

Introduction:

- Did you know that germs cannot live in honey? It's too sweet. The sugar draws out the water in the bacteria, thus effectively killing it. Hams are cured (preserved) with sugar. Jams and jellies can be canned and kept for long periods of time because they are filled with sugar. Without the sweetness of sugar, these things would be quickly become contaminated. **Application:** Most people believe that the way to ward off their enemies is to be quick to retaliate-to return evil for evil. But the Bible suggests another approach. Rather than lash back, the Scriptures exhort us to "return good for evil" (Luke 6:27). It's sweetness, not bitterness, that guards us against being corrupted by the contaminates of this world. "Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones" (Proverbs 16:24).
- Entering the Harvest Field
 - How do we enter the harvest field? If we can see the fields that are ready to be harvested how do get about doing it? 1. See the field and know you are commissioned to harvest. 2. Know that hospitality is one of your greatest tools. 3. Have fun doing it!
 - Jesus taught this message in Luke 14:16-24, 21 *Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.* NLT

1. We Are Commissioned to Go

- a. Note in our parable that the Master sends out invitations:
 - i. vs. 16 Jesus sends out many invitations. The word sent is *kaleo*.
 1. Everyone gets an invitation, everyone. That is the Holy Spirit's job. He starts working on men's hearts. He patiently invites all. As a Christian I have to live with the knowledge and faith that God is working on people and my witness however great or small is moving them closer to the Kingdom.
 2. *"The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent."* (2 Peter 3:9, NLT) People's response are much like ours today. Ie. we are getting invitations now: graduations, weddings, bbq, etc. "Oh I am so excited to go!" "Oh man, do I have to." "Why are they asking me to come." What ever the response God is working on the heart.
- b. Jesus sends his servant vs. 17, when the banquet was ready, to personally invite those who received the invitation. When you were born again you became a servant of God. "My life is not my own."
 - i. *Apostleos* - one who is sent.
 - ii. We are the servants of the Master, we do not get to pick and choose who gets invited. Being a servant and being sent - shouts "RESPONSIBILITY"
 1. Our responsibility is to go into the field. The field is our sphere of influence.
 2. Our responsibility is to invite. When we understand that we are sent we do not treat it as a suggestion. Ie. When my dad sent me to do something as a member of our family, let me tell you, I knew it was not a suggestion of 'if I got around to it.'
- c. Jesus commands the servant to go out. The command to the servant to go out quickly. Element of urgency. Quickly!
 - i. Preparations for the feast are being made. Invitations are sent out. Jesus has take the initiative.
 - ii. The servant is sent out to announce the feast is ready. First to those who receive personal invitations. Second to those who live in the vicinity-again, it is anyone. Third to those who are living in remote regions.

- d. As a Christian I am servant of Christ who is sent. I go not because it is a paid job but because I am excited about serving the Master of the Feast. I want Him to have a crowd! I want to celebrate His joy of the harvest.

2. Hospitality is the Tool of Choice

- a. The very nature of the word hospitality gives us insight into who Christ is and what His life is about. It also gives us insight into the heart we are to have as we go. Note: This parable is focused around the concept of hospitality.
- i. The word ‘hospitality’ comes from a Gr. *philoxenia*. But it comes from two words. 1. Philo - friendly. Ie. City of brotherly love. 2. Xenos - which means stranger, alien, foreigner. It is interesting that the parable moves from people who are know to strangers.
 - ii. Words of the *xen-* stem can mean “foreign” or “strange” but also “guest.” The former is the main sense in the NT.¹ Strangeness produces mutual tension between natives and foreigners, but hospitality overcomes the tension and makes of the alien a friend. (Strangeness produces mutual tension-Christians are strange. You are strange in this community. So you are seen as the stranger.) Historically foreigners are primarily enemies or outlaws who should be killed. It is then found, however, that hospitality is a better way to deal with strangers, and they thus become the wards of law and religion.² There are many OT laws pertaining to strangers. Ie. Lone Survivor Markus Luttrell and the Pushtan people who took him in and protected him.
 - iii. So the word hospitality has everything to do with taking two strangers who have this mutual tension between them because they are foreign to another and by acts of kindness and demonstrations of friendship bring them together. The foundational context of this word is not friends serving friends in hospitality but strangers, foreigners, perhaps enemies showing friendship in order to remove the dividing walls. Hospitality is the act or practice of receiving and entertaining strangers or guests without reward, or with kind and generous words and actions. Going into the fields that are white to harvest will happen around hospitality. In your home or in the street. Ie. The funeral in Chippepo. The soccer game in Chippepo.
 - iv. Maybe the thought of you being a friend of God is starting to take on greater significance because of God’s kindness towards you.
 - v. Ie Jesus demonstrates hospitality in the parable of the good Samaritan. The Samaritan practices hospitality when he takes this beat up Jew into his care and cares for him, covering all his expenses until he is ready to be on his own again
 1. The early church literally practiced this. In fact, the church in Antioch was known to have supported over 3,000 sick, widow, orphans.
 2. In time as churches were built they incorporated small rooms to house the sick. These got to be so big that they became...HOSPITALS- short for hospitality.
- b. Do remember, not everyone is very inviting but everyone is invited and we are sent.
- i. Sin separates us from God. (Jesus saw a whole field of these people.) It therefore makes us strangers to God, foreigners, and most strangers and foreigners were considered enemies. observe:
 1. Col 1:21 *And you, who once were alienated and enemies...NKJV*
 2. Romans 5:8-10 speaks of this. *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* vs 10 literally calls us *enemies of the cross*. Ro. 5:10

¹ Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

² Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

3. These scriptures are describing all who do not have a personal relationship with God as enemies, of God. Jesus came to practice hospitality-to remove the tension between foreigners that we might be accepted before God. What are you practicing?
- ii. I want to live an inviting life so that every stranger I meet and every stranger to God I meet would know the hospitality of heaven and accept friendship with God. Hospitality is love in action.

3. **Have Fun Harvesting!** Have fun bringing men to Jesus.

- a. We are commissioned but we also know His yoke is easy and His burden is light. So let's have fun at this while we enjoy the journey.
- i. Mt 28:19 The great commission. Tim's translation: "*Where ever you go, when ever you go, how ever you go...make disciples.*" We do the commission while doing life.
 - ii. Jesus brought men to God as He was 'doing life.'
 - iii. Paul brought me to Christ while in prison and while making tents.
- b. Let me show you that "God's hospitality is an essential part of his message (cf. the divine generosity in Lk. 14:16ff.; 12:37; 13:29, etc.)."³ Jesus taught this message in Luke 14:21 *Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.* 'NLT Jesus was hospitable to all and He had fun doing it.
- i. Church folks: Pharisee invited Him to dinner.
 1. Lk 7:36 Jesus is invited to Pharisee house where a sinful woman of the night cries on his feet. The law would say "he is unclean" but the kingdom would say, "Enter and be my friend. I welcome you."
 2. The master first invites his "friends." But they all have excuses as to why they cannot come. He is upset with them because they are the ones who should know Him the best.
 - ii. Sinners: Tax collectors & (notorious sinner) invited Him
 1. Lk 19:1-9 Zacchaeus invites Jesus to his house.
 2. Jesus invites Mt the tax collector to follow and in return Mt invites Jesus to eat at his house. Notice that when he eats with tax collectors that often there are prostitutes present. I am making an assumption here, but isn't that typical of many of the world's parties. Yet, Jesus attends. He is not there to have a prostitute he is there because these people are spiritually sick, strangers to God's need a doctor-hospital/hospitality.
 - iii. Sick Mt 14:3 at the house of Simon the leper, (I guess I have to say, formerly sick). Result is the same - the outcast is able to come near.) And now invites the inviter into his home. Woman anoints his feet.
 - iv. Samaritan's invited Him to stay two days-Jn 4:40
- c. So How do I Enter the Field?
- i. Know you are a servant of Christ and commissioned to enter the harvest field. It's not a suggest but a command. Nothing to get fearful about-be kind to people.
 - ii. Know that hospitality is your greatest tool in reaching people/or helping people to become friends of God. Hospitality overcomes the tension between strangers. That is our job.
 - iii. Have fun while you are doing it. How ever you go, where ever you go, when ever you go...make disciples.
 1. Put Christ in the middle of your activities. That simply means you are considering Jesus in the midst of your activities. Ie. Paul the maintenance man, the smokers in the office, the student chiropractor with 5 kids.

³ Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

2. Help people.
 - a. Then He invites the crippled, blind, lame, poor, etc. They are strangers who need help even getting into the banquet! Have you ever help someone like that? It really makes you feel good. Are you starting to see what hospitality is and that Jesus was the greatest practitioner of hospitality. His whole mission was to make men friends with God once again. That is our mission: Help men make friends with God again.
3. Eat with folks. Be a friend of sinners. Jesus ate with the ‘undesirables’/strangers of the Kingdom!...*“Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?””* (Matthew 9:10–11, NKJV) The Pharisees saw sinners as undesirables, enemies of God but they lacked the heart to be hospitable to them.
 - d. Notice that the next verse, Jesus is at the ‘hospital’(Hospitality)...*“When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.””* (Matthew 9:12–13, NKJV)
 - i. The very people who were aliens to the Kingdom of God are the ones that Jesus goes out to get.
 - ii. The people we want to reach are those who are aliens/strangers to the Kingdom of God. Just as Jesus invited them to be a part of the Kingdom we have to invite people to be a part of the Kingdom of God. And we have to use every part of our being in doing it-words, actions, character.

Conclusion:

- One person said, “Hospitality is the art of making people want to stay without interfering with their departure.”
- Jesus inviting people into His life led to many inviting Him into their heart.
 - Jesus has been so good to us strangers, that we to should extend to Him an invitation - come into my heart. Come into the center of my being, and my life.