

December Sermon Series: Recovering the Lost Hospitality Commandments

Sermon Title: “Biblical Hospitality: The Importance of Hospitality as the End Times Approach”.

December 30, 2018

Introduction: Here’s a future scenario we know is going to happen. Someday, I believe in my lifetime, Christians will have to decide to remain loyal to Jesus or worship the anti-Christ. Remaining loyal to Jesus may appear to be fearful since the threat is worship anti-Christ and eat or worship Jesus and starve. Whether Christians will starve is up to God. Some may but most won’t since I believe by faith he will take care of his children unless he has martyrdom plans for them. My question is, will the members of Alex Covenant stand by you when that day comes or Lake Community? I pray they do and are willing to help as much as they can. But will they? How can they if they don’t know you? Will they take up an offering to help you in your time of need? I do not know for sure, but I think it unlikely since they will be scrambling to take care of themselves in that hour. My point is simple. Scripture calls us to be there for one another in the good times but especially the bad. But fellowship is only as strong as is the bond of love for one another. Will our bond of fellowship be strong enough to endure hard times and will we share in true koinonia?

Today’s Theme verses: Hebrews 3:12–15 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” (ESV)

Main point: Holding fast to the end requires community faith. Lone Ranger faith will fail when hard times come.

1. The kind of community faith that lasts is built on the concept of biblical koinonia, which means a sharing of things in common.
 - The first use of koinonia is *Acts 2:42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.* (ESV) Here the passage indicates the NT church devoted themselves to THE KOINONIA. The word devoted indicated that they never missed an opportunity to attend the gatherings, first of all where the Apostles gave their teaching. The Apostles had three years with Jesus now they needed to impart as much of that information to the 3,000 who repented on the Day of Pentecost as they could. Secondly, they never missed an opportunity to participate in THE Koinonia. The article in front of koinonia indicates it is a particular kind of fellowship. It is different that town hall meetings, or relatives gathering for weddings, or book

clubs. This is a unique gathering where they shared in one another's lives.

- The second time the word is used is in verse 44. Acts 2:44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. (ESV) In this passage it indicates that the believers considered everything that was pooled as their own. The root word behind koinonia is koine meaning common. This means that houses were sold, properties were liquidated and the proceeds all put into one common account over which later the deacons administered the money to purchase food for all.
- The third time the word is used is in Romans 15:26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution (koinonia) for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. (ESV)
 - Here the saints in Macedonia and Achaia were anxious to help the saints in Jerusalem who were in much worse shape financially than they were. This indicates that just because a group of saints are geographically distant does not mean that the love of Christ is inactively prodding us to respond to that need.
- The fourth time koinonia is used is in 1 Corinthians 1:4–9 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you—so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. (ESV)
 - Here the word koinonia refers to the spiritual union we have together in Christ. As permanent is the bond between ourselves and Jesus as this indicates so then is our bond together in the family of God. It says here that once adopted into this family or union, we are guaranteed to be guiltless on the day of Christ's return, since God is able to sustain us to that day and the proof of that is his faithfulness. In other words God won't un-adopt His children.
 - I think there is an inference in this passage that Paul saw strong evidences of their genuine faith and reminded them that since it was genuine they would make it all the way to the end, even when threatened with harm or death. This tells me that we need to do the same. When hard times come we need to be reminding one another that we see Jesus in each other and because of that we can know our faith is real and we will endure to the end. I do not think you can make that statement of people if all you know of them is on Sunday morning.
- The fifth time koinonia is used is 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 The cup of blessing that

we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. (ESV)

- Here Paul is speaking very plainly about communion and its link to holiness. How can we eat the bread of communion and drink the wine of communion indicating our koinonia with Christ and remain in our sin and idolatry? This speaks of a deep connection to Christ that was purchased at great expense.
 - The sixth time it is used is in 2 Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership (metaxa) has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship (koinonia) has light with darkness? (ESV)
 - Here the concept of koinoinia has reached the level of sexual relations and legal relations. Paul instructs us to say that there is no magnetism between the two, between unbelieving and believing spouses or business partnerships. Instead of being drawn closer together they will be repelling one another.
 - There are many other times it is shared but we have enough examples to see that koinonia is a unique relationship we have with one another in Christ that supersedes all other relationships. It is a glue that is epitomized by a Christian marriage relationship. As believers are committed to Christ, so they are committed to one another just as much as a husband is committed to his wife and she to him. If I lessen that commitment then I am in jeopardy of reducing our commitment to Christ and I fear doing so.
2. It is biblical koinonia (fostered by biblical hospitality) that helps each believer to persevere under severe stress and temptation. Hebrews 3:12–15 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” (ESV)
- This is a very unusual verse in that it speaks to a so-called brother. We tend to think of everyone addressed in the Bible books who attend church as if they are all Christians but here it speaks of one who thinks he is a Christian (the word “brother” indicates this) but has an unbelieving heart. That means this person has not been born-again, he has not been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. It is a warning that that heart will cause that person to fall away from the living God and perish.
 - What is the believer’s koinonia responsibility? It is to encourage, admonish, plead with, exhort one another daily as long as it is called today. That means that we only have so much time. This lifetime is all we get. Therefore this needs

to be more than a Sunday gathering because he says do it daily.

- So, what is going to make this unbeliever who thinks he is a brother or Christian become a true born again believer? It is this truth: For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. How do we know we are in Christ? We know if we hold our original confidence firm to the end.
 - Now take my introductory illustration of choosing whom to worship Jesus or the Beast. The pressure upon believers to feed their families and to take the easy way out is going to be enormous. The offer goes like this: “You don’t want your child to starve do you? Look they have already lost 20 pounds, you can see their bones. Stop their hunger pangs, just sign on the dotted line that so-and-so (you will know who he is by then) is your real Savior and you will worship him and him alone and not this Jesus who pretends to be your savior”.
 - As we are in the room or close by when these “offers” are made and we say, “don’t do it. Stay true to Jesus. Don’t sign the document. Jesus will rescue you one way or the other.” And,
 - When that person hears our exhortations to stand firm he either will at that moment have been born again or perhaps prior to that moment but it will be at that moment he will know “I am saved eternally and will not spend eternity in hell.”

Application

1. Our encouragement to stay true to Jesus is usually gracious and pleasant emphasizing the positive. If you stay true you will enjoy all the blessings here of God’s favor and eternal life here after. But sometimes it needs to be direct and blunt. Sometimes it needs to sound like this, “Since you are choosing to turn your back against the Savior and reject his love for you and the fellowship of the saints it indicates that you are not truly born again and that can only have one outcome. You will spend eternity in hell.
2. We can only have these kinds of honest conversations with one another if we know one another well by spending time with one another. This is where Christian hospitality is key and why it is so important. Sundays are just not enough. Go deeper with tone another, Open your homes.