



Growth Group Questions
February 11, 2024
“Don’t Miss Out”

Context:

As we end this sermon series on hospitality, we are looking at the last chapter of Hebrews. Next week, as we begin a new sermon series, we will look at the first chapter of Hebrews as we consider how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament offices of prophet, priest and king.

Hebrews reads like a sermon. The structure and layout are unlike any other book in the New Testament. We are not certain who wrote it, or exactly when it was written, or where it was written from, or who it was written to. We do know it was written to a people who were somewhat familiar with the story of God. They had a remnant of faith, but the preacher wanted to connect them with who Jesus was and what he had done.

So, for chapter after chapter, the preacher lifts up Jesus, and his work and what it accomplished. As he nears the end of his sermon in chapter 13, he begins to talk about the practical implications of following Jesus. The style of the sermon changes and the people are called into living out what has just been preached. These verses are the “call to action” part of the sermon.

The preacher says don’t forget to show hospitality. It is one thing to hear a message and quite another thing to live out the message. Hospitality is putting our faith into practice. The Greek word that is translated hospitality is the word “philoxenia” which literally means love of the outsider. What is hospitality? It is extending mercy and grace to someone who is different than us, to someone who may not feel as though they quite fit in.

The preacher reminds us that we never know when we might be entertaining God as we extend our hospitality. This is in reference to Genesis 18 when Abraham and Sarah welcomed three strangers, not realizing that God was in their midst. It is possible that when we welcome the outsider or stranger, or when we show hospitality to others, they might just bring the “presence of God” with them, and we might just end up eating a meal in the presence of God.



Scripture:

Hebrews 13:1-2

13 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. **2** Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Genesis 18:1-5

18 The LORD appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day. **2** Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. **3** He said, “If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord,^[a] do not pass your servant by. **4** Let a little water be brought, and then you may all wash your feet and rest under this tree. **5** Let me get you something to eat, so you can be refreshed and then go on your way—now that you have come to your servant.” “Very well,” they answered, “do as you say.”

Genesis 18:9-15

9 “Where is your wife Sarah?” they asked him. “There, in the tent,” he said. **10** Then one of them said, “I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son.” Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. **11** Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. **12** So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, “After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?” **13** Then the LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh and say, ‘Will I really have a child, now that I am old?’ **14** Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son.” **15** Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, “I did not laugh.” But he said, “Yes, you did laugh.”

Genesis 21:6

6 Sarah said, “God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.”

Psalms 126:1-3

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of^[a] Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.^[b]
2 Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great things for them.”
3 The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.

Hebrews 13:15-16

15 Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. **16** And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.



Questions:

1. What can we learn from the story of Genesis 18:1-5 and Genesis 18:9-15?
2. Genesis 18:14 asks, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”. Pastor Paul told us that the correct translation of this is “Is anything too wonderful for the Lord?” How does this second translation impact how you think about the question being asked?
3. Think about a time when you have shown hospitality to a stranger. How did that experience impact you?
4. How does the concept of joy seen in Psalm 126 differ from our worldly understanding of happiness?
5. How can Psalm 126:1-3 guide us in our daily lives, particularly in our interactions with others?
6. What role do you think gratitude plays in our ability or desire to show hospitality to others?
7. Pastor Paul told us that a byproduct of hospitality is joy and laughter. Do you agree with him? Where have you seen this to be true?
8. Hebrews 13:15 says we are to “continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise.” What is a sacrifice of praise?
9. How is hospitality a type of sacrificial praise?
10. We have spent six weeks examining the concept of hospitality from a variety of perspectives. How has this sermon series changed your perception of what it means to show hospitality to others?

