

“Serve to Bless – Showing Hospitality” / Speaking of Jesus 8 7:27

Josette Duran – *This story moves us in a unique and powerful way. It has moved many – in fact close to 23 million people have viewed this video. Why? ... Ultimately – when we see someone sacrificially care for another it moves us. When we see them sacrificially care with no conditions, seemingly seeking nothing in return – this is unique. But when someone sacrificially loves a stranger in this way – over & over to friendship - it moves us in a unique & powerful way. God tells us there is more to this story and why it moves us deep in our soul. It echoes another greater story that has been going on for a long time.*

Ephesians 2:12-13 (ESV) 12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

You and I – were once strangers to God – far off. But through the work of Jesus, through faith in the work of Jesus alone we have been brought near and made a friend. AND, this is not just our story. This is the story of the whole world.

Now we can see why **Josette's story** moves us & 23 million other people in such a powerful and unique way. Her story is a tiny echo of the greater story God has been about from eternity past – *restoring strangers to sons, daughters, friends. And, when we realize we were that stranger too – and he loved us sacrificially, without conditions – this moves us.*

Shortly after our rebellion - what we call the fall in the gospel story – God began forming a people from strangers and gave this command over and over ...

Leviticus 19:33-34 (ESV) 33 “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. 34 You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers ...

The gospel story of the whole Bible tells us God brought redemption – fixed what was broken through Jesus. Now as he is restoring all things – making things once again – how they were supposed to be – God continued to command his people to love strangers. *It is at the heart of the Good Samaritan story when this religious leader is trying to figure out who he is to love – Jesus says everyone – even the messiest of strangers.*

Romans 12:13 (ESV) Contribute to the needs of the saints (love believers) and seek to show hospitality. (love strangers)

Why? Because it is part of how we share the gospel story in all of life. We are praying and asking God to reshape our culture in this way. And – if we are to become a people who engage others in all of life with the gospel story – the story of Jesus – hospitality will play a big role in our lives.



This is the Gospel Circle Diagram. It is a simple picture of how we can engage others in all of life with the gospel story. Living the gospel story has two components – demonstrating the story and speaking the actual story. Both are vital. No beginning as far as this being a 1,2,3 step process but – Love and prayer are key. No love – no one will hear or respond to the gospel. Prayer moves us to be embrace and go in God's love and moves others to be moved by God's love. The second key action is serving to bless. **That is serving others so they can engage Jesus – this is what bless means.** For the next 2 weeks, we will talk about how.

Today we begin with hospitality & this 1 simple but profound truth:

Living in God's love – we can show hospitality and engage others with Jesus.

“Showing hospitality” involves two things: **01. Open Heart / 02. Open Hands**

01. Open Heart ... to live in God's love

How do we live in God's love given to us in Christ? “Together in the gospel”

- **Grow in our belief in the gospel** *In the finished work of Christ.*

Luke 10:33-35 (ESV) 33 ... he had compassion. 34 He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, ‘Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.’ *Last week we learned that Jesus is actually the Good Samaritan in this story. He has loved us like this Samaritan loved the man left for dead. We, were the stranger left for dead. Jesus rescued us, healed us – all at his own cost. This story is a picture of the gospel – God's redeeming love to us who were once strangers. What does it mean to grow in our belief?*

Trusting daily that it is Jesus' life and work alone that has brought me and welcomed me into His family where I taste and know **his unconditional love to me.** *Who rescued whom in the story and how?*

Instead of believing that I have been welcomed into God's family because of what I have done with my life, my spiritual hunger, my good family, how I benefit society, or my lack of being an enemy to God.

When I realize there is nothing, zero, zilch, nada that I have ever done or can do to place myself in the center of God's love, but rather because of Jesus – God's love rests on me: **I begin to want to live in His love** that I have not earned, that has no conditions, that has no end.

When Fran and I first got married. Our love for each other seemed passionate and on fire, but that passion seemed to turn to fiery anger pretty quick if one of us hurt the other in the slightest of ways. I was pretty laid back but if I felt hurt - I would get volatile. When she got hurt she would get vengeful. How do you respond to hurt?

Crazy – we were holding hands, love crazy newlyweds in one moment and angry barbarians in the next moment. How is that possible when our love seemed so steamy. Our desire to be together was great – emotionally and physically. Love should moves us to desire another, but it has to be and is so much more. Last week in our sermon "Go in Love", Dustin defined love as,

Love: "a willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that is not deserving or require reciprocation.

What was wrong with our love – we only gave it when the other deserved it. And when we felt they didn't deserve it, we took it away. We lived in each other's love – when we earned or deserved it. That is not good, that is not love – and living in this kind of love just made each of us real insecure in the other's love.

In the same way, when I believe I only have God's love if my actions please Him – I will be very insecure in His love and live in fear of God's punishment and abandonment - not in His love.

Living in God's love is about trusting that God's love to me - is sure and unchanging – **because of Jesus' sure and finished work.**

- **Relationships:** **Connected in His body** *Connected means - We are doing life together, caring for one another, warring together in prayer, serving together, worshipping together*
Membership (Sat. 11/12), Serve (Equip to Serve - Sundays 11/6 & 13), Community Groups, DNA
- **Ongoing Repentance:** *When see God's love evidenced by all He has done for us in Christ and continues to give us **only because of Christ** – we are moved to turn to our loving welcoming God as he daily shows us our unbelief in Jesus' work and how that leads us to sin. (will come back to this)*
Ongoing repentance - where we are turning from our unbelief in Jesus' work to a loving welcoming Father God – moves us to have open hands before others.

02. Open Hands ... to give God's Love *(This is not easy)*

Luke 10:33-35 (ESV) 33 ... and when he saw him, he had compassion.

- **Ask for God's eyes and pay attention to those around you.** *(This is not easy)*
PRAY and ask God to see others as he does. *The look and see people around you. Open your eyes and join God on his mission to welcome others into His family. **An open heart to God's love – will lead to open eyes toward others.** You will see the co-worker who always eats alone, the widow taking care of her house alone, the kid without a dad throwing the ball against the wall by himself – the hurting mom. Pray and look around.*
***Jesus one day was sitting by a well, worn and tired** (ever been there – worn out and just wanting to be alone). That was Jesus – he was so tired and so wanting to rest alone – He sent the disciples into town. A Samaritan woman – came up to draw water and Jesus began talking to her. He noticed her – and he saw that this woman was out of place. She was drawing water in the middle of the day (not morning) and alone. She saw her – noticed her, had compassion on her – and was moving. He engaged her ..*
- **Engage people.** *(This is not easy)*
What was so amazing and powerful about Jesus' hospitality at this point – she was a stranger, a woman and a hated Samaritan – and he was not selling something or trying to buy her as had been her past.
When I belong – and I am tired – I just want to be alone. Yet when I am the stranger, I want to be included. Lost in Switzerland – taken I, showed around, - befriended. New to St. Louis. Taken in – showed around, - I was befriended.

- Listen, ask question, and seek to enter into their story (*like we talked about – creation, fall, etc.*)
- Making a connection can happen through social media but engaging people requires face to face time. Get face to face time. **How?**

- **Bring them in with “meals”** (*Stranger to friend is often as simple as a meal.*)
 - There is something about your home that says to another – you are important, I am setting aside my time, comfort, etc. to invite you in. It says wanted – ***it brings them into friend from stranger.***
 - Two more thoughts on meals:
 1. Some times your home won't be the appropriate place to engage someone who is not a friend – they don't live near you or you can just tell you need neutral ground. Take them out to eat- buy!
 2. “Meals” can include other things that allow for time and walls to come down - buy their coffee, buy their golf game, buy their manicure, - ***be creative – just open your eyes, engage, and give***

*For some – you do hospitality pretty well – with believers. You are the meal train king when people are in need. Or, you like to encourage and help people feel a part of the body. That is awesome – but not the kind of hospitality God is talking in His word. 1) Remember the word means – **loving strangers – those far from you and God.** 2) This is about loving strangers in a way that brings them into to being friends. This is more difficult for us all. Why/*

Why is it hard to show (live) hospitality?

There is a cost to hospitality. *Our time and our stuff is part of the cost. I have a question - **If someone else bought the food, cooked, and cleaned – how many of us - would still not be hospitable to a stranger?***

The cost is more than just time and our stuff. Something else is at the heart of why this is not a thought to us or we just have such a hard time welcoming strangers. Let's go back and hear the words of Jesus as he teaches about hospitality and in the process exposes the issue in our hearts with caring for and welcoming strangers.

Luke 10:30-32 (ESV) 30 Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

* A priest is coming down the road and finds a man beat and left for half dead. *When he sees this man – he went to the other side of the road to avoid this man.*

* A Levite also is traveling this road and comes upon this man. *When he sees this man – he too went to the other side of the road to avoid the man. **WHY?***

Why did they work so hard to avoid this stranger – even when they saw him in need?

This was a priest and a Levite of the Jewish faith. They believed their right standing before God was in how well they kept God's laws. In other words, they believed they could live in God's love when they earned it or deserved it.

What do you believe? *To that end – there were 613 written laws God gave to the people. In addition – there were more than 1500 oral laws the priests added to help them keep the first 613. They believed keeping these 200 plus laws made them right and acceptable before God and allowed them to live in God's love – to know his love.*

Lev 21 – A priest could not touch a dead body unless a close relative – unclean – not acceptable – for a week.

Oral Law – added even touching the shadow could make you unclean.

The law was less stringent for a Levite, worker in the temple, but nonetheless the death laws applied to them as well.

They believed they were obeying God – in avoiding the stranger. *But they had perverted him.*

But God gave his laws – not to make us right – but to show us we were broken and needed a Rescuer.

They revealed God as holy, other. They revealed us as sinful. They showed our great need for a Rescuer.

*Their perverted view of God – moved them avoid this stranger. **They were obeying their god.***

When do not practice hospitality – when we avoid loving strangers – it is more than just the simple cost of time and stuff. God is saying – you and I are obeying our god when we avoid loving strangers.

What god are you obeying?

* **god of comfort.** *I don't want to get messy, get off my couch, or do much. I am tired and I just don't want to.*

* **god of self-rescue** (self-righteousness). *I must remain pure for my god and letting strangers with crazy beliefs in my home – nope! I will be seen as like them by others or maybe even by my god.*

Repent with me today – turn from your god of comfort that says being safe and comfortable is more satisfying to your soul than living out the story of Jesus with a stranger. Your loving God who welcomed you is ready to embrace you and show you how His love will give you the courage and energy to love others.

Repent with me today – turn from your god of self-rescue that says I must earn my God's love and taking in weird and unbelieving strangers and hoping they become friends – is so against everything I believe. Turn to your loving Father God – who took you in the weird unbelieving stranger. And know this – he is ready to take you in now.

Remember, this is more than just welcoming or caring for a stranger. We are echoing the great grand redemption story of God when we live out hospitality.

I do not know if Josette is a believer. Truth is – a lot of people do kind things for strangers – that do not bless people because they are doing the kind thing to make themselves feel good or just to help another.

We are showing hospitality to engage others with Jesus.

I want my whole life to engage others with the story of Jesus. Hospitality is a simple and profound way to engage others with Jesus as we echo the unique and powerful gospel story as we love strangers.

We want to reshape our culture – join me. ...

Live in God's love – so we can show hospitality and engage others with Jesus.