

Be Not Forgetful to Entertain Strangers

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Hebrews 13:1 Let brotherly love continue.

Hebrews 13:2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Hebrews 13:3 Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

- I. Carnal man has tribal tendencies that spring from his selfish heart and attitude and are not pleasing to God, which makes them a sin.
 - A. We decide who we are by shopping through the many tribes of men and finding one that appeals to our pride and lusts and we attempt to join that tribe.
 - B. When people do this they automatically exclude everyone who belongs to other tribes; we set ourselves apart.
 1. We develop a bad attitude toward those that are not of our tribe and we esteem them lower than ourselves and our own people.
 - C. All earthly social arrangements and organizations encourage and even demand loyalty to the tribe and this engrains these ungodly and sinful attitudes.
 1. Schools and colleges; sports teams; branches of the military; political parties; races of people; nations; organized religions; cultural identities, such as “bikers,” “cowboys,” “rappers,” “gamers,” “gothic,” “redneck,” etc
 2. So we are subjected to this influence and this pressure to “find ourselves” and figure out where we belong from the time we are old enough to start comprehending the world around us.
 - D. God’s people are to be separate from the world and maintain the distinctions that the Bible declares to be the identifying marks of true children of God.
 1. But God’s people are not to be tribal like the rest of carnal humanity.
 2. We are in the world as the ambassadors of Christ.
 3. We are not here as the one tribe that is against the world and the world against us.
 4. We are not here to build a building and call it a church and then all of us hide in that building and watch the world go to hell around us while we focus on not being taken advantage of by them.
 5. We are here to minister and give our lives for others, just as our Savior gave his life for us.

Matthew 20:25-28 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

- II. Thus these commands about entertaining strangers and helping those who are in bonds or adversity.

- A. The first thing we notice here is that, apparently, we are likely to be forgetful about these matters.

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers...”

1. It is an easy thing to just put it all out of our sight and therefore out of our mind.
2. It is a dilemma for us, as it has always been for every generation, because there are so many people who take advantage of the kindness and generosity of others – especially Christians.
3. We grow weary very quickly of helping people when we realize they are just taking advantage of us and using us.
4. But what we must remember is that humanity has done God that way since the Garden of Eden and God has not turned his back on man yet.
5. God gives and gives to the unthankful and the evil.

Luke 6:27-36 But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

- B. We forget about those who are in bonds or in adversity.
1. When their bondage or adversity first begins most people are more likely to show concern and lend a hand.
 2. But others soon forget and go on about their lives and leave those in jail, or nursing homes, or hospitals, or home-bound to themselves, without a visit, or a phone call, or a letter, or a text, or even a prayer on their behalf.
- C. So God is reminding us this morning in these Scriptures that we are here on this earth for a reason and it is not to join a tribe and stand against all the rest of the tribes of the world, but to minister, to be a blessing and a help in their trouble, as a testimony for God and his goodness, and to show the love of God that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

III. To entertain strangers – what does that mean?

- A. It means to treat with hospitality.

HOSPITAL'ITY, n. *L. hospitalitas*. The act or practice of receiving and entertaining strangers or guests without reward, or with kind and generous liberality.

A bishop--must be given to hospitality. 1 Tim.3

HOS'PITAL, n. *L. hospitalis, supra*.

1. A building appropriated for the reception of sick, infirm and helpless paupers, who are supported and nursed by charity; also, a house for the reception of insane persons, whether paupers or not, or for seamen, soldiers, foundlings, &c. who are supported by the public, or by private charity, or for infected persons, &c.
2. A place for shelter or entertainment.

- B. Jesus gave us a very clear illustration of what it means to not be forgetful about entertaining strangers:

Matthew 25:33-40 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

- C. Who is benefited and made better the most, the minister or those ministered to?
1. Luke 6:35 says those who minister in this way will be called “children of the Highest.”
 2. That is a far greater honor and blessing than having a meal to eat or a place to sleep.
 3. We are imitating God when we are generous and kind to those who can not or will not repay us in like kind.

Acts 20:35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

4. Some have entertained angels unawares.
 5. What will it be like to find out in eternity and who and what God put across our path to give us an opportunity to be his voice and his hands toward some lost or needy soul?
- D. Is it worth it?
1. Sure, there will be those who are not thankful and count us as fools for being kind and generous to them.
 2. But our generosity and kindness is as unto the Lord and not unto men, so it will be on them and not on us.
 3. On the other hand, consider the reward of the joy we will have in heaven when we hear the Savior say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant.”
 4. So it will be worth it all, when we see Jesus.
- E. Let us not be forgetful to entertain strangers and to remember those in bonds and affliction, whether they are of our own tribe or not.
- F. This means that it should be a big part of our Christian life to have an interest in, and seek to find a way, to help others in need, and to be a blessing by being what Jesus was to the poor, the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the afflicted.

Isaiah 61:1-3 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.