

The Power of Hospitality

Galatians 4:4-5

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Opening Thought:

Stand Greet and welcome one another. As Christians what is our purpose? We live in a world that is in lonely, broken and hurt and isolated. Many try to disguise it by using media to fill the void. Our God gave us an antidote. We are built for relationship. As the body of Christ the church we need get out of our comfort zone and follow him and fulfill Gods will for our lives.

God's antidote for our separation and sin and brokenness. It's called hospitality. I realize that hospitality may not sound like the highest expression of spiritual life. When we use the word hospitality... what are the first ideas and images that come to mind? (ideas) Perhaps we think of warm meals around a finely decorated table...

>this morning I want to help us transform both our understanding of what hospitality means... but also the significance in our lives... in living the life of Jesus... of living beyond ourselves.

I believe that no word may have become as misused as the word 'hospitality. We get caught in our human understanding.

Hospitality has the power to DEFINE relationship.

The Latin root of the word hospitality is hospes, which refers to a guest, visitor, host or stranger. Our word hospital is derived from this same root word. The Greek word for hospitality, "philo/xenia" is a Greek compound word that means "brotherly love for a stranger."

1. Hospitality flows from God... through our own experience of profound inclusion. The whole Bible is the story of Divine hospitality... because it is the story of God's invitation. Bringing people to himself.

It is the very life that Jesus extends to us... invites us to enter. In telling us this story... Jesus makes clear that it is GOD who is the grand host. He is the one calling inviting and living inside to us bring us close.

2. Hospitality involves initiative. Take the time to get to know and be with people.

3. Jesus directs his words to all people....not just a particular type. God loves all people to be part of His Kingdom. The more we understand the power of inclusion... the more we understand hospitality isn't just a dinner party. It's not simply for the gifted (although I thank God some have special gifting.) It's for ALL of us.

4. Jesus was intentional...and he calls us to be intentional. It is our purpose in life.

It's never easy - to follow and live for Jesus. If discipleship followed the way of convenience and

comfort, the way would be crowded with more followers. But it's not easy. " It takes faith and courage to get out of the comfort zone.

John Piper says:

The physical force of gravity pulls everything to the center of the earth. In order to break free from earth-centered life, thousands and thousands of pounds of energy have to push the space shuttle away from the center. There is also a psychological force of gravity that constantly pulls our thoughts and affections and physical actions inward toward the center of our own selves and our own homes. Therefore the most natural thing in the world is to neglect hospitality. It is the path of least resistance. All we have to do is yield to the natural gravity of our self-centered life, and the result will be a life so full of self that there is no room for hospitality. We will forget about it. And we will neglect it. (Pause) So the Bible bluntly says. Stop that! Build a launching pad. Fill up your boosters. And blast out of your self-oriented routine. Stop neglecting hospitality. Practice hospitality.

Hospitality begins with the events of the person, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ who now sits enthroned at the right hand of the Father. >Here is the Christian's basis for ultimate victory; Christ's victory is the foundation for courage and the ability to live victoriously in life.

We may want to quit or to relax or use the excuse we are too busy. Our human nature will be constant challenge. But thanks be to God for forgiveness and renewal of life to begin again. Carrying a cross is hard work. But we push on, following the leading of Jesus, and strengthened by His Spirit.

Hear the words of Jesus – do not be afraid - (Pause) trust in Jesus - only Jesus. He will fill you to live in him. If anyone ever proved their love for others it was Jesus. Every time Jesus served, ministered, healed, or preached He was demonstrating love. And of course, we know about His greatest demonstration of love; Calvary! Ultimate act of gathering people to himself. He takes away our sins and leads us to His Grace. He wants that for all people.

The qualities we see in His life in the Word are the very ones God want to reproduce in us

The Encouragement of Scripture and the Promises of God - Thus, it is this God-breathed, inerrant, and infallible revelation of God in Scripture that provides us with the greatest means of courage to live in the Power of the Holy Spirit.

- Hospitality in His Love must be sincere. We have a warm church because we have many people who are friendly and care about other people. There is room to grow in how to love others.
- Hospitality means that To love people, you need to get to know them. To get to know them, you have to participate with them -- or at least talk to them, reach out a with a gesture of caring.

5. If we are going to aim to be a warm church, we need to get a picture in our minds as to how a warm church looks. NO ONE GETS THROUGH THE NET> Part of being that living sacrifice is connecting to a body of believers and loving them. a note someone

Turn with me to Romans 12:13 Practice Hospitality (13b)

(2) hospitality is making people feel at ease and at home: it is relieving the tension of “not

knowing anybody” and providing attention and consideration to another. It says I care about you no matter what.

I want to close with a challenge for all of us. Hospitality isn't easy for many of us. The greater value we place on privacy, the less likely we are to practice hospitality. We may think it will steal away the little bit we have in life.

> I ask you to stop and look face to face into that feeling... because it belies the greater truth... that our lives become bigger when they are expanded by compassion and hospitality. Not more comfortable... but more rich... more satisfying. This isn't easy... but it's essential.

PRAYER / Heavenly Father, we thank you for the hospitality that flows from you. For the hospitality that flows through us.. and among us... we thank you.. and ask that you would bless it. Many of us know that we have become small... we've allowed our meaning to become disconnected... our tables have become small. Show us where our privacy has become a detriment... where our boundaries have become our bondage. Teach us about your party... and how to be a part of it.