of Love as well

❖ **Love Toward Strangers**

OVERHEAD

- Look @ v. 2

❖ We all know that hospitality begins with the family of God

- That's what Gal 6:9-10 teach us...

- Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers

❖ Hospitality should be another mark of kingdom living

- And the diagnostic question to ask to see if it is true of you is...

- How many people could describe the inside of your home?

- I was cut to the quick this week as I preached this to myself

- I had Ed Noonan over to watch a movie last week and as he entered my living room he commented:

- “This is a nice room. I have never been past your kitchen”

- He didn't say it in a mean way at all

- But I was cut to the quick

- Here was a dear brother who could not describe my home

❖ Hospitality toward the family of God is a type of love that marks out our community

❖ But we should also show an even more radical type of Love

- Love of strangers

- The four words “show hospitality to Strangers” is one Greek word

- Philo-Xenias (Xeno-phobia)

- Love of strangers

- That means that people outside the family of God

❖ In her book, The Gospel comes with a Housekey, Rosaria Butterfield calls it **Radical**

Ordinary Hospitality

- She explains it as...

- Seeing our homes, not as ours, but as God’s gift to use for the furtherance of the Kingdom

- Building margin in our days so that routines can be disrupted

- Radical Ordinary Hospitality means...

- Living below our means so that we have plenty to share

- Not fussing over different worldviews represented at the dinner table

- Radical Ordinary Hospitality means...

- Building and keeping friendships with people who are different than we are

- Inviting people into your home and life, even when both are not perfect

- Radical Ordinary Hospitality means...

- Hosts are not embarrassed to receive help

- It is a realization that host and guest are permeable roles

- Radical Ordinary Hospitality means...

- Not being afraid of strangers, even when some seem scary
- Radical Ordinary Hospitality means...
 - Understanding the importance and far reaching effects of the simple act of hospitality can be
 - That is the point of mentioning hosting angels unaware
 - Not to give us an incentive to be hospitable
 - “Oooo, we might have an angel here!”
 - No...
 - But to stress that through the simple act of Radical, Ordinary Hospitality extraordinary things can happen
 - Like conversions...
 - Rosaria came to call Jesus her Lord because of the simple yet powerful effects of Gospel hospitality by a pastor and his wife

The third way we are to have a different kind of Love in this unshakable Kingdom is

❖ **Love Toward the Afflicted**

OVERHEAD

- Look @ 3
 - *Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them...*
 - *We are to have a deep, loving empathy toward those who suffer mistreatment and imprisonment*
- ❖ Earlier in the letter the author commends them for doing just this in chapter 10...
 - you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one
- ❖ As I said when I preacher through that text...

- Prison life was not what it is today
 - Prisoners were dependent on outside help for food and clothing
 - Prison did not supply 3 square meals as they do today
- ❖ If you have seen the old movie Ben Hur with Charlton Heston
 - His two sisters were put in prison and forgotten about
 - They contracted leprosy and a young family member brought them food
 - Many times people were thrown in prison and literally forgotten
- ❖ But we are called to Love those who are forgotten

By way of application...

- ❖ I'd like for you to be praying with me for something
 - Doing an Alpha Course in the Ellsworth Jail
 - Story: Mirus father David Webb, who does prison ministry in Ellsworth, wanted to know more about ALPHA
 - Wanted to know if it is something that he might be able to use
 - I told him all about ALPHA
 - I left and went to Walmart to pick up a few things and walked right into a gentleman named Ben. Ben is a partially deaf man whom the church has helped from time to time a few years back. He moved to Brewer but he would still stop in from time to time when he was on the island.
 - I asked where he had been. Away. Where? In prison
- ❖ I am not one that sees signs around every corner, but...
 - I had just left a meeting talking about ALPHA and I immediately bump into a man whom I have shared the Gospel with many times, who was just released from prison
- ❖ So...

- Please be praying that if the Lord would want us to help bring ALPHA into Ellsworth prison
 - He would put it on our heart to...
 - “Remember those in prison, as though in prison with them...

The Second major way we are to be different living in our unshakable Kingdom is...
We live a different kind of Life

A Different Kind of Life

OVERHEAD

- ❖ Although there are a myriad of ways we are to live differently than the world around us
 - There are two mentioned here
 - Marriage and Money

- ❖ Look @ v. 4
 - *Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous*

❖ We are to be different in regard to Marriage

OVERHEAD

- ❖ We have to remember that this letter was written into a culture that was as depraved as ours if not more so!
 - The intimacy barriers were just like it is today
 - Pre-marital sex was commonplace
 - Little or not stigma attached to Adultery

I remember getting a call from a dear, dear unsaved friend of mine 10-15 years ago. He and some other married guys were headed up to Hunter Ski mountain for a long

weekend and he wanted me to come. I asked if I could bring Carrie and he said that it was just a guys weekend. Knowing this person and the group he had gathered, I knew that they were headed up there to re-live their college days...drinking and picking up women. I declined the invitation.

I heard later how these married men went out to bars, hitting on and picking up women

- ❖ This is not unusual in the world we live in brothers and sisters!
 - And the author is calling his audience...and us!...to live differently
 - To live differently than the world around us
- ❖ Where it has become increasingly normal to view adultery as irrelevant, purity abnormal, recreational sex a “right”, ‘hooking up’ as normal
 - We are told to live differently
 - Keep sexual intimacy within the bounds of marriage
 - We are to keep the marriage bed PURE
- ❖ Sex is always and only good within the bounds of marriage
 - John MacArthur wrote...
 - Within marriage sex is beautiful, fulfilling and creative.
 - And I take “creative” not just as creating children!
 - God created Sex
 - Sexual intimacy is good
 - When it is in the right place...marriage
- ❖ So...
 - When we place a high value on monogamy
 - We are showing that we live in a different kingdom...
 - We should desire to grow old together

- The world will always celebrate “trophy wives” and “sugar daddy’s”
 - But we celebrate marriages that last 40, 50, 60, 70 yrs.

❖ Living differently means...

- We stay with our spouse through good times and bad
 - The world will say...
 - If things get too hard...get out, start over, find another
 - There is a more compatible person out there
 - Richard Philips writes
 - One of the greatest witnesses in our age will be Christians couples who faithfully meet the struggles in their marriage with the grace and power of God
 - Christians are to live differently

❖ Living differently means...

- We view love and commitment, not emotion
 - The world will scream that love is an emotion
 - A feeling, chemistry, compatibility
- But God tells us true love is commitment
 - That is why God’s own words are quoted here from Joshua 1:5
 - “I will never leave you nor forsake you”
 - That is a refrain God says to hi people over and over again
 - Because that is showing true love
 - Love is commitment, not a feeling

❖ Living differently means...

- We place a high value on purity...not experience
 - This is the application for those singles here today

- Those in High School & college and beyond
 - Our culture will tell you again and again that
 - Virginity is an embarrassment
 - Sexual experience is what is important
 - Sexual compatibility not purity is critical
 - God calls each and every single here to protect their purity
 - To give the gift of yourself for your wife or husband
 - And even if you think you are going to marry this person...
 - Wait for the right place...
 - Within the bounds of marriage
- ❖ Living differently means...
 - We take what God tells us in his word about sex within marriage seriously
 - Here we are told that God will judge the promiscuous and adulterous
 - That is what is said throughout Scripture
 - 1 Cor 6:9-10
 - do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality... will inherit the kingdom of God
- ❖ John MacArthur went on to write in the very next sentence...
 - Within marriage sex is beautiful, fulfilling and creative. Outside marriage it is ugly, destructive and damning
- ❖ The other major area of life the author addresses is

Money

OVERHEAD

- ❖ Look @ v. 5

- *Keep your life free from love of money, be content with what you have*

- ❖ There is no topic on which Jesus spoke more often than money
 - The pearl of great price
 - The hidden treasure
 - The Talents
 - The rich man and Lazarus
 - In fact, 11 of his 40 parables were about money

- ❖ Jesus knew that money needs to be addressed because...
 - It can shipwreck a faith like Demas
 - It can cause people to walk away from Jesus like the rich young man
 - It can cause people to proclaim one thing, but really live another

- ❖ Commentator Hywel Jones writes...
 - For Christians to profess that they have better things, and yet live in a way that seems to say that earthly things are better still, is a shameful contradiction

- ❖ So the question we must ask ourselves is...
 - Do we live a contradictory life?
 - Do we claim to have a better life, yet live Joel Osteen's book title
 - "Your best life now"
 - Do we claim to love Christ, yet our life professes another love?
 - Do I love money?
 - Do I live differently than the world around me in regards to money?

- ❖ The easiest way to understand what you really love is by removing it and witnessing the reaction
 - That is the easiest way to get to the root of anything
 - When something is removed...

- When an idol is threatened...
 - You see more clearly what you were getting from the idol

❖ So...

- When the congregation's approval is removed from a pastor
 - And he spirals into depression or anger
 - You see that he was getting his value from that congregation
 - When a job is removed from a person
 - And they sink into the slough of despond
 - You begin to see that they were getting their purpose from the job
 - And when money is threatened or removed...
 - When the stock market takes a downturn
 - When the fishing season is going badly
 - When the summer jobs do not roll in
 - When retirement looms and the income will change drastically
 - How you react shows where your heart is...
 - Where your love is...
 - Where you ultimately find your security

❖ And I think that is what Hebrews is trying to tell us here

- Don't find your contentment in Money...but in God
 - You see...
 - The root of contentment is security

❖ So...

- Don't find your security in money...but in God
 - That is what the two quotes from the OT telling us
 - Josh 1:5: I will never leave you nor forsake you...
 - Yahweh is saying to us as he did to Joshua that day

- I've got you, I'm never leaving you, I am yours and you are mine
 - You are secure
- That is what he is saying to us
 - I've got you, I'm never leaving you, I am yours and you are mine
 - You are secure
 - Find your security in me
- Ps 118:6: The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?
 - The gold and silver are mine
 - I own the cattle of 1,000 hills
 - Find your security in me
 - It is time to give up your security blanket

The term “security blanket” did not come into the English language until the 1950’s with the introduction Charlie Brown and the Peanuts comic strip. One of the characters Charles Schultz brought into our Zeitgeist was Linus

Linus

OVERHEAD

Linus was the intellectual of the comic

He was always well-informed, espoused wisdom, waxed philosophic

But he was a character in contradiction

He was always shown with his thumb in his mouth clutching what became known as his “security blanket of happiness”

Storylines throughout the years involved Lucy trying to do away with the blanket, disapproval of it from Linus and Lucy's unseen grandmother, and Snoopy frequently trying to take it from himself.

On April 11, 1983 Linus claimed to be cured of his security blanket and did not need it anymore...but humorously on April 23rd it was back

Finally in 1989, Linus gave it up for good, after 35 years!

❖ This is a picture of some Christians

- They say they love Jesus...
 - But they clutch their security blanket of money
 - They clutch it, care for it, keep it with us wherever we go
 - They can't imagine what life would be without it
 - They love their security blanket

❖ But like Linus, there comes a time to give it up

- To place our security in something else
- Something bigger...more eternal
- It is time to find your security in God
 - It is time to really trust the words of Ps 118
 - The Lord is my helper, I will not fear, what can man do to me?