So Much to Say So Little Time
1. So here’s some advice
2. And here is God’s promise

With summer coming to a close and school starting back up again this coming week for the public school, it got me thinking. When I was twelve I thought the summers were the best thing ever. Sleeping in, playing with my friends, being lazy around the house, watching TV. Life was grand. I don’t think my mom knew how grand our life was though. Every day she would leave the house around 9 am for work and she would, before leaving, rattle off ten things that we were supposed to do during the day. Remember to wash the dishes, cut the grass, weed the garden, pick up your clothes, hang the laundry out on the line, clean up your room, change your sheets, and if you have time read some books for the Appleton public reading program. Wow, what a list we thought! Sadly our sinful nature was strong back then and we did maybe one or two things on that list, until we saw mom driving up the street, then my sisters and I would like a bunch of Tasmanian devils, scurry about trying to do everything lickety split.

Reading our lesson for today, it’s hard not to think that the author still had so much to say and little time to say it. Throughout the first 12 chapters of the letter to the Hebrews, the writer focuses on Jesus Christ and the new covenant. The focus is on living by faith in Jesus and not fear of failure. The focus is on the real difference between Jesus and Judaism. After 12 chapters, the final chapter gives us application of the matters at hand. During the concluding remarks of this letter we can see the author is tying up any loose ends, and rattling off a list of things that Christians do because of the love of Jesus in each of them. All of the applications surround the way we love others. Love your neighbor. Love those who are imprisoned. Express love as it is intended within the marriage. Watch out for the love of money. Remember the love of Jesus. Remember the men who tell you about Jesus. And again remember the faithful love of Jesus.

So much to say, so little time, so listen up and apply these truths to your life. Show your Christian love: 
1. Keep on loving each other as brothers.
2. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.
3. Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.
4. Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.
5. Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have.

Great pieces of advice wouldn’t you say? Each morsel of advice has an abundance of truth in it as well as priceless value. Keep on loving each other as brothers. This advice is important because within a congregation it would be easy to allow love to grow cold. Yet we are brothers and sisters in the family of God so we are to join together and love one another as a family would. Being kind to strangers. Having pity on those who are imprisoned. Putting
yourself into other people's situation and ask the question, "How would I like to be treated if I were one of them?" The advice then went to the marriage as a backbone for society and things we ought to watch out for when we are married. And then the last advice that the author gives by inspiration is that we should keep our lives free from the love of money and be content.

Now is the case like when my mom rushed out the door and I really didn't hear everything she said, so too it would be easy for us to take this list of advice and disregard most of it. Maybe do some of the things every once in a while when it suits you. Let me tell you to do what the author to the Hebrews is telling us to do take time and effort. The temptation that we have to fight is the cold attitude of the world around us and the voice of hastiness in our heads. All of us would be able to try and fulfill this list of things if we would slow down and take the time and love as Christ Jesus loved us. Imagine what life would be like if Jesus used some of the poor excuses we do when we don't want to be kind, loving, or content. We would be lost. We fail mightily with these demands don't we? How many times do you think it's been when you saw a stranger who needed help and you avoided the situation? How many times has it been that you have looked at someone who is going through a rough patch and instead of showing pity and love you simply showed thanksgiving that you weren't like that person? We need to pull our heads out of the sand and realize what God has commanded us to do, and we need to put forth effort to do these things. Will we succeed more than we fail? Probably not. But that does not excuse us from trying to succeed. To love someone is shaping up to be quite the difficult task. It's easy to see that we are not hard wired to love people as the writer has shown us. So the writer turns to very comforting words of what God tells us and promises us.

The writer to the Hebrews was quite in tune with the feelings of the audience that was there. The ability to do the things that he was telling them was something that I am sure he saw was weighing heavy on their shoulders, so he also reminded them of the pure promise of God's love and desire to be with us. The writer told them: God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." 6 So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Have you ever heard a child say they will never do something? Never is a very strong word. If I say never, or my favorite, never ever, then I am saying that what I did or said won't happen again no matter what. There is no wiggle room with the word: never. And that is how God promises us today. Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you. What a comfort to know! When the going gets tough and those friends of ours start dropping out of our lives, God will never leave us. When we seem lost and discouraged, God is there. When we are feeling like a failure God is there. Now it's one thing to say that God is there, but it's another to say that he is also there as my helper. That's what we know of Jesus in our lesson for today. God is with us and he will never leave us and he is our helper. WOW!
We think about some of the sticky situations that we get ourselves into and wonder how we are going to get out, God is there helping us. When we feel like this world is going to chew us up and spit us out, God helps us and reassures us there is nothing to fear. When we feel like the people around us are attacking us, he tells us do not fear, the Lord is right here. What can man do to me?

Well what can man do to me? A lot actually. But can man take away my faith? They can try to, but they will fail. They can take everything from us. They can’t take our faith.

When you were baptized, you were given the precious gift of faith. This gift of faith is not something we can touch or feel, but it exists within each of us. It is alive; we feed it and nourish it by coming to church. Our faith rejoices in the truth of God’s Word. So we put it in front of the Word here and in our homes. We feed it with the Lord’s Supper that is here today. And we are given forgiveness through this Holy Supper. This Supper is a strengthening of faith in us so we can look back to what God has said and trust and believe in Jesus.

Whenever we feel like the world is winning, we need look no further than the cross. We may think that this world is being forsaken by God, but he is with each of those who believe in him. We may think that this world is destroying itself, and it is sin is ripping it apart. But Jesus is the remedy to sin. Although the earth gives way, Jesus is our staff and stay. Jesus died on the cross for our forgiveness of sins and he rose again in victory to show each of us that there is no question that he was victorious over sin, Satan and the world. He squished them all and they are done. Our Savior Jesus is the king of kings and Lord of lords. There is no one greater than him. The King of kings and Lord of lords is the one telling each of us that he will never leave us and he will never forsake us. That he will help us. That we do not need to fear. He has won. Isn’t that cool?!? Our Savior, the one who forgave us our sins, is the one who is still active in each of our lives, helping us and answering our prayers. Amazing!

And so the writer after looking at the love that our Lord has for all people, he turns back to showing love towards others. Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. When I look at this verse it is easy for us to focus in on pastors. That’s obvious. But there are more than just pastors who speak the Word of God. I think of my dad, my grandpa, my teachers, my professors, my good friends. There are tons of people that I know that I try and emulate their faith, because their faith is worth emulating. And I take heart in the promise that even though all of the people that I know will pass on and will move on and go to different places, Jesus will not. He is the same. He will never leave us. He is the same yesterday and forever.

With so much to say and so little time, the author seemed to have covered nearly everything
in these eight verses. Although it may appear difficult to follow what he has told us to do, we should listen to the Word of God and be comforted by the promise of God. When we fail in this life, God is there showing us how we are forgiven, and not only that that he has succeeded. This sermon was difficult to write, because there was so much to say, and so little time to say it.

AMEN