

WELCOME 9th October 2022 – 18 Pentecost '22 C

Psalm 147:1-12 & 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! We're continuing our worship/teaching series Spiritual Intelligence as a family of disciples... **Bible Study Qs** are there to equip you so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & so you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom Bible Study Catch-ups** on Friday @ 1p.m.

As we move into this week... The **mask**... Nothing symbolizes the last 2 years like it. Whether it was effective in reducing the spread of an airborne virus/not is debatable. What is **NOT** debatable is how effectively it cut us off from another, interfered w/ our ability to communicate w/ one another, damaged our capacity to relate to one another, & crushed our human/humane interactions w/ one another...
On...Every...Level.

What it **DID** was make me afraid of you... & you afraid of you... Our world became, as Roman Catholic author Henri Nouwen writes: "...increasingly full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people, anxiously clinging to their (space), inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy to suddenly appear, intrude & do harm."

How grossly distorted that is from the Bible's call: **Remember** those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. To so fully enter the world & life of those around you that you literally "feel with" them...that you live hospitality in a world of isolation...that you live to make a stranger a guest & a guest a friend...that you live showing compassion mercy & honour to anyone in great need or a strange place at whatever the cost. It's a hospitality we have received in Christ & are called to emulate at every opportunity in our lives.

We'll explore & experience that together today...

Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Thus says the Lord...

This is the kind of fasting I want:

Free those who are wrongly imprisoned;

lighten the burden of those who work for you.

Let the oppressed go free, & remove the chains that bind people.

Share your food with the hungry, & give shelter to the homeless.

Give clothes to those who need them,

and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

- Is 58:6-7

Then what Lord...then what?

Then your salvation will come like the dawn,

and your wounds will quickly heal.

Your godliness will lead you forward,

and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind

Then when you call, the LORD will answer.

'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply.

- Is 58:8-9

Let it be in us according to your word...In Jesus' Name...Amen.

Let's hear God's word...

FAITH CHAT:

1. What was the most difficult part of living in enforced isolation during the pandemic?
2. What do you think keeps some people from living genuine hospitality?

Spiritual Intelligence is **NOT** how much you know: SI is learning to discern right/wrong, good/evil, beautiful & true/horrendous & false...It's wisdom leading you to what is life-giving & God-honouring. It's walking the path of abundant life & impact in Jesus' Name. Spiritual Intelligence is celebrating & participating together in the transforming glory of God. Spiritual Intelligence is **you** maturing in likeness to Jesus Christ.

18 PENTECOST '22 C – SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: HOSPITALITY IN A WORLD OF ISOLATION

- ¹ Keep on **loving each other as brothers & sisters**. ² Don't forget to show **hospitality to strangers**, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!
³ Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies.

Sometimes the Bible tells you **exactly** what you need to know...this is 1 of those. What do I mean? 1st - Remember this is written to the church...Apollos is writing to Xns/followers/apprentices of Jesus JUST LIKE US. The Gk of the bolded words in vs 1 literally reads, "Let brotherly love continue." ... "keep living out what Jesus told you." Jn 13:34-35 "Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." ^{w/in} the church let there be love. Gk word for "brotherly love"? **philadelphia/philos-adelphos** We translate *brothers/sisters* to be clear that it's a charge upon ALL OF US. ^{w/in} the church let there be Jesus-like love.

BUT THEN...Apollos turns up the gospel heat...opens the firehose nozzle of grace & says **this** is what it means to follow Jesus...Gk of vs 2 literally reads *Do not forget hospitality*. But the word for *hospitality* is **philos-xenias**. Which means take that same family of Christ/brotherly/sisterly love & apply it to *xenias*. Who's that? You know that word; you usually see it **as xenophobia**...fear/exclusion of strangers. Apollos says, take that same brotherly/sisterly/family of Christ love & apply it to strangers ...turn it loose on someone you don't already **know**. Hospitality is Jesus-like love for the stranger... Hospitality sees the stranger as friend...in the stranger the image of God, a died-for sinner, not a label category tribe or someone "other/them."

In today's world we are more segmented/segregated into us-es/them-s than ever ^{b/4}...? But there's a huge danger in seeing someone as "other" as the "them" to your "us." Psychologists say something happens to us when we see someone as "other." When we see them on the outside of some boundary we immediately shut/wall them off from our personal "bank" of resources. We put them beyond the reach of our compassion, caring, helping. The larger the boundary we create ^{b/t} us & them the less likely we are to give a rat's ear for their good. The bigger the divide we imagine ^{b/t} their tribe, class, group, or category & mine the less likely I am to care about their well-being their needs. I can even see them as a danger threat devil. *Hospitality* is to take the *philos-adelphos* brotherly/sisterly/family of Christ love & apply it to strangers...someone you don't already know...help them feel seen, heard & loved Which is precisely what Jesus said: "If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that? Even sinners love those who love them! If you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! If you lend only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners

for a full return. Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, & you will truly be acting as a child of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful & wicked. You must be (merciful) compassionate, just as your Father is (merciful) compassionate." - Lk 6:32-36 If the best we can muster is simply to love folks just like us...who share our "insider" status who look think act earn do like we do...we become indistinguishable from the world around us & just as fit for judgment. If the church is no different...we should quit & go home.

But if in fact we are growing into the reborn recreated image of the Father through the work of the risen Christ ^{w/in} us by the power of the Holy Spirit...**hospitality** is the intentional practice of creating a hospitable space in a hostile environment so the stranger becomes a guest & the guest can become a friend. Hospitality, acc to the Bible, is a gift that transforms relationships in an isolated & estranged world; it strips off masks, demolishes barriers, builds deep connection & extends authentic community as a critical work of growing God's kingdom here...now. As Dustin Willis GP, "Hospitality is not about entertaining, it is about engaging" ...moving so deeply into the life of the stranger that they begin to see you as friend.

So the Word became human & made his home among us...Because God's children are human beings (made of flesh & blood) the Son also became flesh & blood. For only as a human being could he die, & only by dying could he break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could he set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying. - Jn 1:14 & Heb 2:14-15 I no longer call you slaves I call you friends...slaves don't know the Master's business but I've told you everything I have from the Father - Jn 15:15-17 Jesus moved so deeply into the life of this world - your life & mine - we can see him & through him the Father as friend...companion, refuge, Lord Saviour strength...our only hope for salvation...Don't forget the Bible describes our natural relationship ^{w/} God...says we are "God's enemies...dead in sin...by nature hate God" but Jesus moves deeply into our world...resides among us not to condemn but to welcome/transform us into friends/children of God & then says "what you've experienced in me go do for someone else on the outside." As the Father sent me so I send you...Jn 20:21

Interestingly enough...Jesus tells us why & how the Father sent him. 3 examples...Lk 19:10 - The Son of Man came to seek & save the lost. Heart/Mission. Mk 10:45 - For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others & to give his life as a ransom for many. Sacrificial death to forgive sin & destroy death/devil. Reconcile you ^{w/} the Father. Lk 7:34 - The Son of Man, on the other hand, came eating & drinking, & you say, 'He's a glutton, a drunkard, & a friend of tax collectors & other sinners!' That's "how:" creating a hospitable space in a hostile environment so the stranger becomes a guest & the guest can become a friend...NT Wright GP - "When Jesus

wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn't give them a theory, he gave them a meal." --- Emmaus...*in the breaking of the bread.*

Hospitality acc to Jesus is an openness to treat another person as someone of value worth dignity & belonging. To so fully enter the world & life of those around you that you literally "feel with" them...that you live hospitality in a world of isolation ...that you live to make a stranger a guest & a guest a friend...that you live showing compassion mercy & honour to anyone in great need or a strange place at whatever the cost. Why is the Good Samaritan the most well-loved of all Jesus' parables? Could be because every one of us Xn or not senses that **THAT** is the way the world's supposed to work...that showing compassion mercy & honour to anyone in great need or a strange place at whatever the cost is how our lives are meant to be spent.

We struggle to live that way because truth is...most of us find other people a bother. What? You don't think you're annoying? We're sinners...fallen...broken struggling stumbling...If no one's ever told you ^{b/4}...Someone thinks you're a bother annoying. I think you're awesome...but that other guy...Which is precisely why Peter writes to the church & offers one of those inspirational calendar lines: *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.* - **1 Pt 4:8** Love hard because they're hard to love...but then he drops the very next verse which will never be on an inspirational calendar: *Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.* - **1 Pt 4:9** Without grumbling. Don't love theoretically, while the songs are still echoing in the room & morning tea makes for a great conversation starter/stopper...Do it genuinely practically in real ways out there & w/ strangers...take the *philos-adelphos* brotherly/sisterly/family of Christ love & apply it to strangers...someone you don't already know...help them feel seen, heard & loved.

Christian researcher George Barna concludes, "**Western** Christianity has largely failed since the middle of the 20th century because Jesus' modern-day disciples do not act like Jesus." We don't do that...SA/Australian church thinker/writer Alan Hirsch (Lance Ford) in their book *Right Here, Right Now*: "**Sharing** meals together on a regular basis is one of the most sacred practices we can engage in as believers. Missional hospitality is a tremendous opportunity to extend the kingdom of God. If every Xn household invited a stranger or a poor person into their home for a meal once a week, we would literally change the world by eating! We can literally eat our way into the kingdom of God!" I'm in! *Is 25:6ff...Lord of hosts feast of fat things dripping with marrow...wine on the lees well-refined...swallow up death forever!*

See...you don't have to preach, know all the ins/out of apologetics, have the NT memorized, speak in tongues...just love & listen, create in your life & your calendar

a hospitable space where someone/stranger can feel seen & heard & loved...where you can take the brother/sister/family of Christ love & apply it to a stranger. Here's the tough bit...you are not too sinful for Jesus to use you in the growing of his kingdom family here in Wagga Wagga...neither are you too old, too poor, too unknowledgeable too clumsy...you might be too busy...too self-absorbed...to fearful But you are always the person in that moment Jesus can use to help another person experience love like they've never felt, compassion like nowhere else, peace & hope in a world that tries to steal every last shred of it every single day...Sometimes, the credibility of our faith rests on the quality of our hospitality.

Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies. To so fully enter the world & life of those around you that you literally "feel with" them...that you live hospitality in a world of isolation...that you live to make a stranger a guest & a guest a friend...that you live showing compassion mercy & honour to anyone in great need or a strange place at whatever the cost. It's a hospitality we have received in Christ & are called to emulate at every opportunity in our lives.

TAKE IT HOME –

What is one step you could make in the next two weeks to practice hospitality - that is to make space for someone to feel seen, heard and loved?

Thus says the Lord...This is the kind of fasting I want:

Free those who are wrongly imprisoned;

lighten the burden of those who work for you.

Let the oppressed go free, & remove the chains that bind people.

Share your food with the hungry, & give shelter to the homeless.

Give clothes to those who need them,

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