

Outwith the camp

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[0 : 00] Let us turn now to the epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 13, reading at verse 12. Hebrews 13, at verse 12.

Wherefore, Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. One of the purposes for this letter, probably from the pen of Paul to the persecuted Jewish believers of his day, was to encourage them to continue in the faith.

They were to persevere, or as this letter puts it, on more than one occasion, hold fast. And one of the reasons that he gives, one of the encouragements he gives to them is to present to them, right throughout this epistle, the fact that Christ, who is at the heart of the Christian system, at the heart of Christianity, that Christ is a better priest, a better prophet, a better king, that he has offered a better sacrifice, that we are heirs, through faith in him, a better promises, and that there is held out for us the prospect of a better eternity.

So you have at the heart of that, of the letter, very often the word better, or greater. And in this context, in the context in which the words of our text are said, that argument, again, is presented by the writer.

[2 : 19] Look at how he puts it, as we take up the theme here from verse 10. Jesus, he says, has offered a better sacrifice.

And by virtue of what he has done, he has become the food, the spiritual food, of those who believe in him.

That is why, for example, Jesus presented in the New Testament by himself as the bread of life. And that is why the Bible always presents him, or always presents his people, in their relationship to him, as feeding upon Christ.

Now this is the argument that the apostle has here. Christ has presented, Christ has become the spiritual food of his people.

Now the way he puts it is this. We have an altar, whereof they have no right which serve the tabernacle. That is, they who serve the tabernacle, that was the unconverted Jews, those who remained within the Jewish religious system.

[3 : 29] They were serving the tabernacle. And they had an altar. They offered sacrifices continually on their altar. But, he says, we, that is, Christians, and you amongst them, he says, converted Jews, we have an altar, whereof they have no right which serve the tabernacle.

And that's what he means here by Jesus being the spiritual food of his people. And, it is within that context that he brings to the fore here what he has done so often in this letter.

The background or the backdrop to all this is what happened in the Old Testament, in the sacrificial Levitical system.

And what happened was this. The bodies of the carcasses of the animals which were slain at the altar were sometimes burned without a count.

Now, the sacrificial system in the Levitical order in the Old Testament is a very complicated study, but a most rewarding one for those who want to engage in it.

[4 : 52] I may put it just very briefly and very generally for purposes here tonight. There were some sacrifices offered in the tabernacle which the worshipper or the offerer was allowed to eat of himself.

There were also some sacrifices which only the priests were allowed to eat of. But there was a class of sacrifices known as the sin offering or the burnt offering offered on the Day of Atonement which neither offerer nor priest were allowed to eat of.

What happened was this. The animal was slain at the altar. The priest proceeded into the tabernacle and sprinkled the blood towards the mercy seat or towards the veil of what was known as the most holy place.

And then a fit person carried the carcass out and away from the precincts of the tabernacle away from the camp altogether and was burnt wholly away from the precincts of the tabernacle.

And that's what we have here in verse 11. The bodies or the carcasses of those animals whose blood is brought into the tabernacle and the holy place by the high priest for sin their carcasses are burned without the camp.

[6 : 17] Wherefore Jesus also that he might sanctify the people with his own blood suffered without the gate.

And what he's telling us here is this the sacrificial system under Moses prefigured or foreshadowed or was a type of the Christ who was to come.

And that is why the New Testament for example tells us that in the Old Testament times God spoke about the coming Christ through the prophets and through that Levitical sacrificial system.

The Old Testament in other words was constantly pointing forward to the coming Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

And that is why the types of the sacrifices are a most rewarding study because they are full of Jesus. they are pointing forward to his coming.

[7 : 28] And so as he speaks of the sacrifice of the Old Testament that inevitably opens the door for him to speak about the suffering of Jesus Christ.

And the point he's making here is this that Christ in his sufferings is inseparably connected with the Christian in this world.

I'll put it another way. If we are to be Christians we are to be companions of Jesus Christ. We are to be with Jesus Christ.

We are to go to Jesus Christ. We are to be where Christ himself is and that is what he says here. Seeing he said in accordance with a type that foreshadowed him seeing he had to suffer out with the gate we too are to go to where he is.

We are to go to him out with the camp. And no matter what it costs us we are to go there.

[8 : 42] It cost him and this is the point he is making. And now you will see that there is an overlapping of this sermon or of this theme with the theme that you heard here this morning. There is an overlapping and that may not that of course is for a purpose undoubtedly in the providence of God.

As Jesus went outside the gate bearing the cross and bearing the reproach and bearing the shame associated with his death so you have to go where he is out with the camp bearing his reproach.

And remember he says as you live like that and it isn't easy remember that you have no continuing city remember you are not to be here all the time you are not always to be bearing that reproach.

there is a time coming when there will be no time we seek this city which is to come.

We suffer for him here as the epistle of the Romans so clearly puts it and there is many other passages in the New Testament we suffer for him here but we remember as we suffer that there is a day coming when sufferings will be no more.

[10 : 01] Now that I take it is the picture that the apostle brings before us in these verses and I want very briefly here tonight to look with you at two or three things first of all where Christ went out with the gate secondly why he went there to sanctify the people with his blood thirdly where we are to go to him out with the camp we are to go out with the camp and we are to go to him out with the camp and this is how we are to go bearing his reproach remembering that our time for doing it is set it is limited let us look then first of all at where Christ went Christ suffered without the gate now without the gate here means outside Jerusalem as the hymn writer puts it whether it was a green hill or not I don't think it was a green hill it was a very bare patch took ground the place of the skull

Golgotha but it was outside the city wall outside the gate there is a significance in that there is a significance in everything the bible tells us and part of that significance is this it speaks to us of the heinousness of sin you see when the body of the when the carcass of the animal that was offered as a sin offering was burnt was burnt away from the camp and wholly burnt consumed by the fire it was that was done under the leading of the spirit of God to show the awfulness the heinousness of the sin for which that animal was offered so when Jesus was led away to be crucified in accordance with the word of God he was led away to suffer and to die out with the camp this was part of his humiliation part of the reproach part of the shame and part of the offence connected with his death he was not allowed to die within the gate and when these people led him that of that morning outside the gate of the city to Golgotha little did they know that they were fulfilling scripture which in prophecy and in type had said that he would be numbered with a transgressor whose place in death the criminals whose place in death was outside the city and it shows us something else not just first of all the heinousness of sin but also this secondly that these people who crucified him outside Jerusalem had no time for Jesus either in his life or in his death he came into their midst and they didn't want him we don't want this man to be king over us he came unto his own and his own received him not they despised him and they rejected him they didn't want his healing ministry they didn't want his power exercised in their midst at all they had no time for

Jesus so he died outside the gate and outside the gate was the place which was always associated with the idea of forsakenness in death these criminals for example the two thieves who were crucified with him were crucified there because society had forsaken them society had abandoned them because of what they were they were alienated from society they were condemned by society and they were alone outcasts from society damned by society and they were dying in that condition unwanted and alone and forsaken so was Jesus but not because he was a criminal he was numbered with a transgressive but he was dying like that because he was bearing our sins he had to die there because sin is ugly in its nature and in its effects there is shame and guilt associated with sin he was there because he was bearing out sins he was alone as the spirit tells us in the spirit of prophecy i i was i i i trot the wine press alone and of this host of people there was no one with me i looked on my right hand and viewed but none to know me where i cried to thee oh god i said thou art my refuge alone and when he cried there was silence from heaven my god my god why has thou forsaken me he was alone in his death he was forsaken by friend and foe in his death they all forsook him and fled he was condemned in his death he was alienated in his death and he was an outcast in his death that is where Jesus died outside the gate why well this verse answers to sanctify the people with his blood now the word blood here as it does always does in new testament means just Jesus and the work that he did Jesus in his obedience unto death even the death of the cross and Jesus came into this life took our nature took our sins and died our death so that we might be sanctified now of course again the old testament types signified this when the animal was slain the blood was taken a vessel by the priest he went into the most holy place and he sprinkled the blood towards the most holy place towards the mercy seat that signified that sin our sin that our sin had to be dealt with

God word you see my friend it is not against society that you sin it is against God that you sin the psalmist puts it better than anyone can put it in psalm 51 against thee thee only have I sinned the sin that you commit against God affects and influences society of course it does but in the first place remember this it is sin against God and therefore sin is to be dealt with God word and that is why we say that the atoning work of Christ is essentially God word and that's what was signified by the blood being sprinkled towards the veil and the mercy seat sin has to be dealt with in its God word direction and so Jesus suffered and died to sanctify his people now the word sanctify means to forgive our sins to cleanse us from our sins and as forgiven cleansed sinners to separate us to

God that thought is right at the heart of the word sanctifying a people who are set apart through the forgiveness of Christ and the cleansing influence and efficacy of his blood set apart to the service of God that's why Jesus died that he may have a people set apart separated by his blood for himself and to himself now that is of paramount importance if you are to understand what this passage means Jesus died to bring us to God Jesus died to separate us to himself to sanctify us through his blood and as someone has put it it is the fact that Christ has sanctified his people that is what calls them to go out with the camp therefore let us go forth unto him out with the camp bearing his reproach and that leads to the third point here where we are to go out with the camp now the camp and the gate are synonymous terms

[19 : 29] Jesus suffered out with the gate or the walls or the boundary of Jerusalem and we as those for whom he died are to go out with the gate or the boundary ourselves now of course the great question is what is the boundary what is the camp as I said for him it was Jerusalem Jerusalem the place where you had the seat of established religion the seat of the political system and the legislative system and the social customs of the day that was the camp for him it was within that camp that he was condemned he was hated in there he was unwanted in there so they put him out of there it was within that camp that people schemed to betray him and to destroy him it was within that camp that he was rejected and abandoned for the likes of

Barabbas and others the world as it was represented by the Jerusalem of his day got rid of Christ they didn't want him and they wouldn't have him and therefore says the apostle here that is what this world is going to mean to us as well and that is what is going out is going to mean to us what it meant to him what it meant to him he was put into the place by them where he was alone where he was forsaken where he was an outcast out of which he cried to God for help in which he discovered and I used the word advisedly inverted commas or in which rather there was revealed to us in his death the ugliness and the shame and the guilt of sin a crucified saviour said someone is never found within the camp he is found outside the camp great new testament teaching that people abandon after peril many try to find christ within the camp many make religion their christ many make a political or social system their christ many reform their lives and many become religious and respectable in the hope that this will become their christ hope i hope that the person who registered the complaint it was someone who was speaking to me about this some time ago and i can understand what they meant you remember the documentary that was made and shown on channel four some months ago about the psalms i shall not die but live and several people from this island and other places were interviewed people who were christians myself amongst them and the camera crew were quite keen to find out how each one became a christian and what becoming a christian meant to him or to her and so each one in his own way tried to explain what conversion was and one of the criticism that was levelled against that program was that it was also negative that each one of us seemed to speak about what christ or coming to christ if we convert to christ meant in our lives it broke us from this and people spoke about drink and about sport and about various things it broke them away from that kind of life now the criticism was that's too negative you've

got to show the positive side of it all but my friend do you remember don't you forget this that the reason why these people were broken away from that kind of life was because they came to him is that negative is that negative let us go forth unto him out with the camp you don't go into a vast emptiness into a vacuum as if you leave somebody behind you and where are you going a wilderness there's nothing oh I know that that's the way a lot of people think of Christianity some person confronted tonight with the thought of maybe committing his life or her life to Christ what's it going to mean to me you think of what I've got to give up you think of what I've got to leave behind think of all these things think of all these things and I tell you this on the authority of God's word there'll be many things you have to leave behind and many things you will have to give up you can't take Christ with you into these things as I'm going to show you I open a minute but my friend that's only one side of it the positive side if you want to put it that is where you are coming to you are coming to Jesus and look then at what you're taking up is that a wilderness is Christ a wilderness is Christ a vacuum is Christ an emptiness

Christ is a room incomparably greater than anything you leave behind we go forth on to him outside the camp and we go outside the camp because he is there we renounce we leave we give up we abandon for his sake see that you always emphasize that I suppose that without a doubt our environment our upbringing our culture our attitudes will determine to some extent to a certain extent what things you do abandon when you become a Christian having said that I can't get away from the New Testament picture to my mind clearly presented that becoming a Christian involves renunciation involves abandonment involves leaving and coming to Jesus Christ for the sake and sin becomes to the convert what it was to Jesus a curse and you'll never paint sin in any other color it will always be a curse my friend

Jesus doesn't make it easier or more comfortable for the convert to live in sin through his connection with Jesus he discovers the awfulness and the desert and the hellishness of sin and he wants to distance himself from sin if Jesus was willing to go out with the gate for sin surely you and I ought to be willing to go out with the camp that we may die to sin the sin that he bore took him outside the gate and the sin that you will of necessity have to shun will take you outside the camp and I come back to something I said earlier I know that there are some people who will object to this and who will say surely the most effective witness I can have as a Christian is to stay inside the camp lead and live the life I've always led and lived and bring Christ with me where I am join let him and I join the camp together

[28 : 46] I'll take out a membership card for him with myself and he'll stay in my seat he'll come into my scene and then he will enable me to show those within that camp how different I am to him doesn't work and I'll tell you why it doesn't work because the power of Jesus Christ constrains you to break with the camp Christ as someone put it does not commission you to go back except to rescue others from the camp as he did himself he was with them to rescue them from and this is what that man went on to say the power for effective service within the camp comes from going to Christ outside the camp the more you know the forgiving and the cleansing power of his presence the more he constrains you to abandon the camp the same principle applies to us today as it applies to these

Hebrew Christians whatever is opposed to Christ whatever and whoever has no room for Christ whoever or whatever can do without Christ we leave we renounce we bid goodbye even if it means that we stand alone because the Christ of the Bible is the one who suffered and who died for sin and who was risen again who was raised again to deliver us from sin we go out to him in adoration in worship in commitment in thanksgiving in service we go out to him and we live with him and we live for him and we live to his glory and for his sake oh if you want to have an easy life as a Christian close this page in the word of God and all the other passages in the New Testament which remind you of what it's going to cost you as you heard today which reminds you of the self-denial and the self-sacrifice that is necessary if you are to be a believer it isn't easy but then who said it was the only person who would say it is easy is a person who is not faithful to the word of God but we abide by the teaching of this word and we go out to him out with the camp how do I go bearing his reproach as we sang here tonight

Psalms 69 also Psalm 22 he bore reproach for us we will have to bear reproach for him what does it mean to bear the reproach of Christ what reproach did he bear what shame did he have to bear well this shame the New Testament tells us they mis-called they told lies about they said he was a wine drinker he wasn't they said he was a glutton he wasn't they said he had a devil he didn't they said he was a devil he wasn't they said he deceived people he never did they said he blasphemed but he didn't and they said all these things about him because of what he was and this is the reproach that Christians have to bear as well the things that people say and the things that people do just because you are what you are the world's attitude of

Jesus will never change the world's attitude of the church will never change it will never change the church the world will never love the Christian we respect them but never love them look at what chapter 11 tells us about Moses this great man of God he left Egypt he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter he esteemed he chose to suffer affliction of the people of God because he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasure of Egypt the shame of having to give up having to leave having to come out and having to separate himself from the camp was dying to him compared with what he was getting as a result so it is with the Christians he goes to Christ bearing his reproach the scorn being made fun of when he arrives in certain circles people elbow one another see who came in when he walks in amongst circles people will tell blue jokes because he's a

Christian they're going to make life rough tough difficult almost impossible for him same with Jesus certainly the same they threw the same in his face in his life and even in his death to the very end of his life in his world they cast scorn and reproach in his teeth well the believers got to go through the bitterness and the pain and the anguish of becoming a leper and becoming an outcast for the sake of Jesus Christ experiencing the awful loneliness of it all having to give up so much perhaps in the way of honour and advantage and prestige and of course what I'm afraid a lot of young Christians today are not prepared to give up a lot of pleasure so called for the sake of

[35 : 12] Christ I think myself that there were some people maybe twenty years ago who sowed seeds in the hearts of young people throughout Christendom in the way of Christian liberty who are rueing the day that they ever open their mouth on that theme they are today reaping what they have sown the more the church separates herself for Christ and in his interests the more effective the church's witness will be I have never ever been convinced by the argument that a Christian a Christian's witness is more effective the more he adapts himself to the lifestyle of the camp

I have never ever been convinced by that argument because I've known through the years that the most effective witness of all is the one which is made by the person who is different and what makes him different is that he goes out to Christ in faith in commitment in service to where he is and the approach of being different there is terribly difficult to bear to be identified with him we must be prepared to bear our heads to reproach as he bore his head as I said earlier the servant is not greater than his mouth but there's one other thing here finally for here he says we have no continuing city but we seek one to come and I think this is what you have right throughout the New

Testament again the two things contrasted the time of suffering the time of trouble the time when you have to adapt the problems of being one of Christ's on the one hand and the time when you will have a blessed release and deliverance from all that you are passing through as a Christian this period of enduring reproach will not always continue there's an end to it the same argument Paul had in Romans oh light affliction which is but for a moment for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding an eternal weight of glory the psalmist said again in Psalm 34 the troubles that afflict the just in number many be but yet at length out of them all the Lord doth set them free in this life are as Jesus said to the disciples in this world ye shall have tribulations but be of good cheer be of good comfort there is one to come when there will be no trouble no afflictions no shame no reproach no scorn no cross to bear when the servant shall see him as he is where they shall be with him where he is is it is it not worth my friend suffering affliction for the sake of

Christ for a little time is that not worth it knowing that an endless eternity of blessedness stretches ahead of you here we have no continuing city he doesn't leave it like that and I just mention these words closing by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name but to do good and to communicate forget not for with such sacrifice God is well pleased a negative life ah perish the thought here you have them offering praise to God thanking him for his goodness and separating them by his grace and living a life of goodness in this world communicating and doing good being what they ought to be in the name of Christ and for the sake of Christ as they serve Christ in the camp but they serve him in the camp remember

I said earlier only as they go out by faith and commitment to him who suffered for them out with the camp you know there's a very easy question that this passage leaves you and I with tonight as simple as this what are you prepared to sacrifice in the interests of a life of commitment to Jesus Christ that's the question that's the question how far are you prepared to go for the sake of Jesus Christ let us pray Lord be merciful to us here this evening and accept our thanks for thy great forbearance thy goodness and thy love help us to commit our way to thyself and to know what it is to have fellowship with thee as the one who suffered for our sake give us grace that we may be prepared to suffer for thy sake for

[41 : 05] Jesus sake Amen