



Sermon, Sunday June 20, 2021, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?”

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 18:1-15 ¹ The LORD appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. ² He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. ³ He said, “My lord, if I find favor with you, do not pass by your servant. ⁴ Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. ⁵ Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.” So they said, “Do as you have said.” ⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, “Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.” ⁷ Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. ⁸ Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate. ⁹ They said to him, “Where is your wife Sarah?” And he said, “There, in the tent.” ¹⁰ Then one said, “I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.” And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. ¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, “After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?” ¹³ The LORD said to Abraham, “Why did Sarah laugh, and say, ‘Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?’ ¹⁴ Is anything too wonderful for the LORD? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.” ¹⁵ But Sarah denied, saying, “I did not laugh”; for she was afraid. He said, “Oh yes, you did laugh.”

Introduction: Hospitality

The Gospels show us the warm and generous heart of Jesus. Jesus healed the sick, comforted the sick with kind words, fed the hungry, and taught the multitudes with wisdom. In words and deeds, Jesus showed us what hospitality means to our neighbors. And He commanded us to practice hospitality toward our neighbors in our lives.

The word hospitality derives from the Latin word “hospes”. The Latin word “hospes” means guest or host. The word hospitality means to welcome strangers and enemies with a warm and generous heart as one would treat their master.

We see a lot of this kind of hospitality in the Old Testament as well. The story of Abraham in today's text is one example. As Christians, we should be able to practice the hospitality shown by the forefathers of our faith and Jesus in our lives and bear abundant fruit.

First, let's look at Abraham's hospitality shown in today's text.

Body: Abraham's Hospitality

One hot day, Abraham is sitting at the entrance of the tent, resting, when he sees three strangers nearby. He immediately runs to them, greets them very politely, invites them to his tent and serves them water and food. Abraham had his servants prepare the best bread and meat.

Abraham serves strangers with hospitality like one would serve the Lord. Abraham's hospitality toward his neighbors leads to the Lord's blessing on Abraham's family.



However, hospitality toward our neighbors is not something we can do without any training of faith. Abraham was able to show hospitality toward his neighbors through his training of faith over a long time. In today's text, we can see Abraham as an image of mature faith, the results of faith training. Then, how is Abraham's mature faith found in today's text?

1. It is the purity of Abraham.

Mamre, where Abraham lived, is the present-day Hebron region between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. Hebron is a wilderness area about 18 miles (28 kilometers) south of Jerusalem.

According to today's text, when Abraham was 100 years old, he finds three strangers traveling in the wilderness. He ran to them, bowed down and greeted them. There is a Bible verse that expresses Abraham's heart very well. **That is Hebrews 13:2. "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it."** It is Abraham who entertained angels without knowing it.

In this verse we see how Abraham treated strangers out of pure motives. It was with a pure heart of service that Abraham treated a stranger who was on a journey in the wilderness. It was not done for any other reason or purpose.

If Abraham's attitude had not been pure, they would not have accepted Abraham's invitation which will serve them. Abraham was a man worthy of God's love and recognition. May we also have the blessing of receiving from the Lord recognition for our pure hearts and faith. Then, what is another mature aspect of Abraham that we find in today's text?

2. It is the humility of Abraham.

Abraham welcomes strangers traveling in the wilderness with the utmost respect as a servant would to his master. Abraham treats others with respect, but he more humbly served them than those who receive treats. Furthermore, Abraham was a generous man. Abraham was not stingy in his hospitality to strangers. He treated the stranger with the utmost care.

We often ignore our neighbors if we have position, wealth, or power. But instead of revealing himself, Abraham served his neighbor with humility. The Lord cherishes Abraham's humility. Then what is the last mature faith of Abraham?

3. Abraham was a man who knew manners.

Abraham welcomed the strangers with the highest courtesy. He welcomed the strangers to the point of bowing himself to the ground. Abraham prepared food under the shade of a tree so that the guests could rest and eat, and he served the strangers as a servant would. This behavior of Abraham is an act that shows the best courtesy that a landlord can give to a guest in the ancient Near East. This shows that Abraham was a man who knew good manners to keep the good traditions and customs of serving strangers. We should have no shortage of good traditions and customs for our community and neighbors.

However, when we think about hospitality, the most important thing is where Abraham's ability to show hospitality to strangers came from.

4. The power of true hospitality comes from the Lord.

As we have seen, Abraham is hospitable to strangers. The strangers welcomed by Abraham say that Abraham's wife Sarah will conceive a son. But when she heard this, Sarah, Abraham's wife, laughed silently to herself because both Abraham and Sarah were too old to conceive a child. That is, from a rational point of view, it would have been impossible.



However, the strangers who saw Sarah's reaction did not blame her for her lack of faith. Instead, they give courage and confidence to Abraham and Sarah by saying, **“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”** Hearing the strangers, Abraham must have remembered God's promises to him in the past. **“Then the word of the LORD came to him: This man (Eliezer of Damascus) will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.”(Genesis 15:4)**

In this way, behind Abraham, who provides hospitality for strangers, there is the Lord who gives invisible hospitality. As Christians, we should be able to look to the Lord who creates, blesses, saves, guides, and welcomes us.

In his spiritual autobiography, **‘Surprised by Joy’**, C.S. Lewis confesses that he feels God in the thrill of reading great literature, the rapture in front of the sunset, and the thrill of listening to Wagner’s music.

However, we have a more intrinsic joy. As Christians, we experience the Lord's love and the joy of experiencing the hospitality of our neighbors living in this world.

Man, created in the image of God, does not live alone. We live in the hospitality of the Lord and the hospitality of people. In other words, humans are creatures of love.

Today is Father's Day. As someone's son or daughter, we grew up through the love of our Father. We also grew up through the love of our mothers, brothers and sisters, our neighbors, and the Lord's compassion for us. Our very existence is the result of what hospitality has brought us.

Conclusion: May you enjoy the blessing of hospitality.

Now let's summarize today’s sermon. By unwittingly entertaining strangers, Abraham enjoys the blessing of reaffirming the promise of his heir from them. Not only Abraham but Sarah is also blessed. Rather than rebuking the doubting Sarah, the angels of God said, **“Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son.”(Genesis 18:14)**

Book of Romans 12:13 says: “Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.” Hospitality toward neighbors is a blessing that saves us and the community.

Please remember! Today's text says, **“Is anything too hard for the LORD?”** The Lord has blessed our lives with hospitality. I hope we enjoy that blessing.

When we entrust our lives to the Lord and live with hospitality toward our neighbors with innocence and humility like Abraham, the wonderful blessing of hospitality from the Lord will come into our lives. I hope everyone can enjoy such a blessing.

