

Have you ever walked into a room and felt completely invisible, as if you didn't belong? Perhaps it was a party where you didn't know anyone, a new job where you felt like an outsider or a group of so-called friends who left you out in the cold. We live in a world that too often locks doors instead of opening them. We retreat into our comfortable bubbles, surrounded by people like us. But is that how Jesus lived? In Luke 5:30, the Pharisees indignantly asked the disciples of Jesus, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Their question revealed a fundamental misunderstanding of Jesus' grace and the purpose of hospitality. It's a question we can't ignore because it challenges us to examine how our understanding of hospitality impacts our ability to seek the lost and embrace those far from God effectively.

1. The Kingdom of God as a Feast:

- a. God's kingdom is like a joyous wedding celebration. | Mat 22:1-14; Luk 14:15-24; Rev 19:7-9
- b. Scripture depicts eternity as an eternal banquet. | Isa 25:6-9; Mat 8:10-12 Luk 16:19-25
- c. Heaven celebrates with feasting when the "lost" are found. | Luk 15:6-7, 9-10, 21-24
- d. Jesus invites the repentant to table fellowship with Him. | Rev 3:20

2. Jesus Dined with "Sinners":

- a. Jesus often dined with "tax collectors and sinners." | Luk 5:27-32; 7:34-35; 15:1-2; 19:5-7
- b. He even dined with the sinfully, self-righteous Pharisees. | Luk 7:36-50; 11:37-54; 14:1-24
- c. Sharing a meal aligned with His mission to "seek and save the lost." | Luk 5:32; 19:10

3. The Pharisees and Jesus on Hospitality:

- a. To the Pharisees, hospitality was a social means to an end. | Luk 14:12
 - i. They were exclusive, only associating within their narrow social circle.
 - ii. Their meals focused on entertaining, impressing, and subtle competition.
 - iii. In some respects, this was a Martha Stewart style of hospitality, but not Jesus'.
- b. To Jesus, hospitality was a tangible expression of the grace of God. | Luk 14:13-14
 - i. It was about giving of Himself rather than getting something in return or hoarding what He had.
 1. Note how Paul contrasts being "greedy" with being "hospitable." | cf. Tit 1:7-8
 - ii. He wasn't just sharing a meal; He was sharing His message of hope. | Luk 15:1
 - iii. His **hospitality** was a time of care, comfort, and refuge. | Luk 5:30-31; 7:50

4. When was the last time you shared a meal and Jesus' gospel with a "sinner"?

- a. Grace-filled hospitality is the mark of the Christian faith. | Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 4:7-11
 - i. Hospitality is the responsibility of both men and women.
 - ii. Of the six NT passages that speak to hospitality, two are directed to men (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8), one describes a woman (1 Tim 5:10), and the other three generally apply to both sexes of believers.
- b. Hospitality is a powerful weapon in the spiritual battle against evil. | 2 Cor 10:4-6
 - i. In her book "The Gospel Comes with a House Key," Rosaria Butterfield, in part, describes how the hospitality of a Christian couple led her from radical feminist lesbianism to Christ. "They simply opened their home and lives to me, and in doing so, they opened my eyes to the beauty of the Gospel."

- c. Over the next 30 days, commit to following Jesus' example of hospitality...
 - i. Open your heart & table to someone outside your regular social circle – an unbeliever you know but have never told them about Jesus, a backslidden Christian you've neglected, a new neighbor that's moved in from some other state, an old neighbor you don't know, someone here at JH you've never talked to, someone who needs a listening ear, a helping hand, a friend, etc.
 - ii. The goal isn't to entertain or impress them with your culinary skills and immaculate home but to share His grace, love, and hope.

Consider this: Jesus, the Son of God, sat with tax collectors, sinners, and the broken. He shared meals not to impress but to impart life. He offered food and fellowship—a glimpse of the eternal banquet where all are welcome. This wasn't a Martha Stewart production of perfect place settings and polite conversation. This was a divine disruption, a revolution of love that turned the world upside down. We are not called to replicate the superficial hospitality of the world but to embody the transformative hospitality of Jesus Christ. We are called to open our hearts and tables, not as a social obligation but as a sacred act of worship. When we invite the lonely, the lost, and the least into our lives, we ask Jesus Himself. We declare that the Kingdom of God is not a distant dream but a present reality. Let us be a church of open hearts and open tables, reflecting the very heart of Jesus Christ.