



Given: Hebrews 13v11-25

Our view of God needs the light of his self-revelation. God tells us that he has nothing lacking in himself (Acts 17v25). He doesn't need us to add something. Rather, he constantly gives to us in outgoing love. He has a constantly open, outstretched hand to those who are his. This transforms our view of praise.

1) God's Giving (v20-21)

These two verses are a prayer. They recognise that God gives us, not only his presence and amazing friendship, but also "every good thing for doing his will". God is at work in us (v21), equipping us by his power, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead (v20). All through this passage we see how God is at work and gives to us:

Jesus has transferred us to his sphere & made us holy (v12); the eternal Son has given himself to us, bearing disgrace for us on the Cross (v13); God is at work sustaining us as we walk by faith (Hebrews 11, 13v14); he gives us praise in our hearts, through Jesus (v15); he's at work through the beautiful love and sharing of the fellowship (v16); he gives Godly leadership to the local church and is at work as all its members submit to that leadership in love (v17); he's at work as we pray (v18), and pray "to an excess" (v19) for things of particular importance. *God is the God who gives, it's who he is!* He is the God of generous, outgoing kindness. He is the God of grace.

2) God's Offering (v11-12)

There are serious consequences to forgetting who God is and 'sacrificing' in various ways, thinking we must get him on side. The living God is the God who comes down. The eternal Son offers himself for us and to us (v12-13). There's no offering to give to get the true God on side or to gain his audience or to win his friendship. God offers and gives himself to us in love. Amazing grace!

3) Our Offering (v13-16)

Let's draw near to Jesus (that's the meaning of "going to him," v13) and "through Jesus...let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise" (v15). This is the only life that remains unshaken. It is the continual life of those who "profess his name," of those who acknowledge who God is and what he is truly like. This sacrifice is pleasant; it is what happens in the true holy of holies (at the true "altar", v10). To praise is to express how valuable and beautiful something is; to praise a person is to express appreciation and love. When two people get married, they give themselves in love to one another, in devotion. It's a kind of "sacrifice of praise." It's a picture of the marriage of Christ to his bride (Revelation 21v1-2), to his people: this is the city that is to come (Hebrews 13v14)! What a beautiful thing it is that Christ gives himself to us and invites us to enjoy life in his presence, joyfully responding and giving ourselves to him in praise!

