

In the 1987 Danish film *Babette's Feast*, we're drawn into this small, austere community. The community is bound by observances and a deep sense of duty. Life in this coastal village was marked by simplicity, and the villagers of this small, isolated community were defined by their simplicity. They're holding fast to a life of spiritual rigor and frugality, and it's into this scene that we meet Babette.

She is a French refugee from Paris who finds solace in this village for 12 years. She has served as the housekeeper of two sisters within the village. She's a humble servant. She preps and cooks their humble meals for the whole family. After years of service within this community, Babette receives word from a friend back in Paris that she has just come into a large sum of money. At that point, the town begins to wonder if she will return to Paris. We begin to learn more of her story in which Babette was a once renowned chef and plans instead, rather than leaving the community, to offer the village a lavish feast unlike anything that they had ever experienced.

As the movie develops and the invitations go out for this feast, the film slowly depicts the deep grievances and hostilities that are among the villagers. The secrets and rumors spread about one another, and the skepticism of the "other" takes prominence. You begin to realize this seemingly benign village is rife with petty disputes that have been left unresolved for years. They were festering into open wounds. Accusations and broken promises, perceived slights, all of these created a hostile environment that was hovering beneath the surface.

Undeterred, Babette continued with her feast. She offered this lavish, multi-course meal, and something remarkable began to happen around that table. The grievances, long-standing conflicts, and silent divisions within the community slowly began to dissolve. The shocking display of hospitality and welcome cultivated the space within that village for the grievances to ease and for grace to flow. It's in this act of sharing the table that these villagers experienced healing and reconciliation that they never anticipated.

The film climaxes at the end of this meal with a powerful monologue by one of the characters, General Lawrence, who reflects on the experience around that table.

Mercy and truth have met together. Righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another. Man, in his weakness and short-sightedness, believes he must make choices in this life. He trembles at the risks he takes. We do know fear. But no. Our choice is of no importance. There comes a time when our eyes are opened, and we come to realize that mercy is infinite. We need only await it with confidence and receive it with gratitude. Mercy imposes no

conditions. And lo! Everything we have chosen has been granted to us. And everything we rejected has also been granted. Yes, we even get back what we rejected. For mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and bliss shall kiss one another. General Lorens, Babette's Feast

I love that line. Mercy imposes no conditions. See, Lorens captures the heart of what took place around that table. The villagers, long separated by pride, fear, and judgment are now united by a shared experience of mercy. A meal none of them deserved. Yet Babette lavishly pours is out upon the villagers. This power in hospitality is not just an act of service but a means of breaking down hostilities with shared acts of mercy.

We've been in this series on Table Welcome where we're looking at what this possibility of life around a table looks like. What is it for us to be at the table with God? What does it look like for the church to be defined by life around the table? What does it mean for us collectively to eat with one another?

Now, we are looking at our last category of what does it mean for us to eat and drink with those far from God, those on the fringes of society, those who may not consider themselves within this community? I might be a hyperbolic preacher, but I genuinely believe that the church has the answer to the hostilities the world faces. I believe it starts with life around a table, extending welcome in the midst of hostility. True hospitality has the power to create space for grace and reconciliation because it is at the table that we have received that grace and reconciliation, and therefore, we can extend it to others.

Throughout this whole series, we've been working from the conviction that in our post-Christian world, the credibility of our witness is dependent not on the rationality of our arguments, although that is important; rather, it's dependent on the quality of our hospitality. If, in fact, the world is as hostile as we tend to think, then our first step needs to be not with logical argumentation but with hospitality—welcome around the table.

We are going to quickly go through almost the whole chapter of Luke 14 because it's in the midst of a larger movement in which Jesus is working out some of the things of welcome amongst the religious elite. He often has words to say to that, and if you've noticed throughout this whole series, we've really homed in on the Gospel of Luke because this is one of the core themes of the life of Jesus that Luke depicts. This life or practice of eating and drinking with those near and far from God.

The beginning of Luke 14 is on a Sabbath day and Jesus is feasting with what the text says is a prominent Pharisee—some high official or ruler. In verse 1, it says that Jesus was being carefully watched at the table,

which doesn't quite set the tone for warm hospitality. But these religious leaders are watching him, and they see this man who's sick. He has a condition called dropsy, in which part of his body swells beyond containment.

Jesus interacts with them, looks at the religious leaders, and says, "Hey, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" I love this because they're trying to catch Jesus in this trap they set, but Jesus flips the table and says, "Is it lawful for me to heal?" If they say no, they'll be seen as lacking compassion. If they say yes, he'll be able to heal the man. So Jesus takes their trap and flips it on its head.

He sees this man and begins to heal him, and it says they remained silent. That's the religious officials. I love that. Then he flips it even further, and he's poking at the condition of these Pharisees. This is verse 5, in which Jesus asks them, as they're angry at Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, he says, "Hey, if this was your child, would you not heal them? If your oxen fell into a ditch, would you not take care of your own property?" The problem was with the condition of their heart. This is all happening at a dinner table,

We arrive at verse 7 when he notices how the guests picked the places of honor at the table. So this is now Jesus doing the watching. They were watching him. Now he's watching them. It's likely that this table was U-shaped, so the host would have sat right at the base of that U-shape. The places of honor would start there and extend outward. You can probably remember your kids fighting over which spot to sit at the dinner table. Once one person gets up, the other one quickly scoots in; then another child licks the fork so no one will take it. There's this jostling taking place, and Jesus is watching all of this unfold.

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. Luke 14:7-9

I don't think this is Jesus doing some backdoor way to gain the honorable seat. I don't think he's trying to teach some social cue or trick, but rather, Jesus is addressing the condition of the heart. He just simply says to not seek out the places of honor because someone more honorable than you may come. Instead, rightly view yourself and put yourself in the place of disregard. Honor others over yourself.

But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." vv. 10-11

This is classic Jesus in the kingdom of God. The first will be last; the last will be first. There's this great reversal of the way in which Jesus is

flipping social convictions and norms and turning them on their head to say, "If you exalt yourself in the kingdom of God, you tend to be humbled. But if you humble yourself, God tends to work with that and will exalt you. Jesus is laying a foundation as to what the kingdom of God looks like. It's always backward to us. I like to say it's actually right-side up. We're just viewing life through the parody, but the kingdom of God is the reality that is present. Jesus has announced that.

So he isn't making some claim. He's stating the way things are. If you exalt yourself, you will one day be humbled. But if you humble yourself, you will be exalted. As we look at this text through the lens of table welcome and hospitality, it's important for us to see that humility is the path where we can find welcome for all people.

If we come in prideful and arrogant, then we approach individuals and others through the lens of how can they exalt me? How do they make me look better? How can I get something from the other? But Jesus says that's not how it works in the kingdom of God. Humility is a proper right viewing of yourself—not an outsized view of yourself or an undersized view of yourself—but a proper vision of who you are in context to God.

That humility creates the conditions within you in which you view the other, not as someone who can either help you climb the ladder or descend the ladder, but rather simply as another soul to be loved. Humility is the path to hospitality. It's what cultivates in us a posture of welcome. It enables us to welcome all people around the table.

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." vv. 12-14

So, the ancient world and society in that day were bound by this principle of reciprocity. Meaning, as you would imagine, you invited someone over, and their hospitality was built on the expectation was they would invite you back. That even plays true in our own context today. There's still a subtle sense in which reciprocity is assumed.

Well, the problem for Jesus with that is that it speaks to social class distinctions and cultural norms. If you are supposed to be invited to parties and then invite people back, well then only people that are in a similar stage and socioeconomic status as yourself would entertain themselves at these parties because they had the availability and the means to invite one another and reciprocate.

Jesus looks at this and says, "You're segmenting out the poor, the lame, the blind, those who are on the fringes of society, the marginalized." When this social practice takes place, without knowing it, you're cutting others off. You're showing a form of favoritism in which hospitality is an extension of a quid pro quo. It's not the table welcome that is for all. Jesus names this injustice and says to not fall into that trap when you

throw a party. That's the prevailing cultural norm that Jesus is seeking to upset.

The church was built around the table. This is a particular moment in a particular time in which Jesus is upsetting the injustice that was playing out. It doesn't mean we're never supposed to eat together, but he says to be careful because in our eating together, in our hospitality, we can perpetuate injustice. He says this is never what hospitality in the kingdom of God looks like.

"When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, 'Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God'" (v. 15). This guy is thinking that this sounds awesome. Someday, we will do that. But in the back of his mind, I'm sensing he's thinking that this day isn't today. It's not now. A lot of us have the posture of this man. We hear teaching like this, and we think that it will be wonderful someday. Then we go on about our business. But Jesus had announced that the kingdom of God was not a future reality; it's a present reality.

When this man says, that will be great when we eat at the feast in the kingdom of God, he's thinking it's a future reality, but Jesus had said that the kingdom of heaven is here. It's available right now. That is not some future thing, but rather this moment. It's not some idealized future picture for one glad morning. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is here, and the call for Christians is to embody that at all of our tables.

There's a radical imminent availability of the kingdom of God. Do not fall into the trap of thinking that the future time is when we can start to embody these things. The kingdom of heaven is available here and now for us to step into. Invite others around the table and experience a foretaste of that which will one day be all in all. You can enter into that now.

Next, Jesus tells another story.

Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' vv. 16-17

In the ancient world, there would have been two invites that went out. The first one is like a save-the-date card, but on that day, it was sent out so the host could determine how much food they needed. Then a second invite would go out, which was the one we just read about that told the guests that the food was ready. It wasn't quite as instant as it is in our day. This second invite is saying that the party is ready, the banquet is available, come and enjoy.

"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' vv. 18-20

All of these excuses are rather pathetic. All of them are things that likely wouldn't have hindered them from going, or they were just fabricated out of thin air. He says he needed to check out a recent field he bought. I'm guessing that's probably not time-sensitive. He could have done that

later. It's pretty foolish to not have checked out the field before you purchased it. So the assumption is this is someone who's just trying to look for an out.

The second excuse involves the purchase of five oxen. Similar to not buying a car without test driving it, I imagine they purchased these and had tests driven the oxen. There was a means by which this would have happened. The third excuse is maybe a little more realistic in that he was just recently married, therefore, he couldn't go. It's likely that in a small village in the ancient world, the host of the party would have known that the marriage had taken place and wouldn't have scheduled the banquet that close to the marriage. So, it's not really a feasible excuse.

The key thing is that those who are invited are creating excuses. Notice, by the way, that at least the first two for sure came from people of significant means. If you're buying an extra field, you've got the means to do so. Five oxen would have been enough to plow far more than the average plot of land. So these first two are similar to the ones Jesus rebuked earlier in the first parable, the rich neighbors, those that have means. He's sitting here at this party, and he's looking at these people and saying, many of you are making these kinds of excuses because the kingdom of heaven is available. And the means in which this kingdom of heaven for Jesus is to be experienced is when you bring people across the social strata together around a table and they're refusing to join that table by making seemingly meaningless excuses.

"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' "Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'" vv. 21-24

A haunting line: "Not one of those who are invited will get a taste of my banquet." Jesus says the host will find people to dine with. The invitation was sent to all rich and poor alike. Those in the country lanes, those in the house, the invitation is there. The invitation will be received. His house will be full. But he says that if you reject that invitation, you will not taste his banquet. That line brilliantly leaves us, the reader and listener, wondering where we land in the narrative. Are we the ones who made the excuses? Or are you out in the country lane, eager to come in? Are you one of those who had been on the fringes, and you've received Jesus' invitation and rushed into the home to be welcomed by him?

The parables are brilliant because they leave it unresolved. You don't really know where you land here, and that's the point. The point is for us to question which role we are and where we land in this story. This got me thinking, what if we come to understand the whole of our lives as followers of Jesus as some mix between both host and guest? That's what Jesus is playing out here.

Those hosting the party, you see them on the inner circle and those also of the guest. It got me wondering if that's the way we are to view our life. What if we came to see the places in which God has placed us, the neighborhoods in which we're a part of, and the means God has given us, not as those that should reify our own standing, but rather as those that are given out freely as both host and guest.

It's been one of the main themes of this series that what we find in the life of Jesus is he is constantly in these two different roles. He is the ultimate, paramount picture of hospitality in which he's welcoming us as the blind, lame, and maimed, those who are on the fringes, not worthy to be in his presence, and yet he welcomes us in. He reverses all of that. At the same time, he's the guest who receives the love and the hospitality of the woman caught in sin and of those hosting the party.

It's interesting because, and this is very much myself included, the majority of us tend to view our homes, streets, backyards, and neighborhoods no different than the way a nonbeliever does. We view them as places of retreat, of escape, where we can seclude ourselves away in the safety of our homes. But what if God has placed you in the street and neighborhood, not because the school districts are great, not because the properties hold value, but for a greater reason? What if you are in the place you are to play the role of both host and guest?

What I learned through this series is that the table is the place where you are both host and guest. That's the place of encounter with God and encounter with others. Let's look at each one of these in turn.

Guest

First, we are the guest. You and I already poked around on this, but the first question we ask as guests is, have we responded to the invitation of Jesus? Or do we tend to make the same excuses that we saw in the story?

Notice that the excuses they made weren't morally negative. There's nothing wrong with owning a field or oxen or getting married. They were morally neutral, but they hindered them from stepping into the presence and the availability of the kingdom of God. I could stand on good ground by making the argument that there are more morally neutral things that hinder us from experiencing the presence of Jesus than morally negative things. Those people were not saying that they had to go rob a bank, and so couldn't come to the party. They were morally neutral things.

John Joseph Surin, a 17th-century minister, was once asked, "Why is it that when so many people undertake to give their direct and full service to God, there are so few Christ-like persons." His response: "The chief reason is that they give too big a place in life to indifferent things." It is all too easy in our day and age to give so much of our time and energy to things that are not central and of the highest value.

We live in an age where it's easier than ever to give our lives to menial things and distractions. It's simply easier to distract ourselves than it is to engage in this level of intentionality. But I would argue this is where the morally neutral things that keep us from the presence of God outweigh

the morally negative things. This isn't to say that morally negative things don't hinder us, too. They do. But in our day and age, there are more of those morally neutral things that hinder us from experiencing the invitation and welcome around life in the kingdom of God.

This is the first two years of our Rule of Life, that vision where we talked about being attentive to God, present to him through the renewing of the mind. We must actively cultivate a heart that is ready to receive the invitation of Jesus. But we tend to distract ourselves more than we realize the availability of the kingdom. C. S. Lewis, in this great section in *The Weight of Glory*, talks about how we're offered a life at sea, but so many of us can't fathom how beautiful that life would be because we're so distracted by making mud pies on the shore that we miss out on the life at sea in front of us.

The kingdom of heaven is like that church. So many of us get caught not in necessarily negative things but neutral things that tease what our deepest longing is within us. Jesus is saying that he offers you a life at sea, life in the kingdom of heaven, but most of us just don't trust that it's actually life and life to the fullest. But that's what Jesus would have on offer.

Host

Second, we're the host. When have we extended the welcome of God to others? Because all of life is this host-guest exchange in which we experience the welcome of God and extend it to others. The clear call of Jesus from the parables is that we are to extend that welcome to any and all around the table. The example here is Jesus healing physical harm and suffering, and that may be the case that we're surrounded by people who are experiencing that. But often, in our day and age, the pain and suffering in the people around us is more internal. It's loneliness. It's pain, hurting, isolation, and desperation for relationship.

You may or may not have people physically suffering in your neighborhoods, but I would guess if there was a way for us to see your neighborhoods from the lens of God, you would find people hiding in their homes, lonely, desperate for connection, but not knowing how to reach out and experience it. The longer I pastor, the more I'm convinced of this. The more time I spend with people, the more I realize how lonely our world is. I often forget because I have this job and all of you that is ripe for relationships.

Many of you, when I talked about that loneliness, something quivered in you because you know that feeling acutely. The problem of our day and age may not be physical suffering, it might be, but I would guess it's more of this pain of loneliness, this ache. While people have it all put together on the exterior, is deep beneath the surface. The Bay Area is deeply lonely. This is conjecturing more than research-based. But the combination of a career-based economy with the transients and the means in which we have in this area create a toxic cocktail ripe for the permeation of loneliness.

We're in a space where loneliness seems to be the epidemic that's unspoken about. And the church is uniquely positioned to take the teachings of Jesus seriously and not just invite our friends but go out into the

streets and invite the lonely, invite those who may look like they have it all together, but deep down, they're in pain.

What would it look like for us, a community, to view our homes not as retreats or places where we isolate, but rather an outpost for the kingdom of God. If I were to summarize, I'd put it this way. Table welcome is about recapturing our homes and our tables as a base camp for the kingdom of God and for the love of our neighbor. For us as believers, that's what the home should be. It's a place where we experience the kingdom of God together with God and with others. Then, our homes become places in which we think this is the means by which God has given us to love our neighbors.

Read what a pastor in New York named John Tyson wrote,

What would our love look like if it showed up dozens of times a week in small but profound ways: meals cooked, prayers prayed, songs sung, scriptures studied, games played, parties thrown, tears shed, reconciliation practice, and resources given? What if we stopped attending community groups and became groups of communities: What if our homes stopped being the places we hid from the world but havens to which the world comes for healing? John Tyson

What a beautiful picture in which people found their way into the church community, not through these doors, but rather through our homes and tables. But I also recognize that this runs the risk of being an idealized experience. I don't want you to walk away thinking that I assume this is easy because it's not. Here are four obstacles we have to overcome, of which I took the majority from a guy named Tim Chester. He has a great little book called *A Meal with Jesus*. That's been central to our thinking through this practice.

It's Too Scary

The first obstacle we have to overcome is pretty simple. It's too scary. We live in an age where intimacy, like what it is around the table, is just difficult. It's foreign for us in a digitized, detached world to connect with people. Honestly, it can simply be too scary. I imagine when you're thinking through this, you're thinking the same thoughts I have. Well, what if they judge my parenting? What if they judge my cooking, my cleaning, or the decor in my house? When you host, you are putting your life in front of another, and that can be intimidating.

I believe all of us, at some level, crave the approval of others. We fear condemnation or being ostracized by them. On top of this fear, the reality is we experienced life during COVID-19 in which the other became more and more distant, and that generated within us another greater fear of people that's valid and warranted. I understand where that comes from. It's an obstacle that we have to deal with and bring before the Lord to help us work through it. I don't minimize that at all, but what does it look like for us to take a step towards table welcome? Maybe it isn't necessarily in your home. Maybe it's elsewhere, such as the coffee shop, or maybe take a walk around the neighborhood at a park.

It's Too Costly

The second is it's too costly. Let's be real. Food costs money. Hospitality takes time. Things get broken. There are risks to a life of hospitality. It's messy. Often, we descend into this obstacle, and we drop back into the topic of entertainment, not hospitality. Meals don't need to be lavish. It can be inviting someone over for dessert or coffee. It can be a potluck; it doesn't have to be costly. Don't buy into the myth that it must be lavish. Table welcome is not about your performance before the other. It's about creating space in which people are welcomed.

I'm Too Busy

The third obstacle we have to overcome is being too busy. Maybe we're all on board with offering hospitality, but the problem is more logistical rather than material. Such as when will we actually do it? Your life is full. You don't have a spare evening. Most of us wrestle with this. The question that haunts me is, "Am I simply too busy to follow Jesus?" If you feel that you are too busy, this may require some planning. It may take some intentionality for you to set aside an evening or two. I want to note that I'm not asking you to do more. You eat about 15 to 21 meals a week. What if you simply repurposed one of those?

Continue to eat the 15 to 21 meals a week, but what would it look like to invite a coworker down to the cafeteria and create a space of welcome? What would it look like to invite a single friend to a family meal in which they might be very comfortable around the family chaos? What would it look like to just get to work a touch earlier and invite someone to have breakfast together? You're already eating meals. Just repurpose them. See what the Lord does.

People Are Too Different

The last obstacle is people are just too different. We have a fear within us. We get nervous about welcoming each other because we live in a world in which the social tension is pretty high. There's a genuine fear of what will think of me. Will I say the wrong thing? Will I do the wrong thing? If I'm seen with them, will that have a ripple effect? Our world is marked by ideological purity, and so welcome of the other seems like a lot at times. What if they vote differently than me? What if they belong to a different socioeconomic status than me? Here's the thing: if you pay attention to the life of Jesus, you will see that he was never worried about this. He was never worried about guilt by association. We need to grow in curiosity.

The goal is that this welcome extends that to others. How do we begin this? If these are the obstacles, how do we begin creating this? I want to offer you two simple ways. The first is a tool called [The Neighborhood Block](#). If you're wondering how to start this, here's a simple way. Imagine your house as that one right in the center. Then, think through the houses or the apartments or whatever it is that surrounds you. Who is the neighbor at the house across from you, kitty-corner to you, behind you, to your left, or your right?

I invite you to start this week to take this image and begin to look at each one of the letters in the square. First, in line A, can you write their

name? I can't, for the record. I've got three of these six or eight blocks where I can at least write their name. Line B, can you offer some surface information? Such as their job. This is how many kids they have. They moved to the area five years ago, basic biographical data. Line C is that really hard one. Do you know any deeper information about them? Do you know their story? Do you know what wakes them up in the morning? What gets them excited? What is the fear of the anger that they might have beneath the surface?

I challenge you to take this and slowly spend the next six months filling out this chart. Be a little bit more present. Start with line A, just get to know their names, move to line B, know a little bit about their story. What would it look like to approach your neighborhood with that level of intentionality? Here are some quick ideas on how you can accomplish this. What if you threw a block party? Invite everyone over, drag the barbecue out into the front yard, and just begin grilling up some hot dogs or something.

What if you went on a prayer walk around your neighborhood? Invite the Holy Spirit to open your eyes a little bit more. For me, this honestly looks as simple as taking my AirPods out when I'm walking around the neighborhood. It demonstrates more availability. It helps me see people a little more clearly.

The holidays are coming. This is the best, easiest excuse. I've already put my girls on notice that we're passing cookies out this year. We're doing that thing. We're knocking on doors. The holidays are a perfect time to break the ice. Merry Christmas, Happy Thanksgiving, Halloween, go trick or treating, and maybe with a little more intentionality, get to know people. You can host a neighbor night where you open up a house and attempt to have people over for dinner.

Take advantage of school events and kids' sports. These are great opportunities to get to know people. Host a Sabbath dinner you may already be having, but instead of viewing it as an insular practice, open it up. Welcome other people around that table. Practice reverse hospitality in which you show up at their house with food. You've learned, like my neighbor, Jean, who just had hip surgery, to just go and offer a meal, practicing reverse hospitality. There are also affinity hangouts; watch the Niners and Chiefs today. Gather together and bring someone over who has a similar affinity as you. Bring back Taco Tuesday, for heaven's sake! These are simple things that we tend to overlook.

As we close, I want to bring you back to the words of General Lawrence from *Babette's Feast*. Mercy imposes no conditions. We don't need to impose conditions; we simply extend mercy to one another, to our neighbors, and to those that God has placed within our sphere of influence. What would it look like, Church, for us to be a community that viewed our homes and our tables as outposts for love of neighbor? With no other conditions. We love others purely because we are called to be

people of love. We do not have to have an agenda. We are not trying to change anyone.

We are simply showing up as an extension of the Lord to demonstrate love to the other and see what the Holy Spirit does. Jesus in Matthew 10:8b said, "*Freely you have received; freely give.*" May that mark our lives and our apprenticeship to Jesus because we have freely received from the Lord, and so we freely give.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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