



“Radically Hospitable”

Week 6 | November 11, 2018

Luke 19:1-10

Sermon Summary: We now move to the outer ring of the bullseye; the outward-facing, world-loving ring which we depict in *rescue boat orange*. This is where the mission begins. As Rosaria Butterfield puts it, “Hospitality is the Ground Zero of the Christian faith.”

But we’re not just hospitable, we are *radically* hospitable. To be radical doesn’t mean to be wild or angry or aggressive. The word comes from the Latin *radix*, meaning root. Radicals simply hold a core conviction, something they will live and die for. There’s no stopping them (which is why many people fear radicals). But in our case we’re radical about *hospitality*. The New Testament Greek word is *philoxenia*, which is *phila* (love) + *xenos* (stranger). *Philoxenia*, love of the stranger. And it stands in direct contradistinction to what is rife in our world today: *xenophobia*, fear of the stranger. As people whose clear aim is to have the life of Christ reduplicated in us, love of the stranger—not fear, hatred, or avoidance—is the value that must grow in us. It’s the Ground Zero of the Christian faith. It’s where the love of Christ happily “explodes” into reality for people who are far from God.

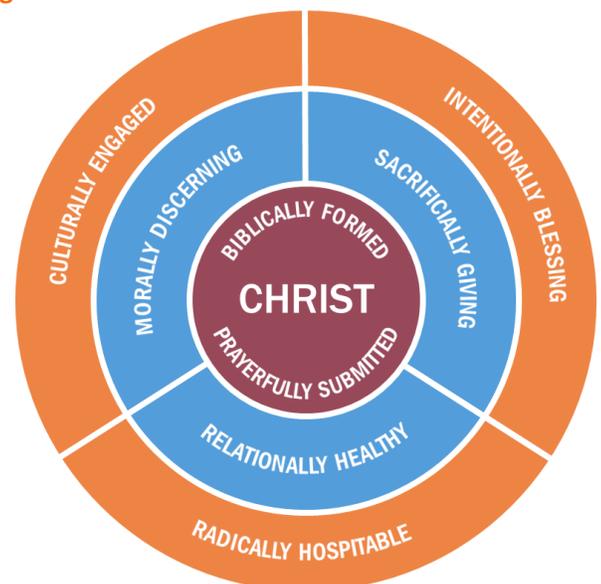
Jesus’ journey through Jericho, on his way to Jerusalem and the Cross, shows *philoxenia* in action. On the way into the city he meets a blind man (named elsewhere as Bartimaeus) who cries for mercy. Jesus stops everything and opens his heart to the man, healing his blindness. On the way out of the city he meets Zacchaeus, the despised tax collector. Jesus stops everything and opens his heart to the man, healing his social and spiritual malignity. The great honor that all the important people wanted to receive, the honor of hosting the visiting rock-star rabbi, Jesus bestows on the least honorable person in the city. And here’s what we learn about our radical hospitality value:

1. Hospitality meets people where they are and starts discipling them there.

We don’t begin to become apprentices of Jesus when we first get saved or baptized, or when we come to church or join a Bible study. It starts earlier, when God starts to woo us with the love and hospitality of his people. Like in Rosaria Butterfield’s story: She was welcomed into a Christian home weekly for two years—two years before she ever set foot in their church—and “the way that they practiced hospitality, became a living, breathing example of the theology that they were teaching.” That’s *disciples making disciples!*

2. Hospitality takes people from the margins of the world to the center of God’s grace.

It’s instructive that we know the names of Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus. There were many other prominent people in



Jericho who were know then but are in oblivion now. But two people, one anonymous and the other notorious, are household names in the Christian faith today. Just as Jesus said, “the last will be first and the first, last.” The personal love, attention, hospitality, and “touch-ability” of Jesus—expressed today through his people—is what gives people an entrée into the kingdom.

3. Hospitality challenges the crowd to examine its real values.

The crowd is the foil in this story. They are too busy and self-centered to care for Bartimaeus on the way in, and too proud and self-satisfied to be challenged by Jesus’ love for Zacchaeus on the way out. Yet they were almost all good Jews, good synagogue attenders; people who “welcomed” Jesus and were eager for the Passover. But their hearts were exposed when they had no time or tolerance for the lost people Jesus came to seek and save (Luke 19:10). If our value is comfort or cool people or clean carpet we’ll never bear the abundant fruit that glorifies God and proves we’re Jesus’ disciples (John 15:8).

4. Hospitality enables us to live with integrity, as the foreigners and aliens we all really are.

There are three great “You shall love” commands in the Bible: (1) You shall love God with all your heart. (2) You shall love your neighbor as yourself. And (3) “You shall treat the stranger sojourning among you as your native-born. You shall love him as yourself because you were once aliens and strangers in Egypt” (Lev. 19:34). In other words, the Old Testament people of God were saved by grace and therefore should epitomize graciousness. The New Testament says the same. In Ephesians 2 Paul establishes salvation by grace. And then he says, “Therefore, remember that you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel, and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:11-12).

We are aliens and strangers—like Jesus himself—who came from outside the system and lived outside the System. He loved the unlovable, touched the untouchable, ate with and befriended the unfrienable. “Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the City that is to come” (Heb. 13:13-14).

Discussion Guide

1. Read Luke 19:1-10 and rewatch the youtube video, “How Radically Ordinary Hospitality Changed Rosaria Butterfield’s Life.” What do you find most striking about the Scripture passage? What do you find most striking about Rosaria’s testimony?
2. We sometimes say that people have to “belong before they believe.” What does that mean? Was that principle at work in your early faith experience? How did it play itself out in Jesus’ ministry?
3. Review the four main points of the sermon, one by one, and answer these two questions about each:
 - Where have you seen this to be true in your life?
 - Where could this become more true in your life, this group’s life, or in our church as a whole?
4. Read Acts 11:19-26 and Galatians 2:9-14. Explain three things as if you were talking to a brand new Christian:
 - Why did the disciples in Antioch get the name “Christian”?
 - Why did Paul later rebuke Cephas (Peter) publicly in Antioch?
 - What does this teach us about the importance of being radically hospitable?
5. Rosaria Butterfield says “Hospitality, biblically speaking, takes strangers and makes them neighbors, and takes neighbors and makes them *family of God*....It is the Ground Zero of the Christian faith.” What is one thing you will do in this next week to drop that love bomb on someone who is far from God but near to you?