

Hebrews 13:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation:
for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

Analysis

And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. The author requests patient reception. 'Suffer the word of exhortation' (anesthe tou logou tēs paraklēseōs, ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς παρακλήσεως, 'bear with the word of encouragement/exhortation') urges readers to receive his teaching graciously. Some might find his strong warnings and challenges difficult; he asks forbearance. The content has been simultaneously encouraging and confronting—they should accept both.

'For I have written a letter unto you in few words' (dia bracheon gar epefila hymin) seems ironic given Hebrews' length, but compared to its profound subject matter (Christ's superiority, Old vs New Covenants, faith's nature, warnings against apostasy), the treatment is remarkably concise. The author has restrained himself, covering vast theology briefly. Imagine how much more could be said about Christ's priesthood, Melchizedek typology, or faith's heroes!

This models pastoral wisdom in teaching: address necessary topics without overwhelming hearers. Balance exhortation with encouragement. Present hard truths with request for patient reception. The author doesn't compromise truth to avoid offense but frames it within relationship, asking brothers to receive difficult teaching graciously. Reformed preaching similarly seeks to declare 'the whole counsel of God' (Acts 20:27) without unnecessarily offending, balancing truth and love.

Historical Context

Ancient letters typically ended with personal greetings and requests. The author's appeal to 'suffer the word' suggests awareness that some content might provoke resistance—particularly arguments that Old Covenant system was obsolete, warnings against apostasy, and calls to bear Christ's reproach. Jewish Christians attached to temple worship and Mosaic traditions would find this challenging. The claim to brevity is relative—Hebrews is substantial, but its theological depth could have been expanded infinitely. Ancient rhetorical training emphasized concision; effective communication required saying enough without exhausting audiences. The personal appeal ('brethren') softens potential offense, framing exhortation within family relationship.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How willingly do you 'suffer the word of exhortation' when biblical teaching challenges comfortable beliefs or practices?
2. What does the author's combination of strong truth and gracious appeal teach about how to give and receive correction?
3. In what areas might you need to patiently receive difficult biblical truth rather than dismissing or resenting it?

Interlinear Text

Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀδελφοί ἀνέχεσθε τοῦ λόγου τῆς
I beseech **And** **you** **brethren** **suffer** G3588 **the word** G3588
G3870 G1161 G5209 G80 G430 G3056

παρακλήσεως καὶ γὰρ διὰ βραχέων ἐπέστειλα
of exhortation G2532 **for** **in** **few words** **I have written a letter**
G3874 G1063 G1223 G1024 G1989

ὑμῖν
unto you
G5213

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 5:12 (Parallel theme): By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

Hebrews 3:1 (Parallel theme): Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

2 Corinthians 6:1 (Parallel theme): We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.

Galatians 6:11 (Parallel theme): Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.