

12/8/24

Sermon – Hospitality – Xenia Love week 4

Scripture - Read Mathew 10:1-23

Main Message – The Gift of Hospitality is fast becoming a forgotten art. It's not hard to understand why, the world seems too scary and uncertain, but now we're losing an opportunity for Christ.

I was almost 16 years old and it was summer time when I got a call from a teacher asking if I thought we could put up a couple of German students for a few nights. Of course I had to ask my parents. They were a group, maybe 20, of talented German students who could play various instruments, sing, and setup equipment. My parents said OK, and we took 2 of them. I was quite surprised that my parents said yes. The two guys we got were great. Oh, they had different customs, but they also were very respectful. One of them was a bit older and had an international driver's license. We had a Volkswagen Rabbit. My parents handed him the keys and I took them out on a tour of Roseburg, Oregon and ultimately on some hiking trips, which many Germans love. I was quite proud of my parents. My father would have been 64. It turned out to be a memory I will always cherish. By the way, the concert they put on was amazing.

This idea of hospitality to strangers, for understandable reasons is fast becoming yet another good thing that is fading away. We are overlearning how to hunker down shelter in place only practicing the comfortable way of living. We are forgoing the huge opportunity of being hospitable at a whole new level. People learn from these experiences. They learn how to put being respectful of different customs into practice. Both Host and Guest must consciously adapt and to be respectful of one another. Last year Sally offered to take in a couple of individuals who were riding bicycles across America. Turned out they got another offer, but that is how it should be. Hospitality with ones we know and love is easy and its good. Hospitality with those we don't know or are somewhat unfamiliar with is next level. OF course there is risk. But the reward is always greater.

Read Mathew 10:1-23

Back in those days there were inns of course. Like inns today, they cost money. At an inn, your sheltered from people. At a home, you dine with them, talk with them, sleep under the same roof. Not forever, but just for a brief period of time where new ideas and thoughts are exchanged.

You know, in some languages the root word for guest/stranger and enemy are the same word. The Greek word is xenia. Xenia is a type of hospitable love. It is love on the edge not knowing for certain how things may ultimately turn out. How do you get over xenophobia – the fear of guests? It's like any other type of fear. Face it with the same attributes Jesus taught his disciples with.

So, I was young when we entertained those German students. My parents were "Old" at least in my book. Young person is often more flexible and less aware or worried about the long long list of things that can go wrong. A young person is more likely not to worry – true?

Mathew 18:1-5

So, this is the direct application of what Jesus taught. If all you see is danger. If fear of unknown is always the response. If you can't bring back an ounce of trust into your heart and embrace risk for the tremendous reward associated with the kingdom of heaven, then you are not living according to Jesus teaching here. The opposite of xenophobe is.... Xenophilia – a word you never hear, because all we know now is fear.