

Sermon Title: "Loving the Stranger"

Sermon Text: Luke 14:12-14

Pre-Sermon: This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word. Think about the following quotes. Maybe read them out loud. Do you agree or disagree? Ask yourself, what stands out?

- "As far as you go back in the history of God's people one of the God appointed duties of the righteous is hospitality."
- "The door of the Christian home, as well as the heart of the Christian family, ought to be open to all who come in need."
- "Hospitality was so deeply valued by early Christians that if they could observe how inhospitable many people claim to be Christians in our generation, they would probably ask, 'Are you even Christians?'"
- "Yet the great part of people are most unworthy to be helped if they be judged by their own merit. But here Scripture helps in the best way when it teaches that we are not to consider what men merit of themselves but to look upon the image of God in all men, to which we owe all honor and love... Therefore, whatever man you meet who needs your aid, you have no reason to refuse to help him. Say, 'He is a stranger'; but the Lord has given him a mark that ought to be familiar to you, by virtue of the fact that he forbids you to despise your own flesh. Say, he is contemptible and worthless, but the Lord shows him to be one to whom he has deigned to give the beauty of his image. Say that you owe nothing for any service of his; but God, as it were, has put him in his own place in order that you may recognize toward him the many and great benefits with which God has bound you to himself. Say that he does not deserve even your least effort for his sake; but the image of God, which recommends him to you, is worthy of your giving of yourself and all your possessions. Now if he has not only deserved no good at your hand, but has also provoked you by unjust acts and curses, not even this is just reason why you should cease to embrace him in love and to perform the duties of love on his behalf. (Mt.6:14,18:35,Luke 17:3) You will say he has deserved something far different of me. Yet what has the Lord deserved? While he bids you forgive this man for all sins he has committed against you, he would truly have them charged against himself. Assuredly there is but one way in which to achieve what is not merely difficult but utterly against human nature, to love those who hate us, to repay their evil deeds with benefits, to return blessings for reproaches. It is that we remember not to consider men's evil intention but to look upon the image of God in them, which cancels and effaces their transgressions, and with its beauty and dignity allures us to love and embrace them."

Sermon Questions: This will help you think through what you heard and are the kinds of things I hope you will be able to answer after listening to the message.

- What does hospitality have to do with discipleship?
- What is hospitality?
- What's the difference between hospitality and entertaining?
- What do we mean when we say hospitality is a moral issue? What do you think about that statement?
- How did we demonstrate that from the book of Luke?
- How does Acts emphasize the importance of hospitality?
- What are some ways the rest of the New Testament highlights the importance of hospitality? What stood out to you in particular?
- What do you think are some of the reasons we always take hospitality seriously? What are some of the particular challenges you think we might have right now in regards to hospitality?
- What reason did we give for taking hospitality seriously? What are some other reasons you can think of from the Scriptures?
- What does hospitality have to do with the gospel?

Sermon Outline: A sermon is much more than an outline, but perhaps this outline will help you follow the sermon.

1. What is hospitality?
 - a. It is not...
 - b. It is not...
 - c. It is ...
2. What is the reason we are talking about hospitality?
 - a. This is a moral issue.
 - i. Proof:
 1. From Luke 14
 2. From Luke
 3. From Acts
 4. From the rest of the New Testament
 5. The importance the Bible placed on the duty hospitality is illustrated in the early church
3. Why should we take what Jesus says about hospitality seriously when it will make our lives more difficult?
 - a. It demonstrates genuine faith and is an important way to worship God
4. How can we obey Jesus and become more hospitable people?

Sermon Goal: This is a VERY short explanation of what I'm praying God will achieve through this message.

I want to help you see the importance of hospitality and motivate you to take steps to demonstrate your faith in the gospel by pursuing biblical hospitality in your everyday life. I

want to motivate us as a church to be a group of people who are known for our genuine and generous concern for people we have no reason besides Jesus to care for.

Self-Evaluation Assignment: These are some questions to help you evaluate yourself.

- Read Matthew 25:31-46: What standard of judgment does Jesus use here? Why do you think he uses that standard? How do the two groups respond to what Jesus says? Where do you fit right now?
- What's the difference between the way the Bible talks about hospitality and how you have thought about it?
- What's your disposition toward strangers? Fearful, neutral, love?
- What are some ways you and your family are seeking to show hospitality right now?
- What kind of responsibility do you feel for people who are on the fringes of your life?
- Is your house an open house? Why or why not?
- When was the last time you had someone you didn't know well over to your home? Why do you think that is?
- Who has shown hospitality to you well?
- What steps do you take on a regular basis to help someone who is on the outside become a friend?
- Part of hospitality is being willing to be shown hospitality. Are you good at being a guest to others? Why or why not?

Sermon Flow: This is a basic summary that might help you understand what this sermon is doing and where it is going.

1. Introduction:
 - a. I identify the passage.
 - b. I explain the kind of sermon this is going to be and why we are taking this particular approach.
 - c. I introduce hospitality as a "neglected area of Christian discipleship" and "one of the primary ways the gospel should transform us."
 - i. Here I just want you to feel like, wow, he takes hospitality seriously. I would like you to ask yourself, why is he so excited about this subject? I really don't mind if you are thinking at this point, maybe he is a little too passionate about this, because that's part of the purpose of this sermon. I want to demonstrate why we all should take this subject seriously.
2. Body:
 - a. I begin by defining hospitality.
 - i. I am doing this at the beginning because there are many ideas of hospitality that are different than the Bible's.
 1. We are going to first talk about what hospitality is not, and then discuss what it is.

will give a couple quick suggestions, and then we'll talk more about how to obey this command in our evening sermon discussion and hopefully in our conversations with one another.

3. Conclusion:

- a. It's my hope that you will go away from this message thankful for the hospitality Jesus has shown you, convinced that showing hospitality is a matter of obedience to Jesus, and excited about thinking about different ways you can follow Jesus

Application Questions: We can't just read these passages, study them. It's vital we respond.

- What have you learned?
- How have you been challenged?
- Look around you at church. Who can you take steps to making a friend?
- Are there any ways you can show hospitality by caring for missionaries or helping missionaries?
- Think about your everyday life. Who is there in your life that people wouldn't expect you to care about? How can you show Christ's love to them this week?

Sermon Notes: This is a place you can record your own notes and thoughts as you listen to the message today so that you can think about them later.