

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Prepared by Rev. James R. Wilson, D. Min.  
Good Shepherd Church - March 25, 2012

Sermon Title: The God of Peace be With You

Sermon Text: Hebrews 13.17-25

Related Texts: John 10.1-18

## I. Start It – Connecting With One Another

Take a few moments to check in with one another about how you are doing, ways you have evidenced God's grace this past week, and/or any concerns that weighing on you.

## II. Introduction

We have come to the conclusion of the Book of Hebrews. The author has attempted to encourage the Hebrew Christians to be faithful to Jesus Christ - the Messiah and the provision of a new covenant relationship with God. The encouragement has been framed with exhortations to faithfulness, deeper trust, perseverance in the face of push-back for their faith, and to grasp the theological significance of Jesus' incarnation (God taking on human flesh and coming to dwell among us). In this concluding passage we see the writer bursting into a final word of blessing, one that encapsulates the message of the entire book.

## III. Study the Text – Read Through Hebrews 13.17-25

- 1) Verses 17- 19 paint a picture of the nature of leadership in the church..
  - a. How is church leadership characterized in these verses?
  - b. How would you describe the reciprocal nature of church leadership and those who are part of the church they lead? How are leaders accountable? How are they dependent upon others?
  - c. Are you supporting your church leaders in prayer? How can you offer encouragement to them?
- 2) It's at this point that the author bursts into a glorious song-like blessing - verses 20-21 - and whether intentional or not summarizes much of the letter.
  - a. "May the God of peace..." Look back to Hebrews 7.1-10.39 (scan through it) but notice particularly 10.5-18. What steps has God taken to bring us peace, that is, to provide for the forgiveness of our sins and to remove the barriers between us and God?

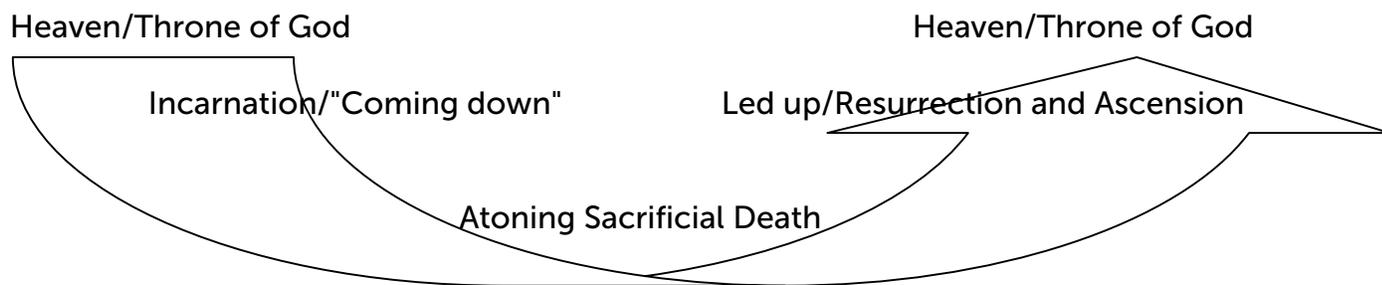
b. Notice 10.19-22. How do these verses paint a picture of having peace with God?

c. What kind of continuing pattern does verse 9 suggest?

3) Hebrews 13.20 continues "...who brought back (literally "led up") from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ..."

a. Refer to Hebrews 1.1-4. The author points us to the unique nature of Jesus - fully human and fully divine. What specific things did Jesus do and accomplish according to these verses?

b. In Hebrews 13.20 the author uses the Greek term Anagagnon = to lead up or to set sail in place of the familiar Anastasis = resurrection or to rise up. Do you remember the diagram below? The author retraces it in this final blessing. What do you think of the idea that one day you will be "led up" into heaven just as Jesus was "led up" (or "set sail for")?



4) "...our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep..." Take a look at John 10.1-18 to see the ways in which Jesus is our good shepherd. Do you experience Jesus this way?

5) "...by the blood of the eternal covenant..." refers back to Hebrews 8.1-9.28. Referring to the blood of Jesus points us to the cost of God's loving-kindness. How do you respond when you consider Jesus' willingness to give himself completely for you?

6) "...equip you with everything good for doing his will..." Take a look at Hebrews 10.14 and 13.15-16. Why has God sought to make people Christ-like in character? Does your faith express itself in praise, good works, love for others?

7) "...and may he work in us what is pleasing to him..." This is a prayer for us to be people of faith (see Hebrews 11.6) and to have our wills be aligned with God's will. This calls us to surrender ourselves completely to the lordship of Jesus. Can you make this your prayer - sincerely and honestly trusting Jesus and giving every dimension of your life over to the leadership of the Good Shepherd?

8) "...through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." Notice how the author concludes with the same imagery with which the book began - Hebrews 1.3: After he (Jesus) had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the

Majesty in heaven. How significant is it to realize that Jesus Christ, through his death, resurrection and ascension

- a. has pioneered the way to heaven?
- b. makes it possible for us to enter even now into God's presence?
- c. enables us to do and be what we are called to do and be?
- d. enables us to bear with joy the consequences of following Jesus?
- e. and waits to welcome us into the city which is to come?