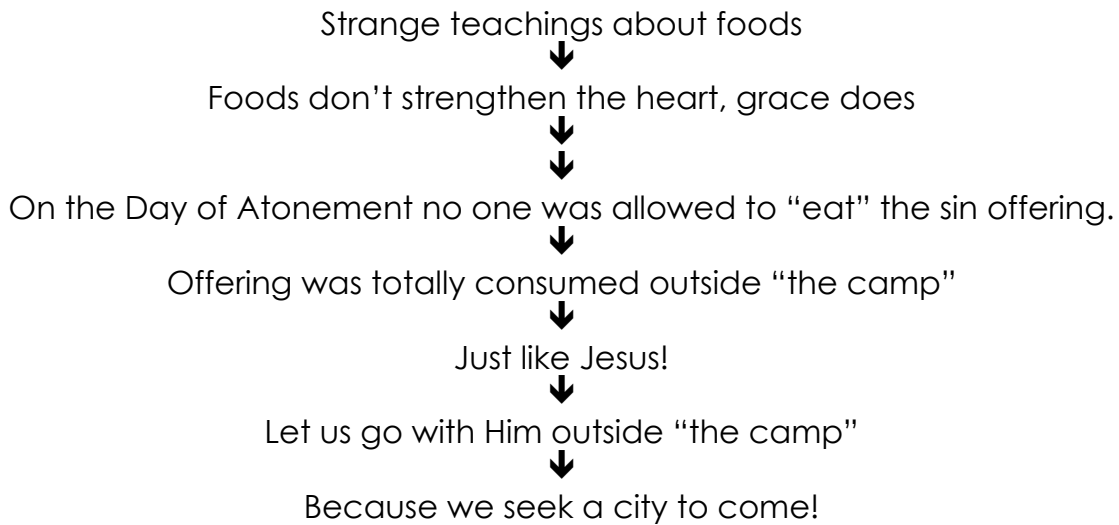


Our writer was very direct in verses 1-8, instructing us to love, be hospitable, be socially just with prisoners, honor marriage, don't love money, imitate the faith of your leaders... (God has given us great opportunity for this) then there's this rather oblique little section that follows.

Hebrews 13:9-14

The Flow



- Doctrine
- Action
- Motivation

DOCTRINE V.9-11

Doctrine: teachings about God, the Bible and life

Theology: what we believe to be true about God, the Bible and living

- Doctrine & Theology are crucial.
 - Esp. in the life of a believer.

Hebrews 13:9

Do 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.

These Hebrew Christians—remember the context—needed the strength to keep going.

- I don't think every Christian recipient of this sermon/letter wanted to leave Christ.
 - There were some, however, who didn't want to get up and leave Christ but wanted strength for the journey.

- It seems from the text that there were some who started to believe a strange doctrine about foods that strengthen the heart.
 1. HEART—The heart is figurative; like weak hands and feeble knees (12:12). It represents the “inner person” [Eph 3:16]
 2. FOOD—No commentator or scholar knows exactly what this “teaching/doctrine about food” was.
 - This is what we do know...evidently people in this church were turning to food for spiritual strength.
 - It wasn't the food itself but what they BELIEVED about the food.

 - Coping mechanism
 - “How do I deal with this pressure? How do I remain strong in this situation?”
 - Ever feel that way?

I know there are many in here that love Jesus, love His word and love to worship and serve and pour out your life...but

- Might be pain on this Mother's Day.
- Your marriage is being shaken to the core.
- Your house is threatened by another fire.
- You still have no idea who you're going to marry
- You can't find a job
- You're going through the most difficult thing I've ever had to face
 - Here's the deal, you love Jesus and you want to follow Him...you don't want to walk away...*but how do I deal and how do I cope with life?*

Food? Drink? Music? Retail Therapy? Computer?

- What the writer does here is he draws their coping mechanism back to Doctrine & Theology.
 - “What do you believe about God?”
 - “What do you believe about His grace?”

Hebrews 13:9

Do not be *led [carried] away by diverse and strange teachings*, for it is good for the heart to be *strengthened [established] by grace*, not by foods, which have *not benefited those devoted to them*.

- The antithesis of a heart established by grace¹ is a life led away by strange teachings.
- And God desires we be established in the Grace of Jesus Christ.
 - **Why?** Because foods spoil and appetites change, but He is the same yesterday, today & forever, He will never never leave you nor forsake you.
 - If your heart (your soul, inner-person) is not being strengthened by grace alone, how ever you're coping and dealing with life...it's not working. It's not benefiting you. It's either making things worse or it's so numbing your mind that you think things are okay but you're never dealing with the problem.

So the author confronts their false doctrine, their coping mechanism, with **right theology**. This is why theology is so crucial.

- It sets false securities right, it pulls down idols and corrects belief.
 - "Every bad practice, every bad act, every bad standard of conduct, can be traced to bad belief²." –John MacArthur
 - Does this in a Hebraic way

Hebrews 13:10-11

- This seems to indicate that the foods they were eating and how they were trying to gain spiritual strength was connected to their old Jewish life.
- **Think about this.** These Christians were turning to physical meals for strength. We can't be quick to judge them...this is what they have always done.
 - How many of you find that your coping mechanism and the way you deal with life's difficulties is something you've always done? Maybe even before you were a Christian...

¹ On the sole basis of what Christ accomplished on the cross (Eph 2:4-10)

² John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Hebrews*, p377

- Under Jewish laws and customs they would turn to physical meals and drinks, physical places and locations...to worship God and be strengthened by God.

The writer is saying to them and to us, **“We don’t go to physical things for spiritual strength. That’s not how we deal with life.”**

- Do you think spiritual nourishment comes from a Big Mac or a bottle of Pinot or 3 Vicodin? May it never be...we don’t turn to physical things to deal and cope and to find spiritual strength...we turn to Jesus...
 - The pagan neighbors of the early church thought Christians had no God, and called them atheists; and their Jewish neighbors, too, would criticize them for having no visible means of spiritual support³.
 - No temple, no sacrifices, nothing really outwardly religious.

“WE have an alter from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat.”

ACTION V.12-13

Hebrews 13:11-13

Once the writer corrects their bad doctrine with good doctrine he then allows this good doctrine to weigh heavy on their lives...and moves us to action.

- **He is telling these Hebrew Christians to Evacuate.**
 - To pack up and leave where they have been living for 100's of years. Inside the gates and inside the camp of Judaism.
- How do you leave a camp where your identity, your nationality, your family, your security have been inside of this camp where everything was safe and sacred for 100's of years?
 - How?

FOLLOW JESUS.

- He is our example who left behind
 - The joys and comfort of Heaven
 - Who Humbled Himself to become a man
 - Who left His eternal home and was made “homeless”

³ FF Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 379

- Remember that scribe that came to Jesus... *“Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” (Matt 8:19-20)*
- He was rejected by the very people He came to save, was murdered outside the gates of Jerusalem, rejected by virtually everyone and cried out on the cross...
 - On the cross cried out... *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matt 27:46)*

He is our example and we are His disciples...

This author says how...LOOK AT HIM...GO TO HIM...

Notice the availability of Jesus. He was outside the camp. He can be found outside of religion and ritual...

You don't have to go through the city walls then the outer court, the inner court, the holy place and then the holy of holies...He's outside of that now. He is outside the walls available to the whole world.

We don't have a physical alter, we don't worship on this mountain or that mountain, we have an available Savior, always there, totally sufficient, the same yesterday today and forever, never leaving never changing. **GO TO HIM...but you'll have to leave the “camp”...**

- Ever notice how going to God and following Him almost always requires leaving something? Going “outside of camp”
- In the Bible we see people leaving
 - Occupations, Locations, Situations, to follow God
- Sometimes this is shameful, it says here when we leave to follow Jesus we do so bearing His reproach.

Bearing His Reproach

CHOOSE CHRIST NOT COMFORT

Hebrews 11:24-27

- Again making the connection that we must leave to follow. Moses left the comfort of his home in Egypt to be mistreated with the people of God. Who bore the reproach of Christ, because it had greater wealth than all of Egypt.

This is hard...how do we do it? Where's our motivation?

MOTIVATION V.14

The bible starts in a garden but ends in a city.

- And this city, this Kingdom that we seek is a lasting Kingdom. **It's an unshakeable Kingdom.**
 - We can place our trust here, lay our hope to rest here, rejoice that this Kingdom will never foreclose, never burn down, never leave, never die, never rebel, never fall apart, never bankrupt.

So let us go. We can leave places of comfort because comfort is not the goal in this life. WE SEEK A LASTING KINGDOM, A LASTING CITY.

So what does that mean for this city? Santa Barbara, Ventura? Whatever city you live in?

“Jesus went up to the city (Jerusalem), and was crucified 'outside the city gate,' a Biblical metaphor for forsakenness. Jesus lost the city that was, so we can be citizens of the city to come, making us salt and light in the city that is. Our citizenship in the City-to-come, by His grace, equips us for the city that is.” –Tim Keller

- This means whether we are to mandatorily evacuate or God is calling us to voluntarily evacuate, we can and we will.
- We can follow Jesus, leave the camp and bear His reproach.
 - The more this world tries to crush us the more Christ comes out to the world...

2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 16-18

7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh...

16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.