**Greater Than All - wk 27 – One Last Hoorah!**

**This is a special Sunday – It’s Palm Sunday and it’s the last one in Hebrews - 7 months = Written to Jewish followers struggling with returning to their old way of life… Don’t give up, but grow up!**

**Affirming along the way the very same Jesus of Palm Sunday is God in the flesh, creator of all, greater than all, only forgiver of all sins – why would you want anything else?**

**A Final goodbye**

**(Adios – hope to see you soon) Hebrews 13:18 Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. 19 I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. (Pray we can come and see you!)**

**(The writer then prays over them) 13:20 Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21 equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

**This is a blessing – a benediction - A shepherds (pastors) blessing.**

**Much like - Numbers 6:24-26 - 24 “The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; 26 the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.”’**

**Christ exalting final prayer! (Like is a song final crescendo)**

**May this be known, present and active in your life**

**This blessing has 7 Anchors to keep you grounded.**

**7 powerful prayer of praiseworthy truths – the gospel is laid out**

**13:20 Now may the God of peace,**

**\*God is good! - Absolute the one and only God of all is a God of hope. He is not a God of hatred and violence - but peace. (Deep breath peace)**

**God is not an angry father ready to attack you! God is good and he cares about you and your life.**

**1. God is Personal (knowable)**

**He is a God who is knowable as reveled through scripture. He knows all about you & wants you to know him and his peace.**

**But that hope and goodness is not accessible due to sin.**

**That is the hard truth of the Bible… which leads to the next…**

**…who through the blood**

**\*Jesus died for you! - Crucifixion of Jesus Christ – his blood was shed.**

**His poured out blood is our salvation! His blood instead of ours!**

**Why would God do that?? Why care? Why the suffering?**

**2. God of Love 1 John 4:8 - God is love.**

**John 15:13 Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. Romans 5:8 But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. (5:10 – while were his enemies Christ died for us)**

**That cross was God’s justice for our sin because of His love.**

* **Since this Friday is Good Friday, I want to walk through what happened that day – the stations of the cross (plank)**

**That blood was both the wrath of God and the love of God on display. Bringing those who are his unto himself.**

**That blood tore down the wall of sin between us and the God of peace. We can now know the God of peace and know peace.**

**…who through the blood of the eternal covenant**

**Covenant (a testament, legal deposition, like a legal will)**

**A binding agreement between two. God’s agreement with you!**

**\*Jesus’ blood covers every sin! Every sin! For all who believe - and not just for a week or month or years – but for eternity.**

**Hebrews 7:27 - Jesus did this once for all when he offered himself as the sacrifice for the people’s sins. (one time was all that was needed)**

**This eternal covenant (initiated by Jesus’ blood) this forgiveness, is an everlasting commitment from God (Luke 22:20, Jeremiah 3:40).**

**An eternal Covenant means that this is the only way – there will be no other – this is an eternal agreement from God.**

**Cross did away will all other religions & systems including the OT temple priesthood. This was the plan from the start. (Rev 13:8, Eph 1:4) These reveals a power anchor…**

**3. God of mercy (God of forgiveness)**

**James 2:13 – Mercy triumphs over judgement.**

**God gives mercy first (before the foundations) without receiving that mercy – judgement is present. But with it… forgiveness.**

**And in case you think this is all wishful thinking…**

**…brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus,**

**\*Jesus rose from the dead! The tomb where he was laid was empty! He appeared to hundreds of people! He conquered death, just as he said.**

**If you thought he was crazy… if you ever wonder if God can really forgive everything… in case you wonder if the cross worked… Jesus rose from the dead!**

**Most significant event in eternal history, the resurrection of Jesus! This is why we celebrate on Sundays and why we have Easter!**

**Invite a friend we are going to unpack this next Sunday!!**

**4. God of power**

**Powerful enough to save you, forgive you, heal you, redeem you, restore you, strengthen you, and keep you!**

**That is the power of God reveled in the resurrection!**

**…that great Shepherd of the sheep,**

**\*Jesus the great shepherd places us in community with others!**

**The pastor (shepherd) now leads the sheep of the kingdom (the church)**

**Jesus did not leave us alone - he places us in community w/other sheep – to grow in him and look our for each other.**

**5. God of guidance - He is a good faithful shepherd. We are designed and born again into community.**

**This great shepherd will one day return – 1 Peter 5:4 - And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honor.**

**He will come not only as a shepherd – but also a king, warrior, and groom – but also always be our forever shepherd.**

**Revelation 7:17 For the Lamb in the center of the throne will be their shepherd. ‘He will lead them to springs of living water,’ and ‘God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”**

**Once you begin the journey of faith in Christ it is just beginning. John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. (He will guide & keep you)**

**Heb 13:21 …that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him…**

**God working in us – sends the infilling of the Holy Spirit**

**\*Jesus equips his sheep to live out His will**

**3 big ways we are equipped – the Holy Spirit / the Word of God / godly leaders - Jesus sends the HS to equip and mature us!**

**Given at salvation. When you are born again, the Holy Spirit moves in –**

**The HS draws us, convicts us, empowers us, guides us, teaches us, reminds us, comforts us, matures us in understanding and in holiness. This growing is known as sanctification.**

**Why are we equipped? “For doing His will… for what pleases Him.”**

**That understanding, skill, ability, talent, gift, interest – that is not for your want but His will.**

**6. God of purpose - We are not simply saved for heaven – we are saved for God’s work on earth.**

**Matt 28 - Jesus gives us a clear mission clear commission to tell the world the good news and serve your neighbors. It is God who equips you – the Holy Spirit! The outreach this Saturday!!**

**(And it is all done) …through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (Eternal glory to Jesus!!)**

**\*Jesus does it all – not ourselves**

**We can look at all this and think I can’t do this – I can’t live for Jesus – I can’t tell others – I can’t help… you are right…**

**But through Jesus you can – by faith.**

**7. God of Glory**

**Why would God love us? Why would Jesus die for us? Why would Jesus send us the HS to help us? Why would God show us his mercy? Every action – every breathe is for his glory!!**

**He loves to use the weak, because it brings him greater glory.**

**Then one final challenge…**

**22 Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you quite briefly. (This is not a long letter – but urgent)**

**This points back to the point of the purpose of this entire letter.**

**This is an encouragement to = Live faithful lives in Christ!**

**Persevere – endure - run the race – don’t give up!!**

**Hold onto this!! Be anchored to this!**

**(then a couple shout outs) 23 I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. (from prison) If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you. 24 Greet all your leaders and all the Lord’s people. Those from Italy send you their greetings. (the writer is in Rome) 25 Grace be with you all.**

**This gives us a glimpse into the authors life.**

**The language, the topics, the style, the references are all very similar to Paul’s – and the people (Timothy) – the location (Rome) – but unlike other letters he never says his name.**

**The Final words of Hebrews - 25 Grace be with you all.**

**At the heart of this letter is grace – through Jesus.**

**Not works, not religion, not tradition, not ceremonies, not rules, and systems… but grace. (the unmerited favor of God)**

**Hymn - Amazing grace – play song (songs come and go - not this one)**

**The most famous and most sung song in Christian history.**

**First titled 'Faith's Review and Expectation' - written by John Newton is the story of his salvation. Once an angry agnostic slave ship captain – (known as the “the Great Blasphemer”) who found the grace of Jesus.**

**He wrote the epitaph for his tombstone: "John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slaves in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the gospel he had long labored to destroy”**

**Amazing grace! How sweet the sound / That saved a wretch like me!**

**I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see.**

**’Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved;**

**How precious did that grace appear / The hour I first believed!**

**Through many dangers, toils and snares, I have already come;**

**’Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, And grace will lead me home.**

**The Lord has promised good to me, His Word my hope secures;**

**He will my Shield and Portion be, / As long as life endures.**

**Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, / And mortal life shall cease,**

**I shall possess, within the veil, / A life of joy and peace.**

**The earth shall soon dissolve like snow, / The sun forbear to shine;**

**But God, Who called me here below, / Will be forever mine.**

**When we’ve been there ten thousand years, / Bright shining as the sun,**

**We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise / Than when we’d first begun.**

**The Final words of Hebrews - 25 Grace be with you all.**

**I pray you know it, have confidence in it, and share it.**

**Given through the superior savior Jesus – who is greater than all!**

**\*\* Communion.**