

“ARE WE THERE YET?” SERIES

PART 3: SETTING OUT – REMEMBERING THE UNCHANGING

BEFORE THE LESSON

Our lesson is found in Hebrews 13:7-9. We will be focusing on the steady and unchanging character of Jesus. Consider reading and meditating on these verses in preparation for this study: Psalm 102:27; Malachi 3:6; Isaiah 46:4.

STARTING THE LESSON

When I read Hebrews 13:7-9 it makes me think of all the great Christian leaders we have heard cited in church over and over: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., C.S. Lewis, John Wimber (the founder of the Vineyard movement), John Wesley (the founder of Methodist Movement), and so many more. If we go all the way back to the early church leaders in Jerusalem, we have very similar examples of sound teaching and leadership as our current leaders. Leaders that teach, affirm, and reaffirm sound spiritual disciplines. And in verse 8, the writer of Hebrews reminds us that not only do we have this great legacy of gifted teachers and leaders, we have a Savior who is unchanging. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

TIPS TO SHARE WITH LEADERS

Get comfortable with silence. Letting people have 30-60 seconds to consider the question before answering is sometimes helpful. You don't have to fill every silence. Let the Holy Spirit move in silences.

STARTER QUESTION

- What is something that you could always count on – either in your childhood or as an adult? Is there a steadying presence in your life?
- In 1-2 minutes, tell us about someone in your life that you can trust.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, please come and be present with us. Open our eyes to see and our ears to hear what you want to teach us. Holy Spirit, guide our conversation that we might draw close to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

- Read Hebrews 13:7. When you read this verse, what leaders in your life do you think of?

Answers will vary.

QUESTION 2

- When we “consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith” in verse 7, what comes to mind? What outcomes would you look for in someone else to make you want to imitate them?

HEBREWS 13:7-9

⁷ Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

⁹ Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so.

Answers will vary. Depending on how success is measured, they may cite evidence like good parenting, good marriage, successful ministry, hospitality, etc.

QUESTION 3

- The writer of Hebrews tells us to “imitate their faith” in verse 7. How do we know that we’ve moved from imitating someone’s faith to possessing our own faith?

Answers will vary. The point of this question is that we must get to a place where we mature in our faith and rather than imitating someone else’s faith we feel confident in the relationship we have with Jesus.

QUESTION 4

- Verse 8 reminds us that Jesus never changes. Reflect for a moment about your relationship with Jesus in the past as compared to your relationship with him today. We know that Jesus doesn’t change, but how have you changed as your relationship with Jesus has matured?

Answers will vary.

QUESTION 5

- Verse 8 says Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This church has been under the same senior pastor since 1988, and that is about to change, and we’ve already gone through more than one crisis in 2020. Knowing that Jesus is unchanging, how do these things make you feel about him today?

Answers will vary. He is steady. We can trust him. We know that he is a constant we can depend on. It’s a comfort to know that he will never change. We can’t always trust people, but we can trust Jesus.

QUESTION 6

- In verse 7, we’re asked to remember our leaders (in the Greek it’s implied that these leaders are deceased). Then in verse 8, the writer reminds us that Jesus is with us forever. The message may be that church leaders may change, but Jesus remains the same. As we transition to our new senior pastors at the end of this year, is it a comfort to be reminded that Jesus is unchanging?

Answers will vary.

QUESTION 7

- In verse 9, the writer warns the readers to beware of “strange teachings.” In the Greek, this most likely meant non-Christian teaching, but also likely referred to a range of fringe and heretical teachings in circulation within and beyond the church in the first century. The author of Hebrews goes on to say “It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace.” How would a strange teaching about ceremonial foods contradict our understanding of grace?

We know that our salvation is based on grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. When a “strange teaching” about eating certain foods is added to that message, then we are not grasping that grace.

QUESTION 8

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Answer to the question

PRAYER MINISTRY

- Read the Great Litany from the Book of Common Prayer together. You can find it here: <https://www.bcponline.org/GreatLitany/Litany.html> You can read it as a responsive reading together as a group. As you go through the prayer, encourage your members to say a prayer for individuals or situations that come to mind. (For example, after this stanza:

That it may please thee to illumine all bishops, priests, and
deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of thy
Word; and that both by their preaching and living, they may
set it forth, and show it accordingly,
We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.

You can pray for pastors and leaders by name.

- Take time to talk about any prayer requests you may have as a group and then pray together.