



Carstairs-Bancroft United Church
February 17, 2022
DAILY ENCOURAGEMENT
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
By Rev. Maria Szabone Berces

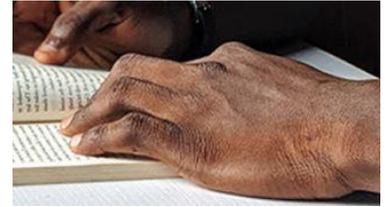


Photo: Our Daily Bread

Beloved Carstairs Bancroft United Church Members,

Today's Inspiration in one sentence

“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.” (Hebrews 6:19)

Did You Know?

Let us recollect what we have learned about the letter to the **Hebrews** so far:

- The Letter to the **Hebrews** was commonly called “*The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews*” from about AD 400 to 1600. Since the Reformation it has been widely recognized that Paul *could not* have been the writer.

- There is no disharmony between the teaching of Hebrews and that of Paul's letters, but the specific emphases and writing styles are markedly different. Contrary to Paul's usual practice, the author of Hebrews nowhere names himself in the letter. The readers, however, certainly knew who he was, as evidenced by his personal comments.

- The scholars think that the author might be Barnabas or Apollos; both were associated with Paul. Theologians date the letter about AD 67-70, before the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. Their reason is that if it had been written after this date, the author almost certainly would have mentioned this significant event.

- The recipients of this letter were primarily Jewish converts who were familiar with the Old Testament and who were being tempted to revert to Judaism or to Judaize the gospel. (The NIV Study Bible; Hebrews)

It is apparent from the clues of this letter that Hebrews I addressed to people who have been Christians for some time but who find that their earlier enthusiasm has faded and that their faith commitment has waned.

Hebrews goes beyond “the basic teaching about Christ” (6:1) to instruct its readers with a creative reinterpretation of the traditions of Jesus. The writer aims to rekindle the people's vision, for if they can catch a glimpse of what God has accomplished and made available in him, there would be no thought of drifting from the faith. The major purpose of Hebrews is thus to encourage, strengthen, and motivate its readers - to call them to faithfulness. (Westminster Bible Companion: Hebrews & James; by Frances Taylor Gench; pages 4-5)

Personal Insight

I picked today's meditation to remind ourselves that God is not as forgetful as we humans are. We are reassured in numerous passages what the Almighty tells us through prophets and inspired writers. Here are just few of these encouragements: **“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast ... Though she may forget, I will not forget you!”** (Isaiah 49:15); **“But God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish.”** (Psalm 9:18); **“Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”** (Hebrews 13:5) It is true about our deep self, and regarding what we do in loving God and our neighbour.

Grace and peace to you all,

Rev. Maria



Not Forgotten

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.

Hebrews 6:10

READ Hebrews 6:9 – 12

When we think of historic, trailblazing missionaries, the name of George Liele (1750–1820) doesn't leap to mind. Perhaps it should. Born into slavery, Liele came to Christ in Georgia and gained his freedom prior to the American Revolutionary War. He took the message of Jesus to Jamaica, ministering to the slaves in the plantations there, and served as the founding pastor of two African American churches in Savannah, Georgia—one of which is considered the "mother church of Black Baptists."

Liele's remarkable life of kingdom service may have been forgotten by some, but his spiritual service will never be forgotten by God. Neither will the work you do for God. The letter to the Hebrews encourages us with these words, "God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them" (6:10). God's faithfulness can never be underestimated, for He truly knows and remembers everything done in His name. And so Hebrews encourages us, "Imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised" (v. 12).

If we serve behind the scenes in our church or community, it might be easy to feel our labor is unappreciated. Take heart. Whether or not our work is recognized or rewarded by the people around us, God is faithful. He'll never forget us. – By **Bill Crowder**

REFLECT & PRAY

Loving God, my service to You is far from perfect, but I also know that as I serve You, that service is remembered and valued by You. Thank You for equipping me to serve. Amen.

What service do you do for God? How does knowing He doesn't forget your service encourage you?

SCRIPTURE INSIGHT

The letter of Hebrews encourages believers in Jesus to continue to live in the power of the Spirit. In earlier days, those to whom this letter was written had shown courage and concern for one another (10:32–34). They were living witnesses to God, who sacrificed His Son so we could be reconciled to Him. Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we're now free from the "fear of death" (2:15) and a self-centered way of life (6:10–12). But then, as now, time and trouble have a way of wearing us down. And the temptation is always to avoid situations where we might face persecution. So while the author went into great detail to show how the temple foreshadowed Jesus, his purpose was to urge his readers to never slide back into something less than a living demonstration of the Spirit of God. - By **Mart DeHaan**

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