

So What:

If you belong to Christ, then you are part of this family

If you think someone seems unapproachable, they might feel
the same way about you

Love is demonstrated in hospitality and hospitality helps love
to grow

Think about how interesting the people here are. Begin to try
to discover what makes them special or unique.

Relationships most often take time to grow

To *Live in harmony with one another* takes **time** and **inten-
tionality**

This is Part 2 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

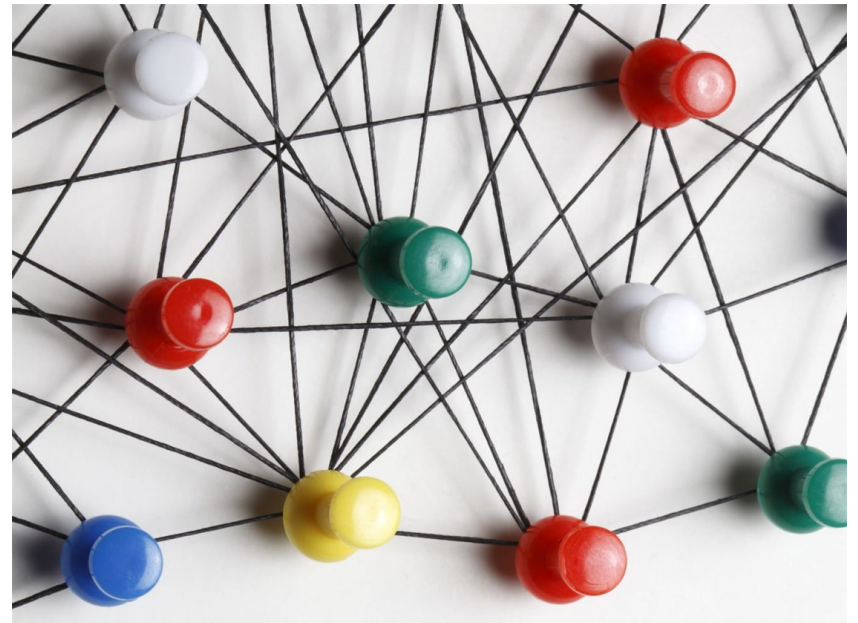
The audio of the actual sermon can be heard on the Forks Community Church website,
<https://www.forkscommunitychurch.org/>



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Once I Was a Stranger, BUT NOW



I AM PART OF A FAMILY

Booklets 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

Once I was a stranger, but now I am in a family

Heb 13:1

ESV Let brotherly love continue.

ASV & NASB Let love of the brethren continue.

Bible in Basic English Go on loving your brothers in the faith.

Easy to Read Version Continue loving each other as brothers and sisters in Christ.

NIV Keep on loving each other as brothers

NLT Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters

Greek φιλαδελφία μενέτω. Simple noun-genitive, singular; verb-present active imperative-present and continuing action

Let the relationship of loving your brother continue

So, what is the point of this, how does it relate to hospitality?

Simple, in that it immediately precedes v2 *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.*

Some thoughts from this:

Not showing hospitality is neglect

Of the Lord's instructions

Of the needs of others

Of an opportunity for a blessing

yone's lives, not educated and not wealthy.

Pointed out to them they had been married longer than some of those people had been alive.

Maybe they could be examples of what a long lasting marriage could look like.

Do what you can- which comes right from vs 11

11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen

Then Peter slips in something to sober us up

1Pe 4:12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you.

Don't be surprised, you will face difficult times

When it comes will you face it alone

Or will you deal with it surrounded by a loving family who will support and encourage you?



brother, juggling schedules with her parents. Not to mention the 'Meet the Missionary' on Thursday and the neighborhood potluck dinner on Friday. For both Pastor and I, we were happy we remembered Sunday. You may have noticed there was no scripture reading last week. And so, we missed mentioning Veterans Day last Sunday. Someone approached me to say how hurt they were and disappointed that we had not done anything. No threats, no accusations, no silent holding of a grudge; just honest talking and expressing of feelings. The way things should be done.

9 Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.

What could we grumble about

Non reciprocated actions

Keeping a tally sheet

Impact on my comfort

Remember who and why we are doing it

Who – a brother or sister in Christ, someone whom

Jesus has died for

Why – the end of vs 11

10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace:

Don't feel like you have to do more than you can

Don't underestimate what you can do

My parents went to a church where most of the people were young seminary graduates. They despaired of ever being able to be useful in an-

There are no strangers here; Only friends
you haven't yet met



- William Butler Yeats

What is a Stranger-certainly they are people we have never met, and we will look at that aspect next week.

But, really if we look around this room, aren't a lot of these people strangers to you? How well do you know them? Their struggles, their needs. How intelligently can you pray for them?

When at Cedar Crest I took a 6 month leave of absence to finish up classes for my PhD and write my dissertation. But we did not want to lose touch with the congregation of about 700. So, we took the church directory and at every meal prayed for 2 or 3 families and then wrote them a letter telling them we had been thinking of them and praying for them.

2 things struck me about that time

There were a lot who we didn't know anything about

The notes that we sent started a number of close relationships.

One person who we had no idea who they were was so touched they wrote a really nice note saying they didn't

think anybody at church knew they existed

Love is demonstrated in hospitality and hospitality helps love to grow

I wonder who knows any of these things about people in our little group:

Would love to open a sawmill

Worries so much about wanting to help others their blood pressure rises

Likes infomercials

Walked around Guernsey and saw where during a time of persecution of Christians, a young believer was burned while giving birth and her child was thrown in the fire with her

A Mayflower descendent

A in New York Golden Gloves contender

Was doing boarder patrol in Coburg Germany when the Berlin wall came down

Accidentally climbed a wall and found they had infiltrated a Ukrainian military base

Wants to open a family business

A young man who is strong but thinks people might not know it

In Jr year of high school as a closing pitcher struck out the other side with 9 pitches.

Adopted when 26 days old

Recently diagnosed as colorblind and concerned with impact on future hoped for career.

I'll do this soon or someday

Often replaced with 'If only I had'

Avoid regrets later by doing or being NOW

Hope beyond this existence

therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

We will disappoint each other, sometimes inadvertently, but sometimes by overtly sinning against them

It is a fact of life, finite and fallible

Fortunately, Jesus love covers a multitude of our sins

Martin Luther 'As God with His love covers my sins if I believe, so must I also *cover the sins of my neighbor*'

He is to be our model and we don't have the right to retaliate

Aggressively

Passively

Instead, in a sober and self controlled manner it should be addressed.

Good example last Sunday – Veterans Day

Pastor was all involved in working on arrangements for new building and breaking in a new staff member and a couple of other energy draining things. On Monday as I started on my sermon prep my 5 year old granddaughter went into hospital with a burst appendix. Shifts at hospital, trips to Slatington caring for her

derstanding grew into respect which grew into friendship which finally flourished in love. As I got to know her better my feelings strengthened and matured.

In the same way, in a group this size there will be some who you might immediately gravitate to. There will be others about whom you will think ‘how can I avoid them?’.

Relationships take time to grow

How do we conduct ourselves in the family?

Important question because some of us come from pretty messed up families. Not to make light of some of the things many of us have endured in our family of origin. Many of us learned skills that were necessary to survive in a



very dysfunctional system. I learned how to be invisible and avoid dealing with issues. If something blew up you endured it, stiff upper lip, and then acted like it didn't happen. If we use the lessons we learned growing up in situations like these as a model for loving our brothers and sisters in Christ then the church is in problems. So Peter gives us a profound summary.

1Pe 4:7 The end of all things is at hand;

For the early Christians a sobering idea because of the growing persecutions

For us a reminder that life on earth is short – a perspective setter

Opportunities are limited

Rom 12:15 *Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.* The obvious problem is how do I know when another is weeping or rejoicing. If it happens during hour and 15 minutes that we are together each week, then OK

16 Live in harmony with one another. Living with one another. How this looks we will explore another week, but it takes **time** and **intentionality**

Do not be haughty, too high of an opinion of yourself but associate with the lowly. Or those you think are lowly, and they might end up surprising you

Never be wise in your own sight.

Don't assume you know what is going on in someone's life unless you have entered into their life with them.

New Couple at church

Karen wanted to invite over

I didn't because they were out of our league – he was radio announcer, had a fancy vehicle

Karen prevailed- couple thanked us because they were so lonely, eventually became very close friends.

Don't assume you have the right to have hurt feelings unless you have talked to the person first.

Eye Dr says Glaucoma in right eye

Shook a bit

Mentioned it looking for sympathy

Didn't get desired response – felt hurt and a bit resentful

Later they gave a good response and we talked

Turns out when I said it, it was #1 thing on my mind and I didn't think about them and realize their

mind was dealing with their #1 thing. when we did

talk, I didn't get mindless sympathy, instead encouraging perspective

One of the other things I did on my leave of absence was a bit of study on the Brother/Sister relationship within the Kingdom of God

The reality of the brother/sister relationship saturates the NT. There are other pictures used to describe the nature of the church – the body, the bride, the temple, or the flock. But, Did you know that in the NT there are over 10,030 words dealing with this? More significantly there are at least 204 passages where this is addressed. I took all that and boiled it down into 128 principles on how to live with one another as brother and sister in Christ.

There were many ways that this relationship showed itself:

5 times greet one another with a holy kiss -culturally gender specific;

Shared material possessions, not just in Acts, but churches in one area helped churches in other areas in time of need;

They met in each others homes for spiritual purposes;

They ate together;

They cared for their widows;

When necessary they disciplined members, but before that they would encourage, exhort, admonish one another in their struggles;

They understood that to sin against a brother or sister by ignoring their spiritual welfare was the same as sinning against Jesus.

1Co 8:10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? 11 And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. 12 Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ.

They showed hospitality.

The first Christians viewed themselves as part of a brotherhood that transcended all national, racial, and social boundaries. It was rooted in one great thing they all had in common – their adoption as children of God. Also, they were a persecuted minority living in an increasingly hostile world. Experiencing the love of God, they loved each other. It sometimes concerns me that Christians have greater affinity to things like community organizations or sports clubs than they do to their Christian community.

Think about love. There is such a thing as love at first sight, sort of. When I first met Karen I thought what a wonderful woman. I hoped that one day I might have a wife as wonderful as her. She was the standard that I used in evaluating all the other females I had relationships with. When issues arose and I would eventually say 'Why can't you be more like Karen?' that did not help the relationship. You could truly say that for me it was love at first sight. Unfortunately, the same wasn't true with Karen's view of me. Without going into detail, suffice it to say she did not have a high view of me. As time went on she got to know me better; un-