

Remnant Life Church

Servanthood

Week 4

“A Heart of Hospitality”

The second and third epistles of John are two of the shortest books in the Bible, yet they speak as if they were great volumes on the topic of hospitality

READ – 2 John

At the time of the writing of these letters, John is the last surviving original disciple of Jesus

- It is addressed to “the chosen lady and her children” who regularly opened their home to travelers
- This had become a regular practice, taking in itinerant preachers, who were more and more common following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus
 - This letter is an appendix to **I John**
 - No new theological truth is shared rather an emphasis on guarding against antichristian preaching
 - It is the only letter of the NT addressed to a woman – likely a widow
- John is writing to a woman who is known for her hospitality
 - So much so that she needs to be warned to not just take in anybody that presents themselves

What is hospitality?

- It was not a word that appeared until the days of the New Testament
- Hospitality is the act of being hospitable
 - Welcoming and open in your home or life
 - In the original language (phih-LOX-ah-neeah)
 - Fond of or generous to your guests (but more...)
 - Lover of strangers (anyone can show love to those you know)
 - And so hospitality, once again, begins in the heart
- But hospitality is not confined to the opening of one’s home
- Hospitality is also about personal approachability
 - Simple question: Are you approachable?
 - What is your demeanor? (You can start with church but it is more about other places)
 - Smile? Look people in the eye? Be the first to speak? What about on a bad day?
 - Not sure I would want to be a Christian based on how many look or act
 - Working out in a gym for the first time
 - Warned about a man who was known to be nasty to people
 - A pastor

Hospitality in the Scripture

1. The apostle Paul is shipwrecked and now on the island of Malta (in the geographic center of the Mediterranean south of Sicily, Italy – he is shown hospitality by the chief official of the island
 - a. **READ - Acts 28:1-10**
 - b. Paul was hosted for 3 days
 - c. God worked through Paul to heal the official's father as well as the rest of the sick on the island
 - d. Hospitality is often the setting of the environment for other works of God to come
2. In **Romans 12:13** and **16:23** Paul recalls and gives thanks for the hospitality shown him and encourages others to do the same for each other
 - a. Hospitable treatment very often breeds the same actions in the recipients
 - b. What? Did you think pay it forward was a new concept?
3. In **I Timothy 5:9-10** Paul lists hospitality as a virtue to be prized in the widows of the city and as a prerequisite for receiving help from the people
4. In **Hebrews 13:2** the author cautions believers to show hospitality to strangers since they may be entertaining angels and not be aware of it
 - a. I think of this verse often
 - b. The most unlikely is actually the most likely
5. Peter then teaches in **I Peter 4:9** that we should be hospitable to one another but to never grumble about what we are doing
 - a. To complain about doing good, is to be doing bad
 - b. At best you negate the work, at worst you are spreading an ungrateful, demonic attitude of grumbling
 - c. **Numbers 17:10** – God says, *This will put an end to their grumbling against me, so that they will not die.*
 - d. **John 6:43** – Jesus commands His disciples, *stop grumbling among yourselves*

Back to **2 John 5-6**

- *And now, dear lady, I am not writing you a new command but one we have had from the beginning. I ask that we love one another. And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.*
- Again we see, John's focus is not on the action of hospitality first; it is the love for one another that produces the action
 - As we have been studying over the last few weeks
 - The acts of service, in this case hospitality, begins in the heart
 - It may require a level of vulnerability
 - Some throw themselves open to whatever needs to happen
 - Others are more cautious
 - The questions remains, what is in your heart?
 - Are you available?

- Are you approachable?
- It is this new revelation of unconditional love, brought first through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, that still calls us to love everyone, even our enemies (Matt 5:43-47)
 - What does that look like?
 - It means you...
 - Err on the side of love, not caution
 - Err on the side of giving, even to those who would take advantage
 - Err on the side of sacrifice, even for those who do not merit such treatment
- That is what Jesus demonstrated in His life
 - Do you think Jesus did not know on that Palm Sunday that those eager faces He saw crying out Hossanah were going to be the same ones screaming Crucify Him 5 days later?
 - Yet, He still healed them, still fed them, still loved them
- David Wilkerson – was a pastor and evangelist who felt a call of God to reach out to NY City gangs in the late 50s’ and 60s’
 - Founder of Teen Challenge – drug recovery
 - Started Times Square Church in NYC
- Nicky Cruz – leader of the Mau Mau street gang
- A relationship made famous by the 1970 movie *The Cross and the Switchblade*
- Cruz once told Wilkerson that he would cut him up the next time he saw him and Wilkerson responded by saying, “You may cut me into a thousand pieces, but every one of those pieces will still say “I love you””