

“Using Hospitality”
By Jesse Rairdon
Sunday, April 10th, 2016

Amen, amen, amen. Remain standing; I’m going to ask Brother Ken A. to lead us in prayer.

Ken: Lord, today we’re so thankful that You walked this earth, and You know exactly what we’re going through. You know all our trials and tribulations. You said, “Fear God, and keep His commandments.” And, God, we thank You for the messenger today, that has prepared, and sought Your face, God. Lay an anointing upon him, this morning, God. And, God, for us, if we could just be open, God, our hearts, God, if you would just pour it out, so that we would hear the message. There’s something here for everybody today, God, if we would just open our hearts and minds, God. We thank You for our love, for Your truth, God, and for the freedom to worship and to serve Your Holy name. Amen.

Amen. Give the Lord a praise. You may be seated. I tell you what, that feels like a Minnesota spring out there, doesn’t it? Who’s from Minnesota? Brent and Gerry. Feels like a Minnesota spring, right? Waiting for some warmer weather, amen? But, these flowers can make it seem like spring. Thank you for bringing these flowers. And they’re real. Oh, they’re not. They look real. I can never tell; I’m a guy. Except when I get flowers for my wife, thy better be real. Amen. But, thank you, that definitely makes it look like spring, whoever takes the time to make this place look beautiful.

So, we’re talking about, this month:

1 Peter 4:8-10 *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

Last week, Parrish talked about, “A Lesson in Fervent Charity.” A few points we’re going to cover: He talked about fervent charity is intentional, something I always want to make sure is there. It’s not going to come by accident, you’ve got to really work at fervent charity. Fervent charity brings a pathway for God’s understanding and God’s love to come in. Fervent charity brings a pathway for God’s understanding and God’s love to come in. Fervent charity separates those who love God and those who don’t, and it also separates a little love from a great love. Then, he talked about the Good Samaritan and how Jesus was that first Good Samaritan to us. How He took us in, He bound up our wounds, He healed us, He made sure that we were taken care of. Amen? And, the message of God is a love story. Fervent charity. Amen?

Today’s message is going to be basically on verse number nine, “Using Hospitality.” Using hospitality. Using hospitality, without grudging, it says. Let’s talk about that a little bit. The definition comes from Strong’s:

Strong's No.:	G5382
Greek:	Φιλόξενος
Transliteration:	Philoxenos
Pronunciation:	<i>fil-ox'-en-os</i>

Definition:	From G5384 and G3581 ; <i>fond of guests</i> that is hospitable : - given to (lover of use) hospitality.
-------------	---

That's just one instance. Most of the other instances, it talks about love of the stranger in the definition, but, this particular instance, this particular Scripture, talks about hospitality, our love, one to another. We're going to talk about the stranger a little, today, too.

So, my three main points are going to be:

1. Using hospitality provides encouragement.
2. Using hospitality creates unity.
3. Using hospitality fosters growth, it cares for the stranger.

Our main Scripture verse for the day is from Acts, right after three thousand souls were baptized, right after the first message—the day of Pentecost—baptism in Jesus' name was first laid out, and said, everybody's got to repent and be baptized. But, what happens after that? Do we just get baptized and then go our own merry ways? There's something that has to happen beyond the baptism. That's what we're talking about this month we're talking about that charity that leads into hospitality. Amen?

Acts 2:45-47 *And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. [That's that fervent charity] And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, [So, there's two different places: One where we gather together for worship and fellowship, and one where we kind of go house to house] did eat their meat with gladness [encouragement] and singleness of heart [that's that unity], Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

That's that growth; that's that bringing in the stranger. Everybody's going to see that love you have for one another, amen? Hospitality naturally comes from having fervent charity. You can't have one without the other. If you just have hospitality, without any love, it's just a meal, right? It's just a social gathering. Just sit around and talk about anything. But, when you have the love of God and God's people, you just want to have guests and you want to show Hospitality. One good example of that—when I was in the military, and the military ministry does that today—is, always, after a worship or Bible study, go out to eat, or get together for hospitality. Kind of create an atmosphere where we could ask questions of one another, and learn about what we learned about that day. It has created hospitality, and they still do that faithfully, today, Phil and Alex, and those of you who go to the base, and others who work with them, and minister to sailors, amen? I'm so thankful that that hospitality was shown to me. I'm so thankful. And many of us, here, too, we understand that. And, maybe you weren't in the military, but someone went over to your house, or invited you over to their house and they had some hospitality, amen?

1. Using Hospitality Provides Encouragement

Have you ever felt like you just wanted someone just to hear your heart? You don't want to hear a Bible study or a sermon, or have Scriptures thrown at you, you just want someone to sit and listen to your heart. Encouragement from a trusted friend. Somebody who's not going to go tell everybody else, "Hey, you know what Parrish just told me?" No, it's confidence, it's trusting. That's where hospitality brings encouragement. It's like a refreshing; it's like a watering in a desert place.

Proverbs 11:25 *The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.*

Did you ever go to try to encourage somebody, or show some hospitality, and left, feeling like, “Well, I’m more encouraged than they were.” That’s how it works. That’s how God works. He really uses that water to refresh; that living water, that springing up, that Holy Ghost to kind of encourage us both, amen? You see, church, we were meant to show hospitality one to another. We were meant, we were designed, from the very beginning, from the very first day, to show love for one another, care for one another, to take time out for one another, to call one another and say—not just on the phone, but we get together face-to-face. Take time for one another.

And it’s not all about just the food, either. Is Ashley here today? Oh, she’s back with Phoenix. But I remember when Jimmy and Kenneth and myself just took her out—before she even was coming out to church—we took her out and shared the simple love of God, in a Bible study. We didn’t share baptism in Jesus’ name; we talked about the love of God, and we took time... At that time, she wasn’t ready to accept it, but, you know what that did for me? It showed me that I was once in those shoes. And I could still very well be back in those shoes, you know?

Hospitality. Mary and Martha are going to have a house-guest. They’re going to show some hospitality.

Luke 10:38-41 Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

It’s not all about the work, and getting ready for hospitality. See, Martha just kind of lost track of what hospitality was all about. It’s all about the growth, it’s all about the listening to God, it’s all about the encouragement one to another. Yes, it’s important to have a clean house. Yes, yes, yes. And I’m sure if I’m inviting somebody over, and I’m just kind of hanging out, my wife is going to be like, “Are you going to help me at all?” If she’s doing all the load, and I’m just kind of hanging out, and being a good host, well, women do that, too, but there’s some things you can do to kind of pitch in together, and help out. But don’t lose sight, don’t do it grudgingly because of the work you’ve got to do. Do it with a pure heart, and you’re sincere in what you’re doing, inviting people into your home, and encouraging people, because it’s a place of hospitality. It’s going to provide some encouragement. There’s family here that do that very, very well. The Orelups do that very well. One after the other, it seems like they have hospitality; they’re bringing people over to their homes. Myself have been a part of that, I’ve been over to their house; they showed me hospitality. The Gieblers. Many others. We can’t lose sight—we’ve got to create a culture of hospitality, so that when people come, we already know that there’s going to be people ready to receive them. Amen?

So, talking about how it is encouragement:

Proverbs 27:17 *Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.*

You ever been down, and feeling low, and you just get around a brother or sister, and, or, just call them, and it shows on your countenance. The very look on your face says, “Wow, I’m encouraged now.” That’s what true hospitality brings. It encourages us who sharpen one another’s iron. It gives us the strength to go through the next battle. That’s what the sword is for, it’s for the battle. But, if it’s dull and just weary and tired and weak, show some hospitality with another. Amen?

2. Hospitality Creates Unity.

“They ate their meet with singleness of heart. “ Sometimes, you don’t see eye to eye with somebody, you think there’s a little friction. I imagine Andy and Parrish don’t always get along so well. Maybe they don’t agree on every little thing, but maybe take some time to go out for dinner, or go to each other’s homes and just iron out their differences, and hear one another’s heart. Hear one another’s heart; those things create unity. Amen? and there is some contention between you two, try reaching out with hospitality.

Proverbs 27:19 As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

Some things are better done face-to-face. You can’t just do it over the phone, or have a text, or shoot somebody a Facebook message. Facebook is so surreal, so superficial. Everybody seems so happy and so encouraged all the time. “Oh, let me put this on Facebook! Everything’s so great!” but they’re miserable. Miserable and poor and naked and don’t want to admit what they are. But, hospitality—don’t let Facebook replace fellowship. Don’t let Facebook replace fellowship and hospitality. Amen?

How I treat someone, how I show respect to somebody creates unity. That’s all part of the hospitality. Division just kind of goes away. Misunderstandings get cleared up, just from simple hospitality. Get in the habit of being a good listener. One of the points that Steven Covey wrote about in “Seven Habits of Highly Effective People,” he says, “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” Sometimes we try to force our opinion, we force our—and we may very well be right, but take some time—I learned this employed in Human resources, sometimes you’ve got to take time to hear people out. Sometimes people just want to hear the words, “I understand.” That’s all they want to hear. They don’t want to hear how right or wrong they are, they want to hear the words, “I understand.” So, how do we go to the next step? How do we go further? That’s good in a marriage, too. Some of you, I know Brent and Amy are getting married soon. Take this and put it in your tool box. You’ve got to take time to understand each other before you go to prove who’s right. Amen. Amen. I didn’t always do that, I didn’t always do that. My wife can say, “Amen,” that I’ve probably failed on that a few times, but, you know, it will go better if you work through those things. That’s why I think, like Andy was saying, it’s important; I know it’s important to go to these kind of conferences that are coming up, because you learn to work together as a couple. Those things are taught. I wasn’t taught these things by my parents about marriage. I fact, I wasn’t taught hardly anything about marriage by my parents. So, I either gleaned from people who’ve been around, how to understand those things, so that I could work together, so that I could show hospitality to couples—one to another, first. If me and my wife are fighting about how to squeeze the toothpaste right out of the tube, all the time, over little things in life, how are we going to be able to really minister to anybody else? Amen? Those are just thoughts.

3. Hospitality Fosters Growth, Cares For The Stranger.

I’m going to spend a little more time in this area, today, because I think we do well with hospitality one to another in the church, but, sometimes I think we lack in this third part with the stranger, or adding to the church. So, I put myself in the same boat. I’ve got a home. I’ve got a wife who can cook really good. Me, not so much, but my wife can cook really good. So, I let her do that part of the hospitality, most of the time, amen? “I’m never coming back there, again. He burned the steak.” Hospitality fosters growth: “and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” God’s good at adding, when there’s an environment for growth. If there’s not an environment for growth, and you don’t have

hospitality, God's not going to bring new people to a church where there's not an environment for it. So, the next step is, we've got to be prepared for that.

Jesus is another guest, at another house:

Luke 14: 12-14 *Then said he also to him that bade him [so He's talking to those that showed hospitality to Him], When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. ["Well, they invited me over, so I've got to invite them over," And it's like a back-and-forth. Maybe one time they forget, and you feel bad that you were forgotten, or you forget to invite them back over... But, no, this what He said true hospitality is, when you invite the stranger.] But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*

So, this is taking hospitality from us, and giving it to everybody else. To the lost; to the stranger. I was a stranger; someone took me in. If we only show hospitality with one another, we won't grow. If we just keep going to each other to have hospitality, and keep having hospitality amongst us, this is all we're going to see. We'll all get old and gray together. We won't any growth. Nothing wrong with getting gray, I'm getting there myself. I'm losing a few more hairs, as I get up there. But when you have a stranger over, it's different; nothing is returned, and nothing is expected. You're just doing out of love, out of generosity. You're just doing it because you love God and you love your fellow man. You want to see that next soul be in the truth. Amen? Our focus is totally on that stranger, too. Our focus is totally on that stranger. Maybe you're a teenager, and you're thinking, "How can I do this?" Maybe you can invite one of your friends into your home, and have your family share with them. Let that light shine. Let them see what a godly home is like, and desire to seek after God.

We're going to go back over the Good Samaritan, here, again, because I think there's some points—you did a great job; I'm not trying to re-preach your message, Parrish, but I think there's some great points about hospitality, here.

Luke 10:30-35 *And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. [Pretty sad situation. Pretty rough situation.] And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. [This was his brother; he didn't even show kindness to his brother.] And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. [I'm not even going to make excuses for him, he just didn't see the need.] But a certain Samaritan [who was a stranger to the Jews, but also a stranger to this man], as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, [that fervent charity] And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [Before there was a hospital—hospitality—he took him to a hospital, met his needs, ministered to him, took care of him] And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.*

So, there's more work to be done besides that initial contact. So, we are a hospital, and we have to show hospitality to the lost. We have people that are coming; they're wounded, they're burnt... We don't know what situation they're in. I worked in a hospital where I saw people come in the Emergency Room; you never know what's going to come in the Emergency Room. There's people with all kinds of cases, all kinds of situations. We've got to be ready to minister to those people and show them love. But you see where that charity—where we saw the need, first; we show love, we show compassion —naturally

went to that hospitality, where he took him and put him on his own beast, bound up his wounds, stayed with him that night, made sure his needs were met. He didn't just dump him off in front of the hospital and run off. He took some time to minister to him; make sure all his needs were met. Even had a follow-up plan. Sometimes we just say, "Oh, okay, I've done my job; I invited someone out to church. That's it." Or, "They came over to my house one time. That's it. Let's move on, now. Put myself on the back; good to go." No, there's more; there's always more when you give hospitality. The church is a Hospital for the lame, the blind, the halt and them that are out of the way. We're accountable for hospitality. It's not just about coming to church. We—everyone that's hearing this message today, you are now accountable. Believe it or not, God will hold you accountable to the words of this message. So, it's not just a few of us that should show hospitality, that some know well, but all of us should have a part in that. Amen? Every single one of us.

Matthew 25:31-40 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 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.*

Amen! Close your Bibles; let's go home. We've done our job; life is good! We've done hospitality. But that's not the end of the story; there's some that didn't, right? So, let's read on.

Matthew 25:41-46 *Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

It was almost as if the ones who did it were just doing it out of habit; that's just what they always did. But they both asked the same question, "When did we do it?" Don't you think that if the people who didn't do it, knew it was the Lord, they would have done it? Don't you think they would have went out of their way, "Oh, Jesus is... I've got to take care of Jesus!" But they didn't do it to their fellow-man, who would have become their brother, and that is where we really need to reach out to the stranger. Amen? They're held accountable for that. I'm held accountable for that. It adds to the church. Otherwise, He would have said, "You wouldn't have done it to Me, you've done it to the least of these." At one point they're a stranger, and then they become part of us. You see, God always provided a place for the strangers. Hospitality was commanded. Yeah, He chose Israel. Called them by name, gave them the Law, gave them everything they needed, He fed them when they needed to be fed, watered them when they needed to be watered, but He also left a place for those who were on the outside looking in.

Leviticus 19:9-10 *And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.*

God always had a plan; you've always got to have a plan to prepare for the stranger.

Leviticus 19:33-34 *And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself [love thy neighbor as thyself... So, who is the stranger? Who is the neighbor?]; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.*

Don't forget, you were a stranger, too. Sometimes, in this country, we get things a little wrong. We think that, as Americans, we have all these rights, and no one else should have them. How does God see that? How does God see that we should minister to every soul? See, in politics, they want to put us on one side of the issue or the other, they try to divide us from each other, but God sees through all that. He called you to minister to the stranger. How do you so meet the needs of the stranger? How is our heart toward the stranger? "I was born here." Israel could have said the same thing, but God said, "No, you were a stranger, too." We weren't all born in this country, or our ancestors weren't all born in this country. I'm not going to get into the politics of this, but, let's talk about whose side do you want to be on when it says, "You go to this side, and you go to that side?" Whose side do you want to be on at the end of time? God sees the bigger picture; he looks at souls, He doesn't look at words and walls. He looks at souls and meeting the needs of the stranger. That's more important to God than what we think is right or wrong.

There's a Scripture passage in the Old Testament—you can look this up on your own time—but, the captain of the Host of the Army of God came to the man of God, and there was a battle set in array; the army of Israel on one side, and the enemy on the other side, and they were getting ready to do battle, and the man of God asked the captain of the Host of the Army of God, "Whose side are you on? Are you on our side or on their side?" He said "Neither; I'm on God's side." (Joshua 5:13-15). Make sure you're on God's side in every age. Pray, look out, seek to meet the needs of the stranger.

There is risk in taking in a stranger. But, it's like any investment. You're investing in the Kingdom; there's a risk in any kind of investment. There's a risk in taking people in your life, in your home, in your heart, and, sometimes, people are going to take advantage of you. Sometimes people are going to be downright cruel, and stomp all over your charity, stomp all over your hospitality. Do you just stop? Maybe you minister to a hundred people, and one person, one soul says, "Okay, I want to have what you have." Don't get worried about the risk; worry about the Kingdom and hospitality. Yeah, I get that; I have a family; I'm not going to just bring anybody into my house. I have a daughter, a young daughter. I've got to be careful who I bring into my home, and let stay in my home, and let eat my food. Yes, I understand that, but you have got to have some faith. You can't let something that happened to somebody else, or happened to you in your past, stop you from showing hospitality and love to the stranger, amen?

God invested in all of us; paid for it in blood. Paid for it in blood. In fact, he invested in the whole world. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son... He invested in everybody, even the stranger. Hospitality.

My grandfather had passed, years ago, and I went home, and before the funeral on Sunday, they had like a little memorial. A chance where all the uncles and aunts got to stand up and share stories about their dad, my grandfather. And I was listening to these and, really, he was a man that was given to hospitality. He would—there was no stranger to him. He would stop alongside the road, and fix a car,

give someone a ride, maybe scare them—there were some very strange people. In fact, one time, one of my uncles was talking about how there were teen-agers working at the farm, and a group of—a motorcycle gang came down to the farm. And, it was the Hell's Angels. It wasn't the nicest people that you would want to deal with, the people that you would want to come over and show hospitality to, right? So, one of them is like, "I wonder how close to the house is where I have to get the shotgun?" And I think thinking things like that are, but the leader of the gang motioned to the rest of them, "Stop there," and he got off his bike, and he had a big tear in his eye, and he went and hugged my grandfather, exchanged some words, and then he got back on his bike, and then they left. Somehow, some way in his life, my grandpa had showed hospitality to that man, and he felt—he was in that state, that he needed to come and pay respect to my grandfather. So, we've got to leave a legacy of hospitality, for people to say, "I remember that church. I remember those people. I'm here in Virginia, maybe I've got to look up, where I can get some fellowship with them now, or, over in Japan, or San Diego, who do I go talk to? Or, I'm in Florida. Especially in the Navy; if you're in the Navy, you're going to travel a lot, and we've got places where we can get together for that type of hospitality. People, even years down the road, right, Bob? People will call us, from the school. Many, many years ago, and say, "You know, I'm down in this area. Do you know of anybody I can get together with?"

My Uncle Jim also shared with me—he spent some time in Israel, probably three or four years. He worked on the oil rigs, and, so, he got to learn a lot of the language, and spend time in Israel, and one of the customs, even today, is you can knock on the door of a total stranger—not even know them—and say, "What's for dinner?" and they will invite you in and have dinner with you. Pastor Ulysse shared with, his family in Haiti, they always had enough food for everybody else, but they always had an extra place for the stranger, just in case somebody would come by in that house that night. They never knew if someone was going to come in; they always had an extra plate in their house.

So, as we get ready to close, and Andy gets ready to close us, let's go back to that first Scripture, showing hospitality:

Acts 2:45-47 *And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.*

Amen. Give the Lord a praise.