

Luke 10:25–37

March 15, 2020

“Love as you have been loved – Show hospitality!”

Our Redeemer

3rd Sunday of Lent

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen! Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

Hospitality! Loving the stranger.

In our Gospel lesson we see a remarkable act of kindness!

—especially when the hero was so different from the victim he saved.

Samaritans were descended from intermarriages between Israelites and foreigners.

They reminded the Jews of the conquerors

who had brought these foreigners to their land centuries before,

and they followed a mixed, corrupted religion,

combining elements of Israel’s true worship

with practices of their old, pagan rites.

As a result, the Jews deeply resented the Samaritans, and the feeling was mutual.

How would we fit into the same story?

[Lonely Child]

A boy was going to school in the United States for the first time.

He had been a good student in Mexico,

but now his father had come to work in the States,

and the boy knew almost no English,

leaving him feeling anxious and feeling very much alone.

Ruben wondered how he’d know where to go, what to do.

Even more, he wondered if anyone would talk to him.

The morning was all right.

He sat in his desk with all sorts of things happening in front of him.

He didn’t understand, but no one expected him to. Not yet.

He’d catch on eventually, his father had said.

Then came recess.

Now everyone was running, playing, laughing, having fun—with their friends.

But not Ruben.

He wished someone would be playing soccer;

he could do that without talking,

probably better than these kids.

These boys played American football, and they didn't invite him.
So, Ruben sat on a swing all by himself.

Lunch was worse.

Ruben's class went through the line together,
but as soon as they got to their assigned table,
Ruben felt alone again.

Nobody noticed as he looked for a seat.

Everyone was having a grand time
—someone must have said something funny,
because everybody laughed,
and one boy's milk came out his nose—
but Ruben couldn't get the joke.
He sat at the very end of the table and just ate.

The afternoon dragged, but finally it was three o'clock.

A teacher led all the children to the front curb.

Students piled into waiting buses and cars.

What? There was no bus *diez*, the one Ruben had ridden to school in the morning!
“*Diez! Diez!*”

The teacher didn't understand. How would Ruben get home?

“Ruben,” came a voice behind him,
“I know where you wanna go. You were on my bus this morning.”

Ruben didn't understand, but he went along as Joshua took him by the hand.

“Bus 10 doesn't go in the afternoon for some reason,” he tried to explain.
We take bus 32.” Ruben shrugged, but grinned.

“That's my stop,” Joshua said as the bus pulled out again.

“I'll stay on with you this time and get off on the way back.
He makes a loop.”

The ride went fast, even though the boys couldn't catch much the other said.

Now Ruben recognized his street. “Gracias!” he said as he got off.

“See you tomorrow!” said Joshua.

Ruben didn't understand those words either,
but he understood the smile.

And he understood the hospitality.

[Elderly Woman]

Trudy planned to celebrate her 83rd birthday on Tuesday,
but she had nowhere to go.

Age had robbed her of her strength
and was slowly stripping away her mental capacity too,
leaving her helpless in a nursing home.

“To My Mother: A Son Can Never Choose His Mom
and Perhaps That’s Just as Well,
’Cause If Each Son Could Choose, I Know You’d Be One Busy Gal!
Have a great day, Mom! You’re the best! Love, Dean.”

“That’s so sweet,” the attendant said as she put down the card.
Be nice if he stopped by once in a while, she thought to herself.
“My Dean travels,” Trudy said. “Travels aaaaaall around.”

“Hi, this is Diane Wilson, Trudy Jones’ daughter.”
The woman on the phone was in a hurry.
“Could you wish my mom a happy birthday for me? We told her we
were going to come by tomorrow, but it turns out we can’t. She probably
won’t remember anyway, but if you could tell her. Thanks. We’ll send
flowers or something. Thanks so much. Bye.”

“Diane just called to wish you a happy birthday, Trudy.”
“Diane’s coming over tomorrow. Tomorrow’s my birthday, you know.
I’m going to be 83.”

Perhaps by the next day Trudy *didn’t* remember.
Maybe she wasn’t disappointed that no one came.
But when the noon meal was over
and the other residents had all been wheeled back down the hall,
she asked to stay in the dining room.
The room was empty, quiet.
For a long time Trudy sat alone.

Then, bouncing into the room came a pretty girl, about 13 years old,
with enough energy for both of them.
“Hi! I’m Sara. I just started today as a volunteer. Are you Trudy?”
Trudy nodded. “I hear it’s your birthday!”
Trudy brightened up. “I’m 83.”

But suddenly Trudy was 13 again,
telling stories about that birthday,
telling stories about her children's birthdays.
You could almost see candles glowing in her eyes.

"Ummm, just a second!" Sara said as she jumped up from the table.
In a minute she was back, carrying a little dish of banana pudding
topped with one flickering candle.

"I think we need to have a party!

*"Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you,
happy birthday, dear Trudy, happy birthday to you.
God's blessings to you, God's blessings to you ,
God's blessings, Jesus loves you, God's blessings to you."*

Sara didn't ask what Trudy had wished for
when she blew out the candle.
But this we know, Trudy received the gift of hospitality.

[My Story]

Now try just one more:

I was going downhill fast and didn't even know it.
Even before I was born, I'd fallen into the clutches of sin,
beating me down and leaving me spiritually dead.

I was just lying there, helpless.
Nothing I could do could save me.
Neither could anybody else,
because everyone who passed by
was wrapped up in the same selfishness,
the same sin as I was in.

Unless someone had done something fast, I'd have perished forever in hell.
But then along came my Good Samaritan,
who took pity on me,
picked me up in his arms,
and delivered me to safety.

He even paid for my care himself
and promised to come back for me.

Now I'm bandaged, healed, and loving life.

[Conclusion]

Whose story is this? Who was the Neighbor? Who showed me hospitality?

The story of the Good Samaritan
is actually every person's story
with Jesus always the hero.

The story is *not*, first of all, about anything we are to do; that's secondary.
It's really about what Jesus has done to save us in our need.

All of us by nature were dead in our sin
and thus helpless to save ourselves.

In our Baptism, Jesus picked us up in his arms
and delivered us from death and the devil into eternal life.

The price he paid, of course, was his own life on the cross,
and Jesus continues to "come back" with forgiveness and daily care until, finally,
he will return someday to take us to heaven.
That, finally, is your story.

That is the story of hospitality that guides us to show hospitality.
Keep practicing hospitality.

Let me just add, during these unprecedented times with the COVID-19,
you will have plenty of opportunities to show hospitality.
Keep loving one another as you are loved. Amen

As followers of Christ, "Keep loving one another earnestly
And show hospitality to one another without grumbling." AMEN! (1 Pt 4:8-9)
