

引言 INTRODUCTION

We care about our health. Our body and mind have to function properly for us to carry on our daily duties. Most people do annual check-up. Based on the test results, doctors will give recommendations on things like diet, exercise and even medications. Adjustments must be made before health concerns become diseases. If we pay attention to our physical life, should we watch out for our spiritual life too? How is your relationship with God? Is your faith growing since you received Jesus? A Gallop Poll conducted in May of this year shows that only 81% of the people interviewed said that they believe in God. That is a drop in six percent compared to a similar poll done in 2017. It is also the lowest number since Gallop started the survey in 1944. In the same study, 50% of the respondents rated the current moral values in the U.S. as “poor.” There is a possible correlation that fewer people believe in God because they see more bad behaviors in the society. Those findings are nothing new. Jesus said it two thousand years ago that people will turn cold to the faith and wickedness will be rampant. The world will keep going downhill. But the good news is that God will never change. Our hope is in Him. We stay alert to potential danger, but we should not be overwhelmed by fear. As the author of Hebrews wraps up his letter, he gives the readers some final encouragement. They must persevere in their faith in a fallen world. We need to do the same. We continue to love God and His people. We show compassion to those in need. We must live out our faith in and outside of the church. Faith should not only be a noun, but it must also be an action word.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 分享主愛 Share Our Affection

First of all, the author encourages us to share our affection with others. Let us read from **verse 1-5**. The ESV translation for verse 1 is the closest we can get from the original text. Some of you know that we get the city name Philadelphia from the Greek word for brotherly love. *Phileo* means friendly-love and *adelphos* stands for a brother. Of course, by saying brothers it also includes sisters. The idea is to treat fellow believers like family members. The passage gives us some examples of how to share our affection with others. First is **hospitality**. This word in Greek literally means a love for strangers. It was a norm in the Biblical world to serve any traveler passing by one's home. In the New Testament times, traveling evangelists had to rely on believers for food and accommodation. At that time, inns were expensive and unsafe, and the living conditions were inferior to the one-star motels today. The two more well-known examples in the Bible where people unknowingly entertained angels happened to Abraham and Lot. The point is that you can open your home to whoever in need. Second, in relation to hospitality is **sympathy**. The readers must identify with those who suffered for their faith. We mentioned before that inmates at that time had to count on friends and family members to provide for food and clothing. It certainly took risk to visit someone being locked up for sharing the gospel. But genuine love for others must involve self-sacrifice. Third, the author turns to marriage as he brings up the topic of **fidelity**. Showing romantic love to anyone outside marriage is adultery. God sees marriage as sacred. It is the closest relationship between two persons – in body, mind

and spirit. The Bible also uses marriage to describe our relationship with God. For example, Revelation 19 tells us that there will be a future wedding banquet in heaven. Jesus will be the groom and His wife is the church, which is the sum total of all the believers throughout history. As such, God wants us to maintain purity in our marriage. Fourth, the author urges us to find **security** in God's blessings. Whether we have a lot or a little, it is all from the Lord. Satan surely knows how to entice us with greed. He whispers to us: "Keep up with the Jones! You deserve it." We should love God more than our stuff. A person who loves money will love himself more and love God and others less. The Tenth Commandment warns us against coveting others' house, wife, servants and livestock. The secular world encourages us to drool over people's cars and other possessions. How can we stay content? It must come from our relationship with God. The author quotes from Deuteronomy in verse 5: "**I will never leave you nor forsake you.**" That was part of Moses' farewell speech to the Israelites. Moses knew God was about to take him home. God had elected Joshua as Moses' successor to bring His people into Canaan. Without a doubt, it was a daunting task. But fear not! God promised to be with His children if they would obey Him. They must not forget God's previous works. Since He led them out of Egypt and through the wilderness, He would definitely take them to the Promised Land. The message was a constant reminder to the readers of this letter. God would be with them even when they suffered for their faith. They were never alone in hardship. God would also provide for their needs in extreme poverty. Compared to them, we live in abundance. Most of us are far from rich. But contentment does not depend on how much we have. It is a measurement of our thankfulness to God. Gratitude should be our attitude. Give thanks every morning you open your eyes. Give thanks when you open the fridge and your closet. Give thanks every time you grab your car door and house door. You will grumble less if you thank God more. Love God first, share your affection with others and we will love ourselves less.

2. 聽從主僕 Show Our Attention

We have to share our affection with others. The second expression of our faith is about showing attention to the leaders. Two groups of leader are mentioned in this chapter. Look at verse 7: **Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.** These leaders "spoke" the Word of God to them in the past. They could be missionaries who founded churches or former teachers. They had direct impact on people's faith. The author encourages his readers to consider the outcome of the way of life for those leaders. They might have an effective ministry in their golden years. But did they maintain faithfulness to God to the end? How a person conducts himself is more important than what he teaches. There were some key people who helped me when I was a young Christian. That include the brother who led me to Jesus, the couple who was my youth counselors, the pastors in my first home-church. What retains in my mind are their characters, their passion for the gospel and their love for God and people. They motivated me to become a better believer. You may have some spiritual leaders who influence you. Do not idolize them as if they had haloes over their heads. Like you, they are only servants of God. But imitate after their godly examples. The Lord may not call you to preach on a podium, write books or lead a church like they do. But you can learn from them and share the gospel with your friends and family, serve in church ministries or minister to strangers with God's love. Other than the former leaders, the readers should also show attention to their current leaders. Look at verse 17: **Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let**

them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Two things they should do to their leaders: obey them and submit to them. The two actions are related. Obedience can be passive. Some drivers slow down reluctantly when they see a cop car from a distance. Not doing so will cause serious consequence. Whereas, submission comes from the heart. For example, at a Council meeting coworkers will discuss various church matters. Sometimes, voting is needed when we cannot come to a consensus. The minority will need to submit to the majority. We let go of our personal views to preserve unity. If we trust our leaders on church issues, how much more should we should follow them in spiritual matters? They encourage you to bring your Bible to the church and attend Friday meetings and Sunday schools. Those are not just good suggestions but they are beneficial to your spiritual growth. Being your pastor, I am responsible for other specific tasks. For example, I talk to baptism applicants before they begin a baptism class. Also, I evaluate the spiritual background of future bride and groom if they ask me to officiate their wedding. People must be Christians before I administer their baptism or wedding. If I notice that they are not quite clear about their salvation, I would suggest them to hold on. That may upset some people. My duty is to oversee people's spiritual health. In the author's words, spiritual leaders keep watching over people's souls. The word translated as "keep watch" has the sense of staying awake. We can think of a shepherd who keeps an eye on his sheep, or a guard stays alert for any enemy during the night. Also, when the term is used in the New Testament, it is always associated with prayer. The implication is clear. Church leaders do not only teach the Bible, they also pray for the spiritual wellbeing of their flock. Ultimately, they will have to report back to God about the spiritual health of their sheep. Those members who are actively growing in their faith will bring joy to their leaders. However, those who are lukewarm will bring their leaders sorrow.

3. 頌讚主名 Shower Our Adoration

Christian life is characterized by sharing our affection with others and showing our attention to spiritual leaders. Thirdly, expression of our faith must include showering our adoration to God. Before talking about worshipping God, the author introduces two topics from verse 9 to 14 as a transition. I will briefly summarize those two issues. In verses 9 and 10, the author warns his readers against some "diverse and strange teachings" that are contrary to the Christian faith. Idolatry was common at that time. Many New Testament writers talk about it. Nowadays, we are also bombarded by different diverse and strange teachings. They can be some established form of religions, or spiritual practices, superstition, meditation, psychology, healing, etc. Often Christians can be fooled if they are not being careful. Our focus should not only be what works the best and the quickest. We also need to ask if those teachings will draw us closer to or away from God. One religious practice the readers were familiar with was the Old Testament animal sacrifice. The readers should not go back to those rituals. The author uses the Day of Atonement as a backdrop in verse 11 to 14 to present his arguments. According to Leviticus 16, a priest took animal blood into the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle to atone for people's sins. The rest of the animals would be burned outside of the camp. It was a collection site for trash and unclean refuse. No one wants to go there to get himself defiled. Jesus was crucified outside Jerusalem. Jesus endured the impurity of our sins outside of the city. In order to receive Jesus' salvation grace, the author encourages his readers to go to the Lord "outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured." They must identify with Jesus in His suffering. Because of what Jesus had accomplished, He put an end to animal sacrifice. From then on, God requires a different kind of

sacrifice. Let us look at **verse 15-16**. First, God looks for a sacrifice of praise. It is an offering of thanksgiving. The author describes it as the fruit of our lips. We let our emotions flow when we praise God. We utter prayer of adoration and we sing songs. Years ago there was a worship song titled “We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise.” The second stanza of the lyrics read: “*And we offer up to You the sacrifices of thanksgiving; And we offer up to You the sacrifices of joy.*” Worship should be a vibrant celebration that is filled with joy. The second form of sacrifice that God delights in are the sacrifices of good work. That echoes with what the author says at the beginning of the chapter. God sees our caring for people’s needs as a form of offering to Him. That reminds us of Jesus words of compliment as He evaluates our noble deeds. Little things that we do to the least of the brothers will be like doing to the Lord. People receive benefits and God gets the glory. Toward the closing of the letter, the author invokes in a what we call benediction in **verse 20-21**. It is a blessing to the readers and an anthem of praise to God. It begins with three titles for God. Our Father is the God of peace. He reconciles sinners to Himself and makes a covenant with them through the blood of Jesus. Their future destiny has been secured. They can enjoy an eternal peace in Him no matter what hardship they may face in this world. Jesus is addressed as our Lord in this passage. He is the Master of those who follow Him. Another name for Jesus here is “the great shepherd of the sheep.” That draws us to an Old Testament passage such as Psalm 23 that depicts God as our caring shepherd. He provides for His sheep and protects them from harm. Jesus also declares Himself as the Good Shepherd in John 10. He leads His sheep by His voice. He gives them abundant life. He even laid down His life for them. God deserves our praise because of all those and many blessings.

結論 CONCLUSION

We must live out our faith in and outside of the church. Faith should not only be a noun, but it must also be an action word. Truth stands no matter how our world may change. Sometimes, God reminds us about that in some special ways. Balsora Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Texas was destroyed in an unknown fire in mid-June. Unfortunately, almost everything was gone in the flame. But there was a bitter-sweet moment to the tragic story. A charred cross remained in the sanctuary. Later, a volunteer fireman posted on the social media: “The fire took the structure, but not the cross. A symbol that the building was just that, a building. The Church is the congregation, and where two or more gather, there He shall be also.” The scene brought joyful tears to many church members. Pastor Smith commented that the cross was “a sign from God, saying, ‘Don't worry, I'm still here and I'm going to lead you forward.’” The picture is a message of hope to Christians. Oppressions of every kind to our faith will continue. But as the heat turns up, the cross of Jesus Christ will continue to stand. The church will carry on the gospel message until Jesus returns.

引言 INTRODUCTION

我們都關心自己的健康。我們的身心必須正常運作，才能處理日常的事務。很多人每年都會做健康檢查。根據檢驗的結果，醫生會提出飲食、運動甚至藥物各方面的建議。你便必須在健康問題出現之前做出調整。如果我們注意我們的身體，我們是否也應該注意自己的靈魂？你與神的關係如何？自從你接受耶穌以來，你的信心是否在增長？今年 5 月進行的 Gallop 民意調查顯示，只有 81% 的受訪者表示他們相信神。與 2017 年進行的類似調查相比，這個數字下降了 6%。這也是自 1944 年 Gallop 開始這項調查以來的最低數字。在同一個研究中，50% 的受訪者評估美國目前的道德水平為「差」。兩項數據可能是有關連的。更少的人相信神，因為他們看到社會上更多的不法行為。這些發現並不是什麼新鮮事。耶穌在兩千年前就說過，人們會逐漸對信仰冷淡，罪會變得更猖獗。世界將繼續走下坡。但好消息是神永遠不會改變。我們的盼望是在神身上。我們要常常提高警覺，但我們不應該被恐懼所嚇倒。當希伯來書的作者結束他的書信時，他給了讀者一些最後的鼓勵。他們必須在墮落的世界中堅持信仰。我們也需要這樣做。我們繼續愛神和祂的子民。我們對有需要的人表示憐憫。我們必須在教會內外活出我們的信心。信心不應該只是一個名詞，它還必須是一個動詞。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 分享主愛 Share Our Affection

首先，作者鼓勵我們與別人分享主的愛。讓我們來讀第 1-5 節。有些人可能知道費城的英文名稱是來自希臘文弟兄的愛這個字。Phileo 是指友好的愛，而 adelphos 代表弟兄。當然，說到弟兄也包括姐妹在內。整體的意思是看待信徒如同家人一樣。這段經文給了我們一些建議，如何與別人分享主的愛。首先是款待客人。這個用詞在希臘文的字面意思是對陌生人的愛。在聖經世界中，接待經過自己家的旅客是一個普遍習俗。在新約時代，旅行佈道者必須依靠信徒提供食物和住宿。那時的旅館並不便宜，也不安全，住宿條件更不如現在的一星級酒店。聖經中兩個我們比較熟悉招待天使的例子是發生在亞伯拉罕和羅得的身上。重點是你可以開放你的家招待有需要的人。其次，與款待客人有關的是憐憫別人。讀者必須認同那些為信仰受苦的人。我們之前提到過，當時坐牢的人必須依靠朋友和家人來提供食物和衣服。去探訪因傳福音而被關起來的人

當然是冒險的。但對他人真誠的愛必須帶有犧牲。第三，作者把話題轉到家庭，提出**婚姻的忠誠**。聖經定義任何婚姻以外的男女關係都是姦淫。神看婚姻是神聖的。這是兩個人之間最親密的關係：身體、情感和靈魂。聖經也用婚姻來描述我們與神的關係。例如，啟示錄 19 章告訴我們，將來天上會有一場婚宴。耶穌是新郎，祂的妻子是教會，就是歷史上所有信徒的總和。因此，神希望我們在婚姻中保持貞潔。第四，作者敦促我們在神的祝福上**學會知足**。不管我們有多少，都是從主來的。撒旦最喜歡引誘我們貪心。他在我們耳邊說：「你要追上別人！這是你該得的。」我們必須愛神過於愛自己的財物。一個愛錢的人會更愛自己，更少愛神和別人。第十誡提醒我們不要貪戀別人的房子、妻子、僕人和牲畜。俗世鼓勵我們貪愛別人的汽車和其他財物。我們怎樣才能保持滿足？知足的心必須來自我們與神的關係。作者在第 5 節引用了申命記說：「**我總不撇下你，也不丟棄你。**」那是摩西向以色列人告別的話。摩西知道神要帶他回天家。神揀選約書亞成為摩西的接班人，帶領祂的百姓進入迦南。毫無疑問，這是一項艱鉅的任務。但他不必害怕！神應許如果百姓願意順服祂，祂便會與他們同在。他們不應該忘記神先前的作為。既然神帶領他們離開埃及，經過曠野，祂也一定會帶他們到應許之地。這個信息不斷地提醒這封信的讀者。即使他們為信仰受苦，神也會與他們同在。他們從來都不孤單。神會在他們極度貧困中供應他們的需要。與他們相比，我們的生活實在很充裕。我們大多數人談不上富有。但知足並不取決於我們擁有多少，它是衡量我們對神感恩的心。感恩應該是我們常常保持的態度。每天早上睜開眼睛時便感謝神。打開冰箱和衣櫃時也要感謝神。每次打開車門和房門時都要感謝神。如果你多感謝神，你就會少抱怨。先愛神，與他人分享神的愛，我們就會少愛自己。

2. 聽從主僕 Show Our Attention

我們必須與別人分享主的愛。我們信心第二方面的表現是聽從主僕。這一章提到了兩批領袖。請看第 7 節：**從前引導你們、傳神之道給你們的人，你們要想念他們，效法他們的信心，留心看他們為人的結局。**這些領袖過去曾向他們傳神之道。他們可能是建立教會的宣教士或以前的聖經老師。他們直接影響信徒的信仰。作者鼓勵讀者要思考那些領袖的生活行為。他們可能在黃金的歲月中有一個有效的事工，但他們是否一直忠心跟隨神？一個人的品格比他的教導更重要。當我剛信主時，有一些領袖幫助了我。其中包括帶我接受耶穌的弟兄、一對輔導青年團契的夫婦、並教會的幾位牧師。讓我印象深刻的是他們的品格、他們對傳福音的熱誠以及他們對神和人的愛。他們激勵我成為一個更好的信徒。你可能有一些影響你的屬靈領袖。不要崇拜他們，彷彿他們頭上有光環。和你一樣，他們只是神的僕人。但要效法他們敬虔的榜樣。主可能不會像

他們那樣呼召你在講台上講道、寫書或帶領教會。但你可以向他們學習如何向人傳福音，在教會服事，或以神的愛服事陌生人。除了以前的領袖之外，讀者還應該聽從目前的領袖。請看第 17 節：**你們要依從那些引導你們的，且要順服；因他們為你們的靈魂時刻警醒，好像那將來交賬的人。你們要使他們交的時候有快樂，不至憂愁；若憂愁就與你們無益了。**他們應該向領袖做兩件事：依從並順服他們。兩方面是相關的。依從可以是被動的。一些司機在遠處看到警車時便乖乖地放慢速度。不這樣做會有嚴重的後果。但順服是發自內心的。例如，在同工會議上，我們會討論各種教會事務。有時，當我們無法達成協議時，就需要投票。少數人需要服從多數人。我們放棄個人觀點以保持合一。如果我們在教會事務上信任我們的領袖，那麼在屬靈的事情上我們不是更應該跟隨他們嗎？屬靈領袖鼓勵你帶自己的聖經來聚會，並參加週五的團契和主日學。這些不僅是好的建議，而且對你的靈命成長有益處。作為你的牧師，我還負責其他事務。例如，在開始浸禮班之前，我會與浸禮申請人面談。此外，如果有人要求我主持婚禮，我會評估一下未來新娘和新郎的信仰背景。浸禮或婚禮的申請人都必須是基督徒。如果他們對自己的救恩不太清楚，我會建議他們再等一會。有些人可能會因此被冒犯。我的職責是監督人們的屬靈光景。用作者的話說，屬靈領袖一直為別人的靈魂時刻警醒。警醒的意思是保持清醒。我們可以想像一個牧羊人看守羊群，或是一個守衛在夜間提防敵人。此外，警醒這個字在新約常常與禱告同時出現。含義很明確。教會領袖不僅教導聖經，還為羊群的屬靈健康禱告。最終，他們必須向神報告羊群的屬靈狀況。那些在信仰上積極成長的成員會帶給領袖喜樂。然而，那些不冷不熱的信徒會使領袖覺得憂傷。

3. 頌讚主名 Shower Our Adoration

基督徒的生活包括與別人分享主的愛，並聽從屬靈領袖。第三，我們信仰的表達必須包括頌讚主的名。在談到敬拜神之前，作者從第 9 節到第 14 節先介紹兩個主題。我會簡單總結這兩個課題。在第 9 節和第 10 節中，作者警告他的讀者不要接受一些與基督信仰背道而馳「**諸般怪異的教訓**」。那時偶像敬拜很普遍，許多新約作者都有談論到。如今，我們也會接觸到各種諸般怪異的教訓。它們可能是某些宗教信仰，也可能是屬靈的操練、迷信、默想、心理學、治療等。如果基督徒不小心也可能會被愚弄。我們不應該注意那種方法最有效和最快捷。我們還需要問那些學說會使我們更接近或是遠離神。讀者熟悉的一種宗教行為是舊約中的獻祭。讀者不應該再回到那些儀式。作者在第 11 至 14 節以贖罪日為背景來提出他的論點。根據利未記 16 章，一位祭司將動物的血帶入會幕的至聖所為人贖罪。動物的其餘部份會在營地外被燒掉。那是收集垃圾和不潔淨東西的地方。沒有人願意去那裡玷污自己。耶穌是在耶路撒冷的外圍被釘

死在十字架上的。耶穌在城外承擔了我們罪的污穢。為了接受主的救贖恩典，作者鼓勵他的讀者要「**出到營外，就了他去，忍受他所受的凌辱**」。他們必須認同耶穌的苦難。由於耶穌已經完成了救贖，祂中止了動物獻祭。從那時起，神要求另一種的祭。讓我們看**第 15-16 節**。首先，神要求頌讚的祭。那是感恩的祭。作者將它形容為我們嘴唇的果子。當我們讚美神之時，我們讓情感流動。我們發出敬拜的祈禱和歌聲。多年前有一首敬拜詩歌，名為《讚美祭》。歌詞的第二節寫道：「我們以感恩的心，來向你獻上感謝的祭。我們以喜樂的心，來獻上讚美的祭。」敬拜應該是喜樂洋溢並充滿活力的慶典。神所喜悅的第二種祭是我們的善事。這與作者在本章開始時所說的相呼應。神把我們對人的關心看作是對祂的奉獻。這讓我們想起了耶穌讚賞我們的好行為。我們做在最小的弟兄身上的美事，就像做在主的身上一樣。別人得益處，神得到榮耀。在這封信的結尾，作者在**第 20-21 節**以一段祝福作結束。這是對讀者的祝福，也是對神的讚美。它以三個神的稱呼作開始。天父是賜平安的神。祂使罪人與自己和好，並通過耶穌的寶血與他們立約。他們永恆的結局已經確定了。無論他們在這個世界上遇到什麼困難，他們都可以在神裡面享受持久的平安。在這段經文中，耶穌被稱為我們的主。祂是跟隨者生命的主人。在這裡，耶穌的另一個稱呼是「群羊的大牧人」。這使我們聯想到舊約中的一些經文，例如詩篇 23 篇，它把神描述為關心我們的牧羊人。祂供應羊群的需要並保護牠們免受災害。耶穌在約翰福音 10 章也宣稱自己是好牧人。祂用自己的聲音引導羊群，祂賜給他們豐盛的生命，祂甚至為他們捨命。基於這一切和許多其他的祝福，神配得我們讚美。

結論 CONCLUSION

我們必須在教會內外活出我們的信心。信心不應該只是一個名詞，它還必須是一個動詞。無論我們的世界如何改變，真理依然站穩。有時候，神會以一些特別的方式提醒我們這一點。德克薩斯州某個城市的一所浸信會在 6 月中旬在一場火災中被毀。很可惜，幾乎所有的東西都化為灰燼。但在這個悲劇中仍然有一個讓人喜樂的時刻。一個燒焦的十字架留在大堂中間。隨後，一名志願消防員在社交媒體上分享：「大火毀滅了結構，但沒有燒掉十字架。這告訴我們建築物就只是樓房而已。教會是關乎會眾，只要兩個或更多人聚集的地方，主就在那裡。」這一幕讓許多會友喜極而泣。史密斯牧師評論說，那個十字架是「來自神的信息，祂說，『別擔心，我還在這裡，我會帶領你們前進。』」這幅圖畫向基督徒傳遞了希望的信息。對信仰的各種壓迫將繼續存在。但隨著溫度上升，耶穌基督的十字架會依然站立。教會將繼續傳揚福音，直到耶穌再來。