

*Sermon: Faithful Perseverance; Delivered by Dan Hiben,
junior high pastor, on December 27, 2020*

Bible text explored: Hebrews 13:7-16

⁷Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. ⁹Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. ¹¹For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. ¹²So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. ¹³Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. ¹⁴For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. ¹⁵Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. ¹⁶Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. [ESV]

Review and application:

A difficult year is drawing to a close with no clear signs of prompt relief. So we need the author of Hebrews' practical advice about surviving and thriving.

1. Who (*verse 7*) are we urged to remember?
Who encouraged you in the early years of your faith?
What stood out about their example that you could copy?
2. What (*verse 8*) is constant about the Lord and Savior we follow . . .
. . . yesterday? (*Hebrews 1:10; 13:6; Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:5*)
. . . today? (*Hebrews 7:27; 10:12*)
. . . forever? (*Hebrews 1:8*)
3. When we feel like giving up (*verse 9*), where should we *not* turn?
Where (*verses 10-12*) should we turn? (See *2 Corinthians 5:21*.)
4. On the annual Day of Atonement (*Leviticus 16:20-22, 27-28*), what animals were outside the camp?
How (*Hebrews 9:14*) was Jesus the ultimate Day of Atonement sacrifice?
5. Take time to reflect on the hymn text Pastor Hiben read to us:
*There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins.
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.
The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day.
And there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away.
Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood shall never lose its pow'r,
Till all the ransomed Church of God be saved, to sin no more.
E'er since by faith I saw the stream thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
When this poor lisp'ing, stamm'ring tongue lies silent in the grave,
Then in a nobler, sweeter song, I'll sing Thy pow'r to save.*

—William Cowper (1731-1800)

6. What (*verse 13*) might bearing the reproach of Christ require of you?

7. What is the goal post (*verse 14*) on which your sights should be set?

The author of Hebrews (Hebrews 7:11; 8:1-2 and 13) asserts that animal sacrifices are now obsolete. But other New Testament authors (Romans 12:1) describe another form of sacrifice that remains acceptable.

8. What “fruit” of our lips (*verse 15*) should God’s grace propel us to offer “continually”?

What other sacrifices (*verse 16*) are we assured would please our Lord?