



## GO! CHRIST'S COMMUNITY

Session 2 – Out of Complacency  
into Christ's Saving Adventures (Part 2)  
Hebrews 13: 10-16 (NRSV)

**Key Verses:** *Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.* Hebrews 13:12-14 (New Revised Standard Version, NRSV).

### INTRODUCTION:

Session 2 is the follow-up to Session 1 using the same key verses but reflecting on a different aspect of the verses. Session 1 focused on Jesus as the Head of the Christ-community because of who he is, what he did for the whole world, and why he did it. Session 2 will focus on the Christ-community's summons to follow Jesus' example even though it may be challenging and daunting. There's no time for complacency, there's a Christ-Adventure waiting for us; so let's go to him!

### INTERPRETATION OF HEBREWS 13:12-14: (Have Scripture passage read aloud)

The author of the letter to the Hebrews reminds the Christ-followers that Jesus suffered outside the community to sanctify (make holy, set apart from the status quo society) the people. Next the author summons, exhorts, maybe even challenges the Christ-followers to follow Jesus and even be willing to bear the abuse (*reproach*) that Jesus endured. The author of Hebrews understands this challenge will not be easy, but makes the summons anyway to move the Christ-followers from complacency, indecision, and indifference to adventure, conviction and courage to please God.

### NOTE ON THE DEFINITION OF CHRIST-COMMUNITY:

The word "community" is not found in the Old or New Testaments. It is late 14<sup>th</sup> century, from Old French *comunité* "community, commonness, everybody" (Modern French *communauté*), from Latin (1325-75) *communitatem* (nominative *communitas*) "community, society, fellowship, friendly intercourse; courtesy, condescension, affability," from *communis* "common, public, general, shared by all or many," (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=community> and <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/community>). A few New Testament words, translated into English, having the same meaning as "community" include: "assembly," "gathering," and "fellowship." Merriam-Webster.com's simple definitions for "community" include: a) a group of people who live in the same area (such as a city, town, or neighborhood); b) a group of people who have the same interests, religion, race, etc.; or c) a group of nations (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community>).

For the four sessions of this study series focused upon community, when discussing Christ-community, the meaning reflects a group of people, who as Christ-followers, have the same interest, belief, faith and confession of Jesus of Nazareth, their Christ (Messiah), Lord and Savior.

### Reflection Questions:

- Reflecting upon Hebrews 13:13, in what ways do Christian congregations reflect Christ-communities?
- In what ways might some Christian congregations not resemble Hebrews 13:13 Christ-communities?
- What are some character traits and behavior that may need to be developed individually and communally to reflect Christ in the lives of Christ-communities?

- What encouragement might be needed to help the discouraged, complacent, abused or weary Christ-follower?

**Read** John Gill’s “Exposition of the Bible-Hebrews 13:13.” Meditate upon his words and then share your feelings, opinions, and/or insights.

*“bearing his reproach; - or reproach for his sake: the reproach, which saints meet with, for the sake of Christ, and a profession of him, is called "his", because of the union there is between them, and the sympathy and fellow feeling he has with them in it; he reckons what is said and done to them as said and done to himself; and besides, there is a likeness between the reproach which Christ personally bore, and that which is cast upon his followers; and this is to be bore by them willingly, cheerfully, courageously, and patiently.”*

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/commentaries/gills-exposition-of-the-bible/hebrews-13-13.html>

**Exploring Other Texts:** *Divide the group into 6 smaller groups/pairs and assign one scripture text and questions to each group/pair. You might need to assign two texts to a group/pair. When everyone has had a chance to read and respond bring the whole group back together. Ask each group/pair to read their scripture passage and share their insights.*

- **Matthew 16:24** – *What must a Christ-follower do? Is there a different cross for each follower? How does a follower know what his/her cross is to carry?*
- **Luke 6:22** – *What concerns come to mind with this scripture? What comfort is found in this passage, if any or how?*
- **Acts 5:41** – *Why would Christ-followers rejoice in the implied situation?*
- **1 Corinthians 4:10-13** – *How are Christ-followers described? In the 21st Century, no one wants to be considered foolish, weak, etc. We want to be safe, secure, protected, in charge. What is this passage teach today’s Christ-follower?*
- **2 Corinthians 12:10** – *Look up the definition/meaning of “content.” What does it mean? Given the circumstances the Apostle Paul describes in this passage, what can we learn about the power of being content in all circumstances?*
- **1 Peter 4:4, 14-16** – *Given the described situations, when are Christ-followers blessed? When might they not be blessed?*

### **Closing Thoughts**

The Session hopefully has caused each participant to wrestle with what it means to be a Christ-follower in keeping with Hebrews 13:13 and the summons to follow Christ even if negative things happen in our life. We follow Christ, even if abused, because of the saving adventures that are waiting for us to accomplish as we carry our crosses in Jesus’ name! Amen!

Each Session’s closing prayer is the Benediction found in Hebrews 13:20-21. Please read first the NRSV translation aloud, then read aloud one by one or together in community, the modified prayer of Hebrews 13:20-21. May it be your affirmation of faith and commitment to live out these words to the glory of God.

### **BENEDICTION**

*Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our [my] Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you [me/us] complete in everything good so that you [I/we] may do his [God’s] will, working among us that which is pleasing in his [God’s] sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. (NRSV) – Hebrews 13:20-21*