

## INTRODUCTION

The man in the Old Testament scriptures most shown to be hospitable was Abraham. When the three men came to him, he showed his love for strangers in how

- he left his place by his tent and came to meet the strangers
- he humbled himself before them
- he made himself their servant
- he had water brought, so their feet could be washed
- he gave them a place to rest
- he had bread prepared for them
- he had an animal killed for them

But there is a man even more given to hospitality than was Abraham:

Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord Jesus Christ. When by our sins, we had made ourselves strangers,

- He left His blessed place in heaven and came down here to us
- He humbled Himself before us, taking our human nature upon himself, condescending even to being born a baby and laid in a manger
- He took the form of a servant, and said that He came not to be served, but to serve
- He not only washed the feet of His disciples, but loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood
- He promised and gave sinners rest not for their bodies only, but for their souls
- He did not order bread to be baked, or an animal to be killed for our meat, but, in the ultimate act of love for strangers, gave Himself up to death, that we starving sinners might believe in Him, and so spiritually eat his flesh as the bread from heaven through faith in Him

Our Lord Jesus was, and remains the most hospitable or harberous man ever to live. We never can equal His acts of love for strangers. Yet, as His disciples, we are to follow in His steps, and be given to hospitality ourselves. This grace of being hospitable is part of what shows a man to be blameless, and qualified to be made a deacon or bishop in Christ's church.

With the great example of Jesus Christ before us, let us learn what the Bible says about being given to hospitality, and how we can be guided by that in our practice of that grace.

## TEXT

1 Timothy 3:1-2

## BODY

Learn what it is to be hospitable from

- I. The Word Used to Express This Concept
  - A. G5382 *philoxenos* stranger-loving; fond of strangers
    1. *phileo*
    2. *xenos*
  - B. There are other places in the NT where this term “stranger loving” is used, either as an adjective, as here, “hospitable,” or as a noun, “hospitality.”
  - C. There also are several places in the Bible where this term is not used, but God speaks to us in other words about about loving strangers, doing good to strangers, taking in and lodging strangers

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- II. The Old Testament Example
  - A. Abraham primarily
  - B. Also Lot
  - C. Note that in these cases, God mightily blessed the man who showed such love to strangers
    1. Abraham was promised that a son would be born to him and his wife within that year
    2. Lot, along with his two daughters, was saved from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorah
  - D. We can learn from Abraham the attitude of hospitality, which involves treating strangers as more important than yourself.
    1. a stranger has needs
    2. you become intent on meeting those needs
  - E. We can learn from Abraham the essential works or deeds that make up hospitality
    1. expressing esteem and welcome
    2. demonstrating that, to you, serving them is not an imposition, but a privilege
    3. giving them comfortable rest
    4. giving them food
      - a) not in this history that the food does not sound fancy - It reminds me of how Martha busied herself too much with serving.

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III. The Commands of the Law

Deuteronomy 10:17-19 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. 18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. 19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

- A. God loves the stranger [ESV sojourner]
- B. Therefore you love the stranger
- C. For you were strangers in Egypt; meaning that you should know what it is like to be strangers and not be loved, and so you would not want to treat strangers the way you were treated when you were strangers

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IV. The Words of the Lord Jesus - Matthew 25:31

- A. At the great judgment, those who are saved will be commended by the Lord Jesus for how they showed their love for Him in their kind treatment of His brethren, His disciples, for His sake
- B. One of the acts of kindness Jesus mentioned is taking in strangers (Mt 25:35)
- C. See here that although taking in strangers in general is virtuous, of especial concern to the Lord Jesus Christ is the taking in of strangers who are His brethren

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### V. The Application By the Apostles

- A. From John, for knowing what to do about Christians traveling for the sake of the kingdom of heaven: 3 John 1:5-8  
Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and for strangers, 6 who have borne witness of your love before the church. If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, 7 because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to receive such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.
- B. From Peter, for sanctifying us regarding temptations not to love strangers: 1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without grumbling or grudging
- C. From Paul in the pastoral epistles for evaluating church members regarding positions in the church
  1. for determining what widows the church might support: 1 Timothy 5:10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.
  2. for choosing pastors: Titus 1:8, 1 Timothy 3:2

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## VI. Application to Our Situation

- A. Our culture does not often produce the situations that call for the kind of hospitality shown in the Bible
  1. we are very rich as a society; it is very unusual for someone to be so poor he needs to be taken in by people he doesn't know
  2. communication is very easy; you can communicate with people where you are going, and make plans to stay with friends or relatives
  3. travel is very rapid; you can drive hundreds of miles in a day, to get where you can stay with people you know
  4. there are hotels in every town; people who travel often stay in a hotel
- B. Be ready to do the very thing the Bible describes, should the need arise
  1. recognize any lack of love for strangers that is in your heart; work and pray to banish hatred and cultivate love there
  2. don't be afraid
    - a) it is true that taking in strangers opens you to the possibility of being harmed by them
    - b) but the Lord is your defender; He is your shield
  3. don't be foolish
    - a) ignorant or foolish ideas about hospitality can spoil your readiness to be hospitable
    - b) love for strangers does not cancel prudence or caution
    - c) do not think that love for strangers obligates you to give things to professional beggars or career criminals or scam artists
    - d) e.g. I have heard stories from right around here during the Great Depression. One woman who lived right near the highway had many visitors asking for work, or for something to eat. She would invite them to sit at a picnic table outside. If they would do that, she would feed them.
  4. be willing to be hospitable on short notice, even no notice!

- C. Be hospitable to those with whom you worship
  - 1. you are not complete strangers
  - 2. but one of the best ways to express your love and strengthen your love for each other is to take each other into your homes
  - 3. this is relatively easy hospitality, and so can serve as warm-up or exercise toward being ready for more challenging kinds of hospitality
- D. Be very welcoming to anyone who comes to church
  - 1. in the church meeting place
  - 2. also by having them home
    - a) e.g. our example in California
- E. Be ready to say, “yes” to other Christians’ attempts to be hospitable
  - 1. I like being at home better than anywhere else!
  - 2. but I make it a rule not to say “no” to an invitation from someone in our church unless really necessary; always it is a blessing that I would have missed had I been shy of accepting

## CONCLUSION

Sinners, not in Christ, you are now hearing the gospel, the good news, in terms perhaps you haven’t heard before. You are seeing a picture you might not have considered. You are a stranger from God. Jesus Christ freely offers to take you in, give you rest, feed you with Himself. God’s hospitality even extends to adopting you as sons in His household. Believe in Jesus Christ; repent of your sins by which you made yourself a stranger; find rest for your wandering soul in the arms of Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:12-19 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, 15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, 16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. 17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. 18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

Jeff - Call to Worship: Matthew 11:28-30

Jeremiah - Scripture Reading: Genesis 18:1-15; 19:1-3

Thad - Congregational Prayer:

Jeff - Benediction: 2 Corinthians 13:14

Anna - Prelude (please choose)

Anna - Trinity 720 "The Child of a King"

Rita - Trinity 53 "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah"

Allison - Trinity 400 "Come, Thou Fount of Ev'ry Blessing"

1 Timothy 5:10 well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

Deuteronomy 31:12 Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law,

Deuteronomy 10:17-19 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. 18 He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. 19 Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:32-34 'You shall rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the LORD. 33 'And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.