

Scottie Alvarez 3-9-2025
HEBREWS SERIES: PERSEVERE, HOLD ON, BELIEVE TILL THE END.
PART 13A: BEYOND THESE WALLS

Good morning CVCHURCH! Happy Spring forward! You all look so rested. I just know you went to bed an hour early last night, right? Remember: next Sunday, March 16th, our Kids' Place! ministry presents the Kid'sPlace! Worship Experience during both Sunday services 9:30am and 11:30am. Invite all of the kids in your life, especially those who don't regularly attend. What a day for the kids in your life to see how Jesus is working in, and through, their peers. Our kids will lead us in a day of worship, dance, creativity, and sharing their heart with testimonies about how they worship Jesus. I'm looking forward to it, and you won't want to miss it! Last week we wrapped up Hebrews Chapter 12 in our verse-by-verse journey through the book of Hebrews in a series we've entitled PERSEVERE, HOLD ON, BELIEVE TILL THE END. We saw God appear to Moses and the nation of Israel with lighting, smoke, and fire that shook Mount Sinai, and we compared that moment from the Old Testament book of Exodus to the shaking, sifting, and burning that He's doing now in and through all of us who follow Him. He's at work shaking away all in us and around us that is temporary in order to leave standing only that which is eternal. The sand is being sifted and shaken out in order to leave only the unshakable Solid Rock of Jesus. Are you allowing Jesus to shake away all that is temporary in you so that He can reveal what is eternal in you? If you missed last Sunday, or any of the previous weeks of Hebrews Chapter 12, or any of our Hebrews series, go to our **YouTube channel & Facebook page**, both **@cvchurchla**, or visit our beautiful new **website cvchurch.com** and you'll find videos, notes, and scripts. Before we start, let's take a moment to re-focus on Jesus. Let's pray: *Merciful Father God, we boldly follow Your Son Jesus to Your throne of grace today. Jesus, we declare You are the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. We thank You for Your presence as we dive into Your Word. Open our hearts to receive Your Spirit. Ignite a fire in us, Jesus, to foster radical kinship, to honor loyal marriages, and to emulate faithful mentors. May Your Holy Spirit empower us to live lives that glorify Your Name and impact those around us for eternity. In Jesus' Mighty Name, we pray, Amen.* Follow me in your notes as I read the 1st of our 3 short passages for today, Hebrews Chapter 13, verses 1-3. As I read, ask yourself: **"How can I apply to my life today the power and endurance of Jesus' radical love beyond these walls?"** This will allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us about persevering, holding on, believing till the end.

Follow along with **Hebrews 13:1-3 – Concluding Words – ¹KEEP ON LOVING EACH OTHER AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS. ²DON'T FORGET TO SHOW HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS, FOR SOME WHO HAVE DONE THIS HAVE ENTERTAINED ANGELS WITHOUT REALIZING IT! ³REMEMBER THOSE IN PRISON, AS IF YOU WERE THERE YOURSELF. REMEMBER ALSO THOSE BEING MISTREATED, AS IF YOU FELT THEIR PAIN IN YOUR OWN BODIES.**" To persevere, hold on, and believe till the end, demonstrate the reality of the eternal, unshakable Kingdom in our daily lives outside these walls, wherever we live, work, and play! Here's the first fill-in in your notes: **I. FOSTER THE FLOW OF KINSHIP** and below, part **A. CREATE space for HOSPITALITY**. When we watch a great movie, or a great episode of a TV series,

what's the most important part of the story? Yeah, it's the ending. Chapter 13 is the ending of the book of Hebrews. The preacher of Hebrews drives home his points in a rousing conclusion. After all of the urging he gave us over the past 5 weeks in Chapter 12 to surrender ourselves to the refining process of discipline—the shaking, the sifting, the burning away, the cutting away of everything that is not of Jesus, of everything that is not eternal—the preacher of Hebrews now shifts our focus back to our heart and our actions. In the very first verse, '**keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters,**' the preacher gives us the main idea of the entire passage for today and of the entire Ch13. It's encapsulated in a single Greek word: **philadelphia**. Understanding this one word unlocks the power of what Jesus wants to communicate to us as we conclude the book of Hebrews in the upcoming three weeks. **Philadelphia** comes from two other Greek words: **philos (beloved, dear, or loving)** and **adelphos (brother, brotherly)**. It means "**a deep, familial love among equals for our blood brothers and sisters.**" In the New Testament, philadelphia appears regularly, a total of six times, always referring to the affection that we as followers of Christ must have for each other. Philadelphia is to be the hallmark, the signature, of any community that professes to follow Jesus. I love how every guest we have the privilege of receiving in our church family says, "this is a friendly church." How does this happen? It's because every one of you practices and cultivates philadelphia: welcoming each other, loving each other as blood brothers and sisters because we are all family by the blood of Jesus. We are all equals because we are all the same before Jesus, at the foot of the cross. In **John 14:6** Jesus says, "... **I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. NO ONE CAN COME TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME.**" Our separate identities as male or female, our personalities, our ethnic diversity, our ages, our many different backgrounds and life experiences, our socio-economic status—all of those things make us unique individuals. Unfortunately our culture uses those things to divide us, yet we are united as blood brothers and sisters in Christ because we all embrace Father God through Jesus. Brothers and sisters, are you ready to unleash the power of God's philadelphia in a world that desperately needs it? We're not talking about warm fuzzies or putting on a happy Christian Sunday face; we're talking about demonstrating the heart of Jesus through tangible acts of love and compassion.

Our next fill-in, part **B. EMPATHIZE with the MISTREATED**. This entire chapter gives us specific directives for how we are to express our love for each other in Jesus' Name. These aren't just nice sentiments; it's a call to radical, contrary action! What do I mean by contrary? Remember that the Book of Hebrews is a spoken teaching, and that the original preacher is speaking to a first-century Jewish Christian audience who are tempted to leave the church because they're facing trouble and persecution—not only from the anti-Christian Roman government, but also from their very own friends and family who've rejected Jesus. They have friends and family who remained in their family synagogues, and who chose not to join them in following Jesus. We all have family and friends who we gave up to follow Jesus, and so did they. The preacher of Hebrews challenges us—not only to persevere, hold on, and believe till the end—but to take action contrary to our human instinct. In recovery we call that **contrary action**. When we feel rejected, persecuted, isolated, alone, hurt, we retreat. We hunker down. We saw this during the lockdowns. People just gave up. The preacher urges those original persecuted Christians, and us, to fight back with love and fellowship! Return good when

we're struggling through evil. When you find yourself isolating, practice hospitality. That's when Jesus shows up. **Serving God means laying our lives down to help fellow followers of Jesus—and not-yet-followers of Jesus.** Application: when was the last time you reached out to someone in our church family who you're not already friends with? I'm not shaming anyone or condemning anyone. I'm asking myself these questions first. Mind you, I'm the introvert of introverts. It drives my extrovert wife nutty. I want to sit on the couch and veg. She wants to go out and meet up with friends! I'm not talking about recharging. We all need rest. I'm talking about 'letting philadelphia continue' by intentionally fostering the flow of kinship and creating spaces for hospitality. We must stoke those fires and cultivate those skills. To some they come naturally. For the rest of us, we must learn them and practice them. How are your relationships? Who are you struggling with in our church family? The enemy of our souls is on the prowl looking to divide us, looking to create conflict among us. Reconcile where there's strife. Look at your part. Make amends for your part. Forgive for their part. If you don't know how, we learn how in **Celebrate Recovery every Friday 7pm onsite and online.** Are you practicing hospitality? Reach out. Nurture and maintain loving relationships with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Are you practicing empathy with those who are struggling? Don't try to fix. Listen and pray with them. The Holy Spirit wants to ignite a fire in us to love tangibly beyond these walls! American professor Ben Witherington says: **"What is especially telling about this exhortation is that, in the Greco-Roman world, sibling relationships were seen as the closest and strongest relationships, even closer than parents and children, so our author is drawing on what would be seen as a natural bond, only applying the idea in a religious or spiritual way. Urging the audience to 'continue'... reminds us that even here in the final exhortations our author is not urging any changes, but is rather reaffirming values and virtues the audience has already been practicing. The word [for hospitality] *philoxenia* (literally 'love of strangers') may refer to traveling Christians who would need hospitality and a place to stay since the inns of the day were notorious as dens of iniquity. In view of the following reference to entertaining angels unawares, the word 'stranger' may mean any unknown person. Every one of those strangers who bore the Christian name had therein a claim to hospitality. For Christianity was, and grew because it was, a great fraternity. The name 'brother'... vividly expressed a real fact. A Christian found, wherever he went, in the community of his fellow Christians, a welcome and hospitality."**

Flip back to our 2nd section, **Hebrews 13:4-6 – ⁴GIVE HONOR TO MARRIAGE, AND REMAIN FAITHFUL TO ONE ANOTHER IN MARRIAGE. GOD WILL SURELY JUDGE PEOPLE WHO ARE IMMORAL AND THOSE WHO COMMIT ADULTERY. ⁵DON'T LOVE MONEY; BE SATISFIED WITH WHAT YOU HAVE. FOR GOD HAS SAID, 'I WILL NEVER FAIL YOU. I WILL NEVER ABANDON YOU.' ⁶SO WE CAN SAY WITH CONFIDENCE, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, SO I WILL HAVE NO FEAR. WHAT CAN MERE PEOPLE DO TO ME?'** In our first section, the preacher urges us to practice love and hospitality with fellow believers and strangers. Here, however, he balances that by urging us to honor every marriage and warning us to not engage in inappropriate acts of love that violate the marital bed and bond.

The next fill-in is: **II. HONOR THE COVENANT OF MARRIAGE** and part **A. BREAK the chains of COVETOUSNESS**. Every marriage is sacred and established by God—especially the dysfunctional, struggling ones that Jesus wants to heal and restore for His glory. Marriage is a covenant of faithfulness between a man and a woman—one biological male and one biological female—that reflects the sacrificial relationship between Jesus and us, His church. As His followers, we’re called to a higher standard of integrity in all our relationships, especially within our marriages. Nothing destroys a church faster than sexual immorality, adultery, and anything that dishonors this sacred union. Here’s how we protect our marriages at CVCHURCH: I’m never alone with a member of the opposite sex who’s not my spouse. It’s that simple. If I need to meet with a leader or do guidance with the opposite sex, of any age, I ask a third party to sit in for accountability as a witness. If everyone in our church practices this simple rule, we won’t ever have an issue. It protects all of us. For those who are married, how pure is your marriage bed? If it’s not, get help. For those who are single, of any age, how are you stewarding your sexual desires? We honor sexual intimacy within marriage. If you’re single and want to be married, but you are struggling, invest in your future spouse by getting help now. Do your words, actions, and thoughts honor your spouse or your future spouse who you’re trusting God to bring? We devote ourselves to Jesus and commit ourselves to reflect Him through purity in our marriages and in our singlehood. If you’re struggling, get help: our women’s ministry **CVWOMEN**, our men’s ministry **In the Company of Men (ICOM)**, our abortion healing ministry **Journey With Us, Celebrate Recovery**. CVCHURCH is a place of support, healing, and accountability. We’re a hospital for the sick and hurting. Reach out to one of us, get plugged in, and allow the Holy Spirit to empower you to live a life that honors God with your sexuality, in your marriage or in your singlehood. Our next fill-in, part **B. PROCLAIM bold faith over ADVERSITY**. Just like we need Jesus in our sexuality, we need Jesus in our finances. Just like we need help breaking the chains of coveting the opposite sex, or the same sex, we need help breaking the chains of coveting money or material things. Discontentment and greed destroy us as quickly as lust and sexual immorality. They’re two sides of the same coin. Do you lust after money and material things? Ask Jesus to disentangle your heart and lead you into total dependence upon Him. Myke Rost and Rick Whitlow teach the **Finding Financial Freedom** seminar and can help you invite Jesus into your finances. Where are you discontent? Contentment and peace are not having everything you desire but finding your satisfaction in God alone. Did you grow up in a home marked by financial turmoil or idolatry? Or perhaps the pursuit of wealth distracts you from the pursuit of Jesus? Cultivate confidence in Him, gratitude for what He’s already given you, and trust in His provision for your future. One of the best ways to persevere, hold on, and believe till the end through adversity in your finances, relationships, or marriage is to boldly declare God’s truth through His Word over your circumstances. The preacher of Hebrews does exactly this, twice in this passage, quoting Deuteronomy 31 and Psalm 118 from the Old Testament. Follow along as I declare over you **Psalm 118:1-9 – ¹GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD! HIS FAITHFUL LOVE ENDURES FOREVER. ²LET ALL ISRAEL REPEAT: ‘HIS FAITHFUL LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.’ ³LET AARON’S DESCENDANTS, THE PRIESTS, REPEAT: ‘HIS FAITHFUL LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.’ ⁴LET ALL WHO FEAR THE LORD REPEAT: ‘HIS FAITHFUL LOVE ENDURES FOREVER.’ ⁵IN MY**

DISTRESS I PRAYED TO THE LORD, AND THE LORD ANSWERED ME AND SET ME FREE. ⁶THE LORD IS FOR ME, SO I WILL HAVE NO FEAR. WHAT CAN MERE PEOPLE DO TO ME? ⁷YES, THE LORD IS FOR ME; HE WILL HELP ME. I WILL LOOK IN TRIUMPH AT THOSE WHO HATE ME. ⁸IT IS BETTER TO TAKE REFUGE IN THE LORD THAN TO TRUST IN PEOPLE. ⁹IT IS BETTER TO TAKE REFUGE IN THE LORD THAN TO TRUST IN PRINCES.” Jesus powerfully declares His

unwavering presence with you. His promises ring out in His Word. He is faithful!

Flip back to our 3rd section, **Hebrews 13:7 – “REMEMBER YOUR LEADERS WHO TAUGHT YOU THE WORD OF GOD. THINK OF ALL THE GOOD THAT HAS COME FROM THEIR LIVES, AND FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF THEIR FAITH.”** The next fill-

in: **III. EMULATE THE GOODNESS OF MENTORS** and below, part **A. RECOGNIZE Godly LEADERSHIP.** We’re all part of God’s larger story. We stand on the shoulders of

those who’ve faithfully equipped us. They served Jesus by speaking His Word into us.

Think back on your life: who have been your spiritual mentors? Write down the names

the Holy Spirit brings to mind. Let’s take this moment to remember their teaching, to

consider their lives, and to imitate their faith. Whose names are you writing down?

Maybe it was a friend or sibling, a teacher or pastor, a parent or grandparent. Honor

their memory. Take time to thank them this week if they’re still living. Thank Jesus for

them if they’re with Him now. Who are you leading and mentoring? I see such

tremendous leaders and mentors in the room here today. Nothing strengthens your

relationship with Jesus like pouring yourself into someone else and intentionally

disciplining them. You’ll never feel ready or worthy. That’s okay—Jesus is worthy, ready,

and able. If, by faith, everyone in this room does this, Jesus will build a vibrant and

enduring church to proclaim the Gospel to our city and to the world. Our final fill-in, part

B. ACKNOWLEDGE faithful TEACHERS. So many of you teach diligently in all of our

ministries: Small Groups, Prayer, Kids’ Place, EPICC, Turning Point USA, CVWOMEN,

ICOM, Celebrate Recovery, Journey with Us, and soon, Young Adults and Harvest.

Thank you! Your example inspires us. Look at the names you wrote down earlier.

Picture them right now. How can you follow their example? The preacher gives you a

clear, direct application: ‘**follow the example of their faith**’. This is why you remember

them today. Emulate their trust in Jesus, their commitment to His Word, and their

perseverance through adversity. They are your models for your own journey. I don’t

know about your mentors, but mine were not perfect. Our imitation of them is not blindly

following every detail of their lives but discerning and adopting the faith principles that

guided them. How can you apply their lessons? How can you show the same level of

faith and commitment? Ben Witherington closes us out with this: “**...leaders who spoke**

the Word of God in the past is, likely, a reference to the first missionaries who

converted the audience... The successful outcome of their behavior or way of life

is to be imitated—that is, their faithfulness... Their faithfulness to the end is what

the audience is being encouraged to imitate... Our author is contrasting the

leaders whose faithfulness was exemplary but have passed on with Jesus Who

endures and is faithful and an exemplar forever. What is important is that our

author assumes and asserts that leaders did and should speak the Word of God

to converts and potential converts. This is the only activity mentioned here as

part of their leadership tasks.” If you’d honor your faith mentors today by choosing to

follow them to Jesus, you can do that right now by praying this with me: “*Jesus, thank*

You for faithful leaders who spoke Your Word to us. We choose to follow You today, just like they did. We turn away from our sins and receive Your free gift of eternal life. Lead us on Your path of devotion and trust of Father God. Grow us in our capacity to reflect Your philadelphia—Your hospitality to strangers and Your love to our brothers and sisters in Christ. In Your eternal Name we pray, Jesus, Amen." If you prayed that for the first time, or as a recommitment, please let me know by filling out your Friends Card or coming to see me out back after service. I'll give you resources to help you on your journey following Jesus. Here's Kathe to close.