

# A Sermon for DaySpring “Roadside Reminders”

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Hebrews 13:1-16

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DaySpring, the Lord is with you.

Though taken completely out of context, Luke 12:48 comes to mind...”to whom much has been given, much will be required.” Ain’t it the truth!?

It appears our pastor is going to become the Chaplain of Baylor University... it’s a full-time position. My brothers and sisters, it is to weep. Let us weep tears of grief, but also tears of deep humility that God would deem DaySpring capable of such sacrifice.

Let’s pray.

What has happened?

Well, God has touched our congregation in a very special way. That’s what has happened. It is no small thing to have God visit us in the way God *has* visited us this week.

Our hearts ache and we cry out, *God, what in Heaven and earth is going on? What are you thinking? What are we supposed to do now?* I believe God’s response to our questions is found in Hebrews 13. Let’s listen. Please allow a bit of poetic license firmly grounded in the passage.

I believe God has led us to Hebrews 13 for his response. Let’s listen:

My dear children, as individuals and as a community of believers, you are on a journey. You know that, but in recent days I’ve given you a reminder. I know it’s tough. I don’t deny that a bit, nor do I fault you for grieving. My reminder is that DaySpring is not your destination. It may seem like heaven, but it is simply a pleasant part of the journey. With Burt as your pastor, the journey has been through green pastures beside still waters (even though the creek has flooded). I know it’s been wonderful, that’s why I sent him to you and you to him. But, the journey continues... for him and for you. So let’s put this in terms of a journey.

That list of instructions I put in Hebrews 13 is rather like the signs you see along the road, you know, like, *Speed Limit 70*. When you see that sign, you already know what the speed limit is, but it’s good to be reminded.

Then comes another sign, *No Passing*. You know that, the yellow line is solid on your side, but it’s good to be reminded.

There's another sign, *U.S. Highway 84*. You know that. But you've been through some intersections, so it's good to be reminded. It's the same with my instructions in Hebrews; think of these things as road signs as you continue the journey without Burt and Julie, as hard as that is for you.

1. *Let mutual love continue* (13:1). That's a great reminder for the next portion of your journey. You have allowed me to create a loving congregation here. That doesn't need to change. Watch for that sign as you journey along. You are going to need to love and support each other more than ever now. Let mutual love continue.

2. Here comes another sign (13:2): *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers*. You all are so good at that. Burt has taught you well. Don't forget it. It's basic, I know, but dealing with Burt's leaving has shocked you back to the basics... sorry if it was too abrupt for some of you. It's alright, you can cry. I wept. Just remember... don't stop showing hospitality to strangers.

3. These next two road signs ought to help put things back into perspective for you: *Remember those who are in prison* and *Remember those who are being tortured* (13:3). That's all I could get on a road side sign, but there's a bit more that goes with each of them. *Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison* is the whole statement. So, too, with the other one, *Remember those who are being tortured as though you yourselves were being tortured*. Now, I don't want to get overly dramatic here, but you are *not* in prison and you are *not* being tortured. Things could be worse. Burt is still alive and will still be in Waco. When you really get to feeling down, and you've forgotten that I'm leading you on this journey, if nothing else helps, remember, it could be worse... you could be in prison or you could be subject to torture. It saddens me to tell you that some of your brothers and sisters on earth are suffering those things for my sake. While you're praying for yourselves (as you should), pray for them, also. I'll put the signs along the road from time to time to remind you.

4. Oops... here comes another one, another roadside reminder. *Let marriage be held in honor by all* and this one also has a twin sign, *Let the marriage bed be kept undefiled* (13:4). Now these signs may seem somewhat out of place, somewhat strange and unnecessary to you, but I'm telling you – people who are feeling sorry for themselves or are feeling somewhat *entitled* do some strange things. Don't go crazy or do out of character things just because you're upset that I'm moving Burt. Stay in character, in Christian character. Don't forget who you are. Don't think I've abandoned you so you, therefore, can abandon everything I've been teaching you. Keep your wits about you and remember my teachings. The *whole world* hasn't changed. The Bible hasn't changed. Burt's address isn't even changing. Don't go crazy... and I'm telling you, I've seen other folks in similar kinds of temporary despair do some crazy things. I'm going to put the signs up along the road, even if they embarrass you a bit. Don't lose your mind or your self-respect or your family, just because you have to select a search committee.

5. *Keep your lives free from the love of money* (13:5)... basic I know, but so are all road signs, all roadside reminders. I still need you to give back to me through the ministries of DaySpring Baptist Church. The ministries I've led you to do (and, by the way, it was *Me*

leading you), the ministries I've led you to do must continue, and on earth that means that some money still needs to flow through you to those same people in those same situations. Nothing has changed in that regard. I'll put up the sign from time to time... just as a reminder. I may use the sign now and then that says *Be content with what you have*, but you'll recognize it as the same message.

6. My dear children, I do not want to make light of your loss or to discount your pain as you adjust to Burt and Julie leaving. I know it hurts. So, I'm going to post this sign along the journey as well...be watching for it, *The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?* (13:6). I'll have to make that one a billboard. I don't want you to miss it. You may miss the others along the way, but don't miss this one. I am your helper. Don't be afraid. I'm going to be with Burt as he leaves, yes. But, I'm also going to continue to be with you. I can do that, its no sweat for me.

7. Oh, this next sign is a good one. I just love it. I've put variations of it throughout the Bible. Here it comes, *Remember your leaders, imitate their faith* (13:7). Don't you just love that? I do. Remember the stories of the handful of people who came together and became DaySpring, even before I sent Burt to them? Some of them are with me, but some of them are still with you: Katie, Kurt, Pat, others. This is a good time to remember them and imitate their faith. Get them to tell the story again and be encouraged by it. Hey, we did it once, we can do it again... you and me, I mean. Watch for the signs... remember your leaders, imitate their faith.

8. Next sign? You'll smile at this one, it's so obvious. As you get back on your feet and continue the journey, watch for this roadside reminder, *I'm the same yesterday and today and forever* (13:8). It's the truth. No truer sign was ever posted. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever*. This one's kind of like the old Burma Shave signs. It's all *now* to me, you know. You're the ones in the *time lane*, moving from past to present and present to future. You can't help it. I had to set it up like that, but the truth is *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow*. I'll put the signs up now and then along the way.

9. Here's another sign to watch for as your journey continues, especially as it continues without Burt, *Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings*. (13:9). There are a lot of uptight, by the rules, religious folks out there who are threatened by your devotion to the *spirit* of the teachings. They are wearing themselves out and they resent your rest, even though I keep inviting them to also come unto me and rest. Watch out for them... love them, but watch out for them. Remember that. Burt may not be here to calm you down, so I'll put up the roadside reminders. The silence and slower pace, the listening...those may be Burt's personality, but they were my personality long before him, and I'm not leaving. *Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings*. Remember who I am. Remember who you are.

10. I'm going to post a reminder from time to time that simply says, *You have not yet arrived* (13:12-14). My dear children, this journey is toward a city that is still to come. Waco isn't it [thanks be to God]. DaySpring isn't it. Waco, DaySpring, this congregation as it is now populated, none of these are the destination. They are but camps, temporary habitations. This

world is not your home, you are marching to Zion. DaySpring is not heaven. Your grief is not the end of the story. I can't say it any better than I did through my poet-servant Isaac Watts: *...you are marching... marching to Zion*, and you are not there yet. The scenery will continue to change. The roster of your marching partners will continue to change. You will change, but take heart... I will *not* change and I will not leave you. The simple reminder will be the sign, *You have not yet arrived*.

11. There are two more signs and they are *really* basic, but really important. One of them is *Continue to worship God*. Read all the words in that one... *Continue to worship God* (13:15). Pull over and think about it if you need to. You've been doing it, don't stop now.

The other of the last two signs is this, *Do good and share*. This is so basic and so important, it brings tears of truth to my eyes. *Do good and share* (13:16). Just do it. You need to be able to count on each other in this way. The surrounding community needs you to do good and share.

Don't worry about Burt and Julie, you'll still see them around, and I'll take care of them. And... don't worry about yourselves, for I'll always be with you, too.

And so, God uses Hebrews 13 to speak to our concerns; to calm our fears.

My brothers and sisters, it is to weep: tears of grief, and... tears of humility that God would deem us capable of such sacrifice.

Remember, we've been singing it for years... *He it is who binds us together and he it is who sends us apart... to be God's people, be God's people...*

And all of DaySpring said... *Amen*.

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