

ADVENT AND HOSPITALITY

I. Romans 12:9-13 & Hebrews 13:1-2

A. During the four Sundays leading up to Christmas we'll be taking a look at Hospitality, Generosity, Spontaneity, and Charity. On Christmas Eve we'll look at Divine Humility. So does Hospitality have anything to do with Christmas and the birth of Jesus? Anything to do with the Gospel? Let's dig into God's Word.

B. A couple months back Janet and I were invited to a birthday celebration. It was a cookout, Buckeye game, mini-reunion, extravaganza. The host said a few days later something like: "*My wife and I are talking about having more such gatherings, even when there isn't specific reason to do so.*" What's God putting on their heart? It's the notion of Hospitality. Hospitality is such a potent witness!

C. Romans 12:9-13 (ESV) "Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality." (Hospitality works best in your home or yard, around a fire ring or at a block party.)

D. Hebrews 13:1-2 (ESV) sings in harmony: "*Let brotherly love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*" Hebrews 13:1-2 (Amplified): "*Let love for your fellow believers continue and be a fixed practice with you [never let it fail]. Do not forget or neglect or refuse to extend hospitality to strangers [in the brotherhood—being friendly, cordial, and gracious, sharing the comforts of your home and doing your part generously], for through it some have entertained angels without knowing it.*"

E. There's angelic examples in the OT: (Gen. 18) Abraham extended hospitality to three men, one was the Lord, two were angels. Likewise Gideon in (Judges 6), and Manoah (Judges 13). NT examples of hospitality include: Martha & Mary hosting Jesus in their home. Cornelius invited Peter into his home to share the Gospel with his family and friends. Lydia insisted that Paul & Silas stay in her Philippian home. In Matthew 10:11-14: Jesus sends out the disciples two by two and tells them to depend on hospitable hosts: "*And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.*"

F. The Greek word for hospitality is *philonexia* which means *love for strangers*. Our Hebrews 13:1-2 charge is to love one another whom we know and extend love to those we scarcely know or those we don't know at all. C.S. Lewis quipped: "Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?" (Share about the Butterfield's green picnic table...)

G. Dr. Christine Pohl, author of *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*, writes: "A life of hospitality begins in worship, with a recognition of God's grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us... As a way of life, an act of love, an expression of faith, our hospitality reflects and anticipates God's welcome. Simultaneously costly and wonderfully rewarding, hospitality often involves small deaths and little resurrections. By God's grace we can grow more willing, more eager, to open the door to a needy neighbor, a weary sister or brother, a stranger in distress. Perhaps as we open that door more regularly, we will grow increasingly sensitive to the quiet knock of angels. In the midst of a life-giving practice, we too might catch glimpses of Jesus who asks for our welcome and welcomes us home."

H. After the resurrection, Jesus showed up unexpectedly on the shores of Galilee where the disciples had run away to fish. Jesus performed another big fish-catch miracle and the boys knew it was him. He already had a fire going with fish on the grill. He invited the disciples to share his fire and food. How awesome would that get together have been?! Jesus' fish fry is a prime example of hospitality.

I. In advent, we celebrate Jesus' first coming and anticipate His second coming. Why did Jesus come in the first place? Though that list is extensive, be sure of this: He came to turn enemies into friends; sinners into saints; strangers into family, spiritual orphans into beloved children. He came to make His abode with us. He's invited us into His eternal home to live forevermore. How serious was His invitation? He shed His blood to make it so! He bore the cross to take us all in!

J. John 14:1-6 & 23 (ESV) is usually read at funerals. Dare we share it as a verse leading up to Christmas? Does it have anything to do with Hospitality? "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." And let's add verse 23: "Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (How sweet is our Lord's Hospitality!)

K. *In Christ*, your days of homelessness are over! Jesus befriends the lonely, the lost, the last and the least. He heals the brokenhearted. You are among those He has aimed His love! He says in essence: "Come share My bread and fish! Come drink from My well! Come share My fire! Come share My yoke! Come share My life! Come walk My path! Come share My home, walk My Garden, enjoy My company for all eternity."

* Close with Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Romans 12:9-13 (ESV)

9 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. **10** Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. **11** Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord. **12** Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. **13** Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.

Hebrews 13:1-2 (ESV)

1 Let brotherly love continue. **2** Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Matthew 10:11-14 (ESV)

11 And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. **12** As you enter the house, greet it. **13** And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. **14** And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.

John 14:1-6 & 23 (ESV)

1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. **2** In My Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also. **4** And you know the way to where I am going." **5** Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going. How can we know the way?" **6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." ... **23** Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?"

Quote by Christine Pohl

"A life of hospitality begins in worship, with a recognition of God's grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us.... As a way of life, an act of love, an expression of faith, our hospitality reflects and anticipates God's welcome. Simultaneously costly and wonderfully rewarding, hospitality often involves small deaths and little resurrections. By God's grace we can grow more willing, more eager, to open the door to a needy neighbor, a weary sister or brother, a stranger in distress. Perhaps as we open that door more regularly, we will grow increasingly sensitive to the quiet knock of angels. In the midst of a life-giving practice, we too might catch glimpses of Jesus who asks for our welcome and welcomes us home."

- Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*.

Film Clips & Other Links

Ever Met An Angel? - John MacArthur

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSqCdwY8UYc>

John Piper on Hospitality and Love

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02Oib4Ex4qc>

Professor Christine Pohl (Asbury Seminary) on Hospitality

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kG0s5a6t780>

Nan McCollough - Hospitality - Family Life Today

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7RZhhFqXWQ>

"Come On (My Soul)" - Rend Collective
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SswMKsFaHWE>

Bonus Stuff

1 Peter 4:8-9 (ESV)

8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Galatians 6:9-10 (NIV)

9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Quote by Francis Schaeffer

"A compassionate open home is part of Christian responsibility, and should be practiced up to the level of capacity."

Quote by John Piper

"Freely you have received. Freely give. Is there any greater joy than the joy of experiencing the liberating power of God's hospitality making us a new and radically different kind of people, who love to reflect the glory of His grace as we extend it to others in all kinds of hospitality?"

- John Piper, Sermon, "Strategic Hospitality," Aug. 25, 1985. www.desiringgod.org/messages/strategic-hospitality

Quote by Thom Schultz

"It's likely that every day presents an opportunity for you to practice radical hospitality to someone with whom you cross paths. There is no shortage of people who could use the fit of a caring, welcoming person in their life. How awesome would it be if, in a time of need, the first thing people would say is, *"I need a Christian!"* If you expect to be that person, you'll be surprised at how often the opportunities come along for you to show love through radical hospitality."

- Thom Schultz is an eclectic author and the founder of Group Publishing and Lifetree Café. Check out Thom Schultz's website at: holysoup.com/

Quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Let not the emphasis of hospitality lie in bed and board; but let truth and love and honor and courtesy flow in all thy deeds."

Quote by Henri Nouwen

"Hospitality means primarily the creation of free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to offer freedom not disturbed by dividing lines.

- Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out*.

Quote by Patrick Henry

"Hospitality invites to prayer before it checks credentials, welcomes to the table before administering the entrance exam."

- Patrick Henry in *The Ironic Christian's Companion: Finding the Marks of God's Grace in the World*. Author, Patrick Henry, is the retired past executive director of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research at Saint John's Abbey and University in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Quote by John Wesley

"One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor is because they so seldom visit them. Hence it is that one part of the world does not know what the other suffers. Many of them do not know, because they do not care to know: they keep out of the way of knowing it – and then plead their voluntary ignorance as an excuse for their hardness of heart."

Quote by J.R.R. Tolkien

"Frodo was now safe in the Last Homely House east of the Sea. That house was, as Bilbo had long ago reported, 'a perfect house, whether you like food or sleep, or story-telling or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all.' Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear and sadness."

- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring*.

Greek/Hebrew Definitions - Bible Tools

<http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Lexicon.show/ID/G5381/philonexia.htm>

Strong's #5381: Philonexia (pronounced fil-on-ex-ee'-ah)

from 5382; hospitableness:--entertain stranger, hospitality.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon:

Philonexia

1) love to strangers, hospitality.