

# Hebrews

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 05 October 1966

Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[ 0 : 0 0 ] As the Lord may help me I will speak again this evening upon the text in the epistle to the Hebrews the thirteenth chapter fourteenth and fifteenth verses For here have we no continuing city Thus we seek one to come By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually That is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name The thirteenth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews the fourteenth and fifteenth verses I will just very briefly outline what has been already considered from this subject for it falls into these three main points of truth

First of all here is a solemn consideration that we have here no continuing city but there is to the people of God a blessed prospect if they have no continuing city here they seek one that is to come and then there is thirdly this spiritual exercise of praise and thanksgiving which we are to offer to God continually during our present time state I mentioned that it is certainly true that we have here no continuing city because there is nothing here continuing everything is passing passing until it finally will pass away altogether and that we ourselves are not continuing either the years carry us on towards our passing and that in any case everything here is defiled with sin and sorrow that we have no continuing city here because this is not a suitable state nor suitable condition for the people of God to have their continuing city in but we seek one to come the city which is to come

I understand I understand to be the glorified state of the church of God which is represented in that form of a city to the apostle John in the revelation which account of it as he saw it we read in our worship this evening and this city is to come in two ways first it is to come in its completeness it is not yet fully completed still that glorious city is increasing it increases as one by one those who seek for it are gathered home to it and when the last vessel of mercy is gathered home the last living stone is built into that glorious city when that will be fulfilled of which it is written in Zechariah that his hands lay the foundation and his hands will finish it and he will bring forth the top stone crying grace grace unto it then the city will have come in a sense that it will have come to its completeness and that completeness is strikingly represented by the expression that the city is four square the length and the breadth and the height of it are equal and as I understand it it has not yet come to that but when the work is completed then the city the church of God will have come to its perfect completeness not one will be lacking not one of the chosen redeemed quickened sanctified children of God will be missing from that completely glorious city and then it is to come in the sense of its manifestation for all this is going on invisibly to the world both the work of grace in the heart and the building of this glorious city to its completeness in heaven is going on invisibly to the world but at the last this city will come in the glorious manifestation of the children of God as John saw the holy city coming down from God out of heaven now this city we are said to be seeking we seek a city to come and I spoke a little of that city in its holiness and purity and in its blessedness and in its light the light of that city is the glory of

God shining unveiled unclouded and forever undiminished in the Lord Jesus Christ just as even now spiritually the glory of God shines in the face of Jesus Christ and is reflected in the gospel and it shines in the heart as the Holy Spirit reveals it but still that is in a very cloudy way to us we see that glory through a glass darkly we see but a few glimpses of it a few beams of it and they often seem hidden again from us but when the city of God cometh in its perfection there will be an unclouded unveiled shining forth of the glory of God in the face of Jesus

Christ that will fill the city with ineffable light glorious holy ineffable light such light as there is nothing in this world to be compared to it at all for the builder and maker of this city is God throughout when I read that chapter just now my thoughts struck me with regard to that description of the city that the wall of the city had twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the land well now we regard of course this city as having one foundation essentially that is the Lord Jesus Christ and his work of redemption and atonement and mediation his personal merit is the foundation of the city of

[ 8 : 45 ] God but by the walls of the city I felt we might understand the truth of the gospel and by the wall of the city having twelve foundations and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the land we may understand that it was the doctrine and teaching of the apostles under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God that laid the foundations of all gospel truths and doctrines and gospel truths and doctrines of the city of God like walls that surround it but I must not dwell longer on this part of my text I mention with regard to this seeking of this city that it is a believing seeking of it because there is in faith a persuasion that there is such a city as this such a glorious holy blessed city and that it will come and therefore there is a seeking of it believingly and I said that it is sought hopefully for reasons

I mentioned that it is sought prayerfully for there are two things that in seeking this city a prayerful soul prays about and one thing is to be prepared for it and fitted for it and have an interest in it and to have that interest in it made clear and confirmed in the heart by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and that there is a seeking this city in that there is a walking in the way that leads to it and the way that leads to it is to go forth unto Jesus Christ without the camp bearing his reproach the way to seek this city which is to come is to walk in the way that leads to it and the way that leads to it is to follow

Jesus Christ he will lead us into the city if we are given grace to follow him but now I must come to the other part of the subject which is closely connected with it as you see by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name that is while our days on earth are lengthened may we give them Lord to thee that's what it amounts to there's a spiritual exercise of praise and thanksgiving that is to fill our passing days while we seek the city which is to come there is something that lies upon us by express exhortation now that city which is to come oh that is full of heavenly praise oh how they bless how they praise how they glorify how they adore him that sitteth upon the throne and the lamb with what burning love with what profound humility with what intense devotion they praise his name in heaven that city which is to come is a city that is full of praising and glorifying and blessing

God and giving thanks unto his holy name for they ascribe everything to him blessing and praise and honour and strength and glory and thanks giving be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb that is heavenly praise but there's earthly praise as well it doesn't rise to such a height as heavenly praise does not so warm so fervent and for this reason that still everything that is spiritual in us is clogged by sin unhindered in all its exercises by that which is so opposite to it in our fallen nature and another thing of course spiritual feelings are responsive spiritual feelings are responsive now it is just so far as we have any spiritual discernment and any spiritual feelings of the goodness and grace and mercy and blessedness of God of his glory then as it shines in Jesus

Christ in the gospel it is just so far as we have some discernment of that and some feeling of it that we praise him and bless his name but we see through a glass darkly and therefore our praise is comparatively poor that in the city that is to come his glory is so continually before them and there's nothing in them to hinder at all or darken or deaden holy affections in their hearts that they praise him there so much more than we can here because they see his face they are in the light of his glory and therefore ever delivered from everything that hinders holy affections in their souls poor living tongues are dumb at best we must die really to praise him as we all yet for all that there is an offering unto God this acceptable sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving although in this present time state it can never reach to a heavenly level but it does reach to an acceptable level and I think we may make a misjudgment of ourselves in this particular that because we feel our praise and our thanksgiving and our worship generally is so poor that it seems to us it's altogether unworthy well so it is come to that of what is due to him so we have to think that it cannot be very acceptable in his sight it seems too poor to be acceptable to him too much lacking in that warmth of love and depth of devotion and fervency of spirit that we feel there should be in our spiritual praise and thanksgiving well my friends we must remember this for our encouragement that the

[ 17 : 05 ] Lord knows our praise our difficulties all that we have to contend with he knows the struggles that prevail within us between the powers of grace and sin and kindly listen when we tell the bitter pangs we feel within about this about the poor woman who could only cast two mites into the treasury because she hadn't any more she was too poor to cast in anything much only two mites you might have thought well that's too poor for anything that's too poor for anything only two mites but the Lord looked upon it with much approbation he knew that she would have put in more if she could but she hadn't got it to put in and he didn't despise two mites such a very small amount because it was so small because he knew she couldn't do more and so I feel with regard to this matter of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving the Lord knows we would praise him if we could we would bless him with all the powers of our heart with all our love and all our feeling if we could he knows that it's such a lisping of his praise that we offer that we can put into the church's treasury of his praise such a very little such poor feeling so unworthy of him we feel only two might but the

Lord knows we would praise him more if we could if we had warmer feelings we would pour them out to him if we had more fervent affection oh we would we would like the poor woman with her ointment we would pour them on his blessed head he knows that if we could mourn over sin repent with more with more tears of real genuine loving sorrow he knows we would wash his feet with them we know it's our frame and he remembers that we are done now I must come to speak a little of this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and I want to begin with this now it cannot be too clearly understood and realized and felt that all true religion in every exercise of it towards

God springs from a principle of spiritual and in that sense divine life in the soul spiritual life in the soul is the inward essential and only spring from which all real religion can rise in the exercise of it now spiritual life in the heart in the exercise of it is always God washed because it comes from God it is something of his own life that is communicable there is a certain sense in which the life of God is communicable that is in a way of grace and love not in a way of his divine perfection that are incommunicable but of his grace and love that is communicable now that which is imparted to the soul from God in the exercise of it always has

God for its objective always and it has God for its objective in many ways for instance is there a cry in the heart to break forth from within it's God be merciful to me you see God warned and if there's any desire in the heart that springs from that spiritual life it's this oh that thou wouldst bless me indeed you see God warned all repentance all faith all hope all love all prayer all praise it's God warned because it's in the nature of spiritual life to ascend to its source it finds its objective in its source now in general the exercise of spiritual life towards God is in prayer and confession and it is in praise and thanksgiving and there is this difference between these two main features of spiritual life and exercise in the soul that prayer respects our case our need our desire not exclusively ours but it's expression of desire in some way or another we are prayer is asking it is knocking it is seeking it has behind it need want longing we pray for something that we desire and that we need now praise and thanksgiving doesn't arise from need in us in that sense prayer and thanksgiving arises from a sense of

God of his name and nature his goodness his mercy his blessedness and thanksgiving respects benefits and thanksgiving and thanksgiving that we receive from his hand and thanksgiving respects benefits and favours that we receive from his hand and therefore there is continual cause for praise and thanksgiving that we should offer this sacrifice to him because whatever we are God is blessed he is blessed over all God over all blessed forevermore nothing can alter that he is always worthy to be praised always because he is always the

[ 25 : 09 ] God that he is and though we know so little in this present time state of his name and nature but if we are taught of God by the Holy Spirit we do know this that he is a most blessed God no words can describe no impressions can really convey to us what a blessed being our God is the Son is not so full of light as God is full of glory not so full of warmth as God is full of love God is love God is everything in his nature that is worthy of praise and adoration from us he's always that whatever changes we pass through in our spirit and we pass through many or in our lives and we pass through many yet with him there is no change he is a

God of infinite glory love and blessedness always praise and because he is the God that he is and that he is always the God that he is therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to him continually praise is ascribing to God praise is ascribing to God in a spirit of adoration what really belongs to him we can convey nothing to God of course that's impossible he is infinite in every perfection of his name and nature we can convey nothing to him he can to us we never can to him but what we can do and what we are exhorted to do is to ascribe in a spirit of love to his name gratitude to him to ascribe to him all that which belongs to him and to do this we do much need that the understanding the eyes of our understanding should be enlightened something

I feel very very much to need and often to pray for and it is that he would open the eyes of my understanding oh if I could that more clearly discern his glory as it is in Jesus Christ his greatness his love his goodness his holiness all that constitutes that blessedness that is his oh if I could see this more oh if only the Holy Spirit would show it more clearly to me I know I should praise him more my friends we can never discern anything spiritually in such a way as that it acts upon our heart as it should only if the blessed spirit of God reveal it oh that blessed spirit how we do need him how we need him to give us eyes and then to anoint the eyes he gives with the eyes held of his divine teaching

I believe he's given me spiritual eyes to see oh but they are so dim they are so dim oh how I do need I feel I need this as much as anyone listening to me tonight how I need that heavenly eyes held oh that my eyes were anointed with that I could see it is so often with us brethren we have blessed things set before us in the scripture but we turn such dull eyes to them we see the words we know what they mean we know that certain words mean certain things but oh we so little see the glory of those things they mean we so little see the glory of them we read those scriptures that speak of God's love we know what love is in some sense we know what that word means

God is love but oh how little of that love we see how little of that love we see and so of every divine perfection that constitutes the glory of God we know what the words mean that express it but oh we have such dim views of what that meaning really is oh Holy Spirit open the eyes of our understanding and then here we need in order to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually that the Holy Spirit would animate our heart with spiritual liveliness now spiritual life is one thing as I've been saying it's the spring of everything that's spiritual in our heart but spiritual life in the exercise of it or as I have said the liveliness of it is not self-operating it's not self-operating there's a dependence in it there's a dependence in it upon the

[ 31 : 40 ] Holy Spirit it is only the Holy Spirit by his quickening power holy influence blessed teaching acts upon our heart that spiritual life is lively it is as we read with regard to prayer we know not what to pray for as we ought but the spirit itself make us intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered now just as we know not what to pray for as we ought so we know not how to praise as we ought that scripture we know not what to pray for as we ought must be understood we know very well there are certain things we ought to pray for we ought to pray for forgiveness for cleansing for guidance oh there are many things we know we ought to pray for but we don't know how to pray for them as we ought to pray for them as we ought to pray for them that is to say we have not that at our command in prayer in this matter not that servency not that energy and the light we know not how to pray as we ought to pray unless the spirit helps us so it is with our praise my brethren it's easier for me to set before you tonight the reasons why we should offer the praises of our heart to

God continually than it is to do it we know not how to do it as we all oh we need the holy spirit to enliven our heart and it is so often with us as the psalmist expressed it at the end of that remarkable composition the 119th psalm after all those spiritual expressions in it and I have thought that every possible spiritual feeling from the highest to the lowest is expressed in the 119th psalm now how does it finish let my soul live and it shall praise me and let thy judgment that is there let thy dealings let thy dealings help me he came to that let my soul live and it shall praise thee for unless our souls live that is unless we are lively we cannot really praise him ah it is sad holds down as languish on our lips and our devotion dies but now my friends given these things spiritual life to begin with for the dead cannot praise him then given a spiritual understanding that we can discern what there is in god to pray and then given the holy spirit animating influence that enables us to praise him as we ought then there does arise from our poor heart this acceptable sacrifice to god we praise him let me now just for a moment or two time is pressing me rather just speak a little of the objective of this praise and I will just bring into the subject a word from the sound to help me something to fix upon praise him for his excellent greatness now there is an excellent greatness in god that calls for our praise and if we could discern it what an excellent greatness it is if we could feel the influence of it on our heart attracting us to him if we could feel the holy spirit energizing our affection oh how we should praise him for his excellent greatness and that expression excellent greatness implies that there is a greatness in god that excels all other greatness whatsoever so that nothing else is great compared with that excellent greatness of god oh praise him the psalmist said praise him for his excellent greatness now let me mention a word or two about his excellent greatness one might hear of course go into many things the excellent greatness of his power that created and sustains the world and controls it the excellent greatness of his wisdom in it all and especially in salvation but I haven't timed just one or two points

I feel I must mention praise him for the excellent greatness of his love and bring this word into his great love his great love wherewith he loved him great love there is an excellent greatness in god's love a love that excels all other even the spiritual love that is in the hearts of his people is also little compared to that great love of his it is great in its degree the apostle speaks of it as having high too high for us to reach to but so high high as heaven high as his divine nature is high above all other that he may know the height and the depth the love that comes down from such an infinite height incomprehensible to us that comes right down to our lowest state so that though we are by nature's creatures so far below him and by sin sunk into a depth far deeper but his love is so great it is so great in its depth it reaches right down to the very lowest it reaches right down to us if it has ever come to us and it has such a great depth in this that in that depth of love as it is forgiving love all the sins of all his people have swallowed up sins immense as is the sea have swallowed up oh love indeed all that great depth of love unfathomable as we cannot reach its height so we can never fathom its depth oh praise him for such excellent greatness as is the greatness of his love his great love seems as though

I couldn't do better than keep trying to impress that on your mind tonight the greatness of God's love and the apostle describes it as having a length which of course means that it extends from an eternity past when it had no beginning to an eternity future when it will have no end whoever can measure the greatness of God's love must measure eternity and it is so wide so broad that it embraces oh such an innumerable number a number that John couldn't number a multitude beyond all reckoning and all of them embraced in the greatness of God's love oh praise him for his love and give it set before us too by that same blessed spirit the manifestation of that love for God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners

Christ died for him brethren young men and women all of you listen to me have you ever come to feel this that nothing but Calvary can measure God's love and nothing but God's love can measure Calvary oh praise him for love like that praise him for love like that so high so deep so long so broad so rich so free love that pardon keeps pardoning is pardoning still love that embraces love that receives prodigals back and gives them the very best the best robe and the best food and the best embracing oh praise him for such great love as that praise him for his excellent greatness think of the excellent greatness of his mercy for as high as the heaven is above the earth so great is his mercy toward them that fear him praise him for his goodness well and as told by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to god continually how thanksgiving thanksgiving to his name thanksgiving

[ 43 : 21 ] I'm afraid I must leave but there's just one point I want to mention now there can be no sacrifice without an altar that's always been a principle in the scripture no altar no sacrifice all sacrifice needs an altar now there's only one altar now for our spiritual sacrifices and that altar appears in this chapter we have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle serve the tabernacle our altar is the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus Christ he is the altar that sanctifies the gift when he offered himself without thought to god that sacrifice we have not to offer it is offered once for all he has offered one sacrifice for sin forever there is no sacrifice for sin in our praise nor our thanksgiving because there's no atonement in it neither need there be any but to offer this sacrifice we must still offer it on and by this altar because nothing that we can offer to god ever it is agreeable to his word and his will no praise that we can offer ever servant no thanksgivings that we can offer ever sincere can be acceptable to god unless we offer them by that altar everything that is acceptable to god from us as we are sinners must have in it the merit of a saviour sin removing and sin atoning sacrifice therefore as we have this altar this sacred altar let us offer unto god by it by the merit of it by Jesus Christ the high priest of it let us offer this sacrifice to god let us offer it this evening brethren the lord may help us oh may the holy spirit move in this assembly in our hearts quicken and animate these holy feelings of thankfulness and devotion in our breath that incense the incense of praise and thanksgiving that incense smoking from my breath in prayer and praise ascend thy hill amen thou