

Once I Was
a Stranger,
BUT NOW



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I am a
Child of God

There are only 6 verses using the word which is normally translated Hospitality

Romans 12:13 contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality.

1 Timothy 5:10 having a reputation for good works; and if she has brought up children, if she has shown hospitality to strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has assisted those in distress, and if she has devoted herself to every good work.

Hebrews 13:2 Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing

1 Peter 4:9 Be hospitable to one another without complaint.

1 Timothy 3:2 An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

Titus 1:8 but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled,

In the next few weeks we will see how the concept is much broader than these 6 verses.

But what does it mean? Help me with some words

What does Philadelphia mean Love for Brother

What does Xenophobia mean? **Fear of Strangers**

What does Philaxenos mean? Love for Strangers

This is a definition borrowed in part and tweaked by me
Hospitality primarily means creating a safe space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an unknown entity. Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where growth can take place. It is not to bring men and women over to our side, but to bring them into relationship.

Next week we will continue exploring hospitality as
Once we were strangers, **but now I am in a family**

This is Part 4 of a four sermon series preached at Forks Community Church. Scripture passages are in *italics*, my comments are normal type. Booklets are to be read in this order:

Now I am a child of God

Now I am in a family

Now I am reaching out to the stranger

Now I understand

The audio of the actual sermon can be heard on the Forks Community Church website,
<https://www.forkscommunitychurch.org/>

...sus would die for the nation, :52 and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

Romans 8:16 *The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, :17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*

So what

Were the first 2 questions describing you? Do you have all the aloneness uncertainties and fears? Do you feel like a stranger and wonder where and why this messed up life is leading?

Please grab onto the answers to the last 3 questions. It is Jesus who paid the price. It is Jesus who says Come and find rest and forgiveness. It is He who will help you find purpose and meaning

Let thoughts of how God has dealt with you be an encouragement and a motivation to love Him and others

Where He took you from - past

Where He has put you – present

What He has in store for you – future

God's example of reaching out to some of the most unlovely people around, US when we were unbelievers, is a challenge for us to think about. But it is also a pattern He expects us to follow.

Many Muslim friends

Often I say I am not trying to convert you

Do say I believe Christianity is the truth and want to give you a chance to understand it

It is then their responsibility what they do with it

They know they can ask hard questions, it won't affect our relationship

We may have started as unknown entities to each other, but now we trust each other as friends.

I Was talking the other day about former refuge couple we are close to. They became Christians and had to flee for life. Man in a container not knowing where he would end up. Later wife and children walked for weeks through Eastern Europe. Left career, savings, house, and family behind. Now safely settled in a free country, have citizenship and all the busyness of living in a western country. But Now seemingly just spiritually coasting. I Was asked my opinion and I said 'I think they have forgotten where they have come from'. People appreciated my wisdom and insight into the situation and the conversation moved on.

But that night I began to think about all the spiritual blessings that I presently enjoy and I realized that I too often take them for granted. I began to reflect on where I came from.

Pretty comfortable typical American family

Nice people, but God's name was just used in swearing

Outside had everything going for me

Inside I was a mess:

Didn't fit in, but didn't care, except sometimes when I felt really alone

Could be a really nice person unless something set me off and I got violent
Didn't see any purpose or meaning in life
I felt adrift, was always looking for the secrets that would make sense of life, wanted absolutes that mattered but there were none

I lived in a nice house, but my heart had no home
So, when I remember where I have come from, this statement about hospitality becomes quite precious

The ultimate act of hospitality was when Jesus Christ died for sinners to make everyone who believes a member of the household of God. We are no longer strangers and aliens. We have found a relationship with God. Everybody who trusts in Jesus finds a home in God.

Demonstrate from Old and New testament God's hospitality in saving sinners

OT

Psa 23:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

*2 He makes me lie down in green pastures. Safe space
He leads me beside still waters. :3 He restores my soul. Cares for me*

*He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. 4
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. With me*

:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Meets my needs

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my

of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. :4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. :5 But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. :6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. 8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? 9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

What was the outcome?

1Peter 2:10 *Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

John 11:51 He did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Je-

those things is death. 22 But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the **free gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.

John 14:1 Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me.:2 In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.:4 And you know the way to where I am going.5 Thomas said to him, Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.7 If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Matthew 11:28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

No browbeating or quid pro quo. Just gentle invitation to come find the cure for all your needs

What did it cost?

Isa 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man

life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Certainty, relationship

One sided caring, He does for us; nothing we are returning

Isa 55:1 Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; invitation

and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. generosity

2 Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. No strings attached, but good questions

3 Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David.

NT

3 parables which are notably Gospel oriented are Parable of Lost sheep, lost coin, and prodigal son

What is the context where they were told?

Luke 15:1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, This man receives sinners and eats with them."

Eph 2:11 Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called 'the uncircumcision' by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—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 who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, 16 and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. 17 And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. 19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,***

Now bear with me as I reflect a little on where all the children of God have come from. Whether your background is better than mine, or worse, all have some things in common. 5 questions

Who were we?

Not a people - **1Pe 2:10** Once you were not a people alone

Sheep - ***Isa 53:6*** All we like sheep have gone astray;

Strangers and aliens, ***Lev 25:23*** The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and aliens.

Spiritual refugees
but why

What was our condition?

Garden caught and kicked out

Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

and cleanse me from my sin! 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight,

Proverbs 5:21 For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths. **22** The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. **23** He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.

Romans 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. **21** But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. **22** But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Who bridged the gap?

Start with same 2 passages—the rest of the story
Isaiah 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Romans 6:20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. **21** But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of