

# The Simplest Way to Change the World – Biblical Hospitality 1

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[0:00] All right. Good morning, everybody. We're going to get rolling. Grab your breakfast burrito. You might arrange it. If you're early enough, you can arrange it where you can you can balance everything and grab another seat and slide in in front of you like a table.

And so this is hospitality. This is wonderful. Can we just thank the Deckers for providing this this morning for us? I said, man, we can't have a class on hospitality and not have something we can just kind of nibble on.

And I was like, hey, maybe we can get like some doughnuts. And they said, doughnuts. What are you kidding me? We got to feed these people. We got to host these people. And so thankful for their effort. Go above and beyond.

And it's a great way to start our class just so you get kind of a road map of where we're going. We're going to spend three sessions together. I do hope you'll come back today is we lure you in with the breakfast burritos, but we hope you'll stay for the content for the next couple of classes as well.

So the first one today, what we're doing is trying to lay some groundwork, just an introduction to the concept of hospitality. And then from here, what we're going to do next week, we're going to try to survey kind of this unfolding story of hospitality in the Bible.

[1:23] So we're going to lay a foundation with an introduction and then a biblical survey of what is the Bible actually teach about this topic? And I think it might surprise you. It might go beyond what you're expecting.

And then the last day, the third session that we'll spend together, we're aiming to hone in on some very practical application. How how are we called to practice biblical hospitality?

So those are the three sessions beginning with today. I'm just going to ask for the Lord's help and then we'll jump in. OK, oh, Lord, we do call upon you now. Ask for your help.

Not sufficient to communicate these things appropriately. I pray that you help me and help us give ear to your word and to lean in. We want to know what is the simplest way to change the world when things are entrusted into your hands.

Tools that are used for selfish gain can be used for selfless purposes that glorify and magnify your name. And so that's what we're asking for. Ask that you help us to see hospitality through that lens.

[2:30] We entrust these few minutes to you now and ask that you come in Jesus name. Amen. That song, Is Anyone Worthy? One of my favorite songs that we do.

I love kind of the call and response aspect of that because it draws us in as a community to to hear truth and then respond with our hearts. The questions posed and then an affirmation of the question.

And if you remember the very beginning of that, it's on your paper just for reference. Do you feel the world is broken? Right out of the gates.

It's like we're not going to we're not going to pull any punches. We're going to we're going to get into the deep end of the pool here. Do you feel the world is broken? And all of us respond with this choir of voices.

We do. And we don't need to go very long around this room to find some points of suffering, some points of brokenness, some points of even things that we've done.

[3:28] So, you know, at any point we are saints, sinners and sufferers at all times. So we've both done and had things done to us or those that we've loved.

We feel the world is broken. We do. Do you feel the shadows deepen? We do. But do you know that all the dark won't stop the light from getting through?

So that's that's the refrain of of the Christian is that our musings about suffering, about pain. Don't just stop with the brokenness. It proceeds to hope.

It proceeds to light. And it's not something that we admit the light doesn't come from us. It comes from another source. But that last line, do you wish that you could see it all made new?

Absolutely. And the rest of the world would say the same thing. They also would like to see the world made new. Most people in the world recognize that the world is broken to some level in some way.

[4:32] There's things that are wrong. There's there are problems in the world. Things are not as they should be. There's only a handful of people that carry a godless universe away through to its logical conclusion.

Say, well, all suffering is just part of it. You know, there's no real meaning. There's nothing to it. There's a very small handful of people that actually carry that to the logical conclusion. Most people in the world sense that there is something wrong with the world and there's a need for it to be fixed. We strive in some way to fix what's broken. What's broken? What would you say? What comes to your mind when you think of the brokenness in the world? Just generally, as you look around, what are some of the things that that you think of when you think this is broken?

What would you say? Family. Yeah. Family. Certainly, there's a disintegration of the of the family, nuclear family and beyond. What else? Anything else? We're more connected, but we're more lonely.

Yeah. So this idea of relationship loneliness is an epidemic. It's been labeled as an epidemic even by secular psychologists. Anything else come to mind? Yeah, there's lacking in so many ways.

[5:47] Yeah, there's anger. There's violence. There's injustice. There's homelessness. Hunger. People are hungry. There's health issues. Cancer.

Not getting the help that you need medically. So there's all sorts of things that we could we could just spend hours just thinking about all the problems that we see, all the brokenness that we see. We wish that we could see it all made new.

But what can we do to help change the world? Lots of people offer solutions to the brokenness that we see all around us. As I was thinking about some of the issues, even the ones we rattled off, you know, some people throw themselves at like, OK, we just need medicine.

We need access to medicine. We need better medicine. That's going to fix the problems because most of the issues we have are related to health. Or maybe it's, you know, education.

If we could just get literacy rates up, that will help solve the problems in the world. That would take care of it. That would fix what's broken. We need to empower people through literacy.

[6:50] Maybe it's business. If we could just generate more economic stimulation, then people would have more access to resources and we would be able to afford the things that we need and things would be better.

Things would be fixed. Maybe it's government. If we could just get government coordinated and organized in a way where there's not corruption, then we could have all things made new.

So there's a lot of fixes that we throw towards the problems. But often our fixes are aimed at resolving, in a lot of ways, physical problems or just earthly problems.

They don't necessarily address underlying issues. Is literacy really the biggest thing that's broken? A lot of times we address the wrong thing.

We diagnose it and then we address it in the wrong way because we're not actually getting to the underlying issue. I was reminded of a book I read years ago.

[7:53] It was on economic development and Christians, how we can help people that are in the in the straits of poverty. How do you help poor people? Well, when they did research for this book, it was really fascinating.

They're trying to find solutions to a problem, right? Well, this guy, Brian Fickert, he's a Christian economist. He made a striking discovery. And the quote is on your paper.

As he interviewed poor people to draw out their ideas about what is their situation? What is your problem? According to your perspective, this is what he found. Poor people tend to describe their condition in more psychological and social terms.

More like relational terms rather than material stuff. That is, most of us in this room probably would see poverty as lack of food, lack of money, lack of medicine, lack of housing.

But the poor themselves, they talk about their poverty in terms of shame, inferiority, fear, hopelessness, isolation, voicelessness.

[9:00] Isn't that fascinating that those are the ways they describe poverty? It's very different than the solutions we throw at it. Fickert argues that poverty is also on your on your text there.

Poverty is the result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable.

It says poverty exists where one or more of the four foundational relationships for each person are broken.

And these are the four, the big four that he has in his mind. Relationships, first and foremost, with God. Relationship with their selves. How do they understand themselves and their role in this world?

Relationship with other people around them. And then the rest of creation. He's saying that ultimately we trace things upstream at its root.

[9:58] The main problem is brokenness in relationships, primarily starting with God himself. Way upstream. So as long as we're leaving him out of the equation and relationships out of the equation, we're actually just kind of moving chairs on a sinking boat.

We're rearranging furniture on the Titanic is what we're doing. This is very important because he's going to get at what claim I'm going to make here in just a second. Pastor Kevin DeYoung comments on how our helping actually often hurts those in poverty.

He wrote this on this book. He said too often church and governments have resorted to throwing money at the poor. But in most situations, money is far from the biggest need.

People need to see that Jesus's death and resurrection changes everything. Everything. It changes everything. They, not just poor people, and we need to understand who God is.

Who we are in light of who God is. How we should relate to others and how we should relate to the world around us. So in other words, what is broken in the world is not merely physical.

[11:10] Upstream from the physical is relational and moral brokenness. Relational and moral brokenness. Starting with the relational brokenness with the God who made us.

It doesn't matter what issue you're seeing. It all traces back upstream to that first and foremost broken relationship with God himself. All of them.

All of them. Just think about Jesus himself. Just do a thought experiment with me. Think about how Jesus is revealed in scripture.

He had, our Lord, he had the ability to heal all diseases. To heal all sicknesses. Like that. He could have done like that.

And yet, when he was on earth, he did not focus his efforts on setting up a hospital or distributing medicine. He could have done that.

[12:14] He had the authority over nature. He could stop storms in their path. Peace be still. He exercised authority in such a way where we could see he could do that.

And yet, famines, storms, earthquakes continued beyond his time on earth. Well, think about this. He possessed perfect knowledge. Perfect wisdom. Perfect. In fact, he's noted as the very wisdom of God. And yet, he did not strive to publish or to promote literacy.

It was not his primary ambition. He possessed all power on heaven and on earth. And yet, he did not overthrow Rome.

Or any other earthly kingdom or institution. Just think about that for a second. This is our Lord and Savior. So instead, that wasn't his priority.

[13:23] Instead, we have to ask, what was his mission? What was he chasing after? What did he come to fix? His mission was to go to the cross as a lamb led to the slaughter.

That was his mission. And guess what? All along the way to the cross. A very unexpected ending to his mission. All along the way, he could be found at tables with people.

It's striking. I encourage you this week to go through and just even look through the gospel of Luke. And look at all the episodes.

In fact, one commentator, he wrote about the gospel of Luke saying that all of Jesus's earthly ministry, all of it, could be thought of in terms of either coming from a meal, eating a meal, or going to a meal.

It's very striking when you start to read it. So the world is definitely broken. This is the point. The world is definitely broken. And what is Jesus doing?

[14:34] He's bringing a ragtag bunch of disciples, a bunch of nobodies with him from meal to meal all the way to the cross. That's Jesus's game plan.

It sounds ludicrous to us. Sounds crazy to us. So what would you say if I told you that the simplest way that you and I can change the world is actually by extending biblical hospitality?

That's a big claim. And I'm going to try to defend it. I'm going to try to help you get where I'm going. But it's very important that you hear that word biblical hospitality because it's more than what might initially come to mind.

So I want to just take a moment to do some word association with hospitality. What comes to your mind when you hear that word, hospitality?

Just give me one word freebies. Throw them out there. What comes to your mind? Good food.

Good food. Yes. What else? Hospitality. What else comes to your mind? Opening your home.

[15:39] Opening your home. Yeah. Anything else? Sharing. Sharing. Yep. What else? Listening. Who said that? Listening.

Sorry. Who said listening? What about the hospitality industry? It's actually a label for an entire industry. What comes to your mind when you think of hospitality industry? Vacation.

Vacation. Yeah. And nice ones, too. You better be nice. I'm going to pay for it. What else? Anything else come to your mind? Service.

Yeah. Service. I think of resorts and skiing. You know? Maybe HGTV comes to your mind. My mom was, like, super obsessed when it first came out and they started producing these shows.

Fancy homes maybe come to your mind. Like, this is the place you do hospitality. It's like a fancy, nice place. Or you think of the resorts or the white gloves come out.

[16:34] And it's just, like, above and beyond. Niceness. I remember we went to a meal one time, Elizabeth and I, for our anniversary. And we're like Kentucky Fried Chicken people. Like, that's nice.

Like, we're going to go and get the buffet of chicken. And we went to this place and they did the whole spiel. Like, a waiter comes out to talk about how the Kobe beef had been massaged from infancy in Japan and bottle fed a certain type of sake.

And then it was massaged each night before the slaughter at just the right age. So the meat was at maximum tenderness. It was like all this stuff about how wonderful this steak experience is we're about to have.

And so I think I ended up getting the chicken anyways. So you had fried chicken. You massage the chickens. But I almost was about to laugh.

I was trying to restrain myself because I could see this guy was actually very serious about the presentation. And they bring out this damp, hot towel and put it across our laps. And I'm like, I haven't had this happen since mom.

[17:36] You know, I was like two or three years old. So maybe those are the types of things that come to your mind, you know, like a really posh, nice, above and beyond service.

But isn't it interesting? You stare at that word hospitality that embedded in the word hospitality is the word. Hospital.

Hospital. That's pretty striking. You know what? What comes to your mind when you think of hospital? Let's do a little word association with that. Hospital. What comes to your mind?

Kobe beef and white gloves. Maybe some white gloves. Rubber gloves. What else? Sickness.

Sickness. Yeah. What else? Injury.

Injury. Care. Care. Yeah. Recovery. Recovery. Yep. Anything else? Saving people.

[18:34] Yeah. Rescue. How many of you have been to the ER? Raise your hand in here. You've been to an ER at some point in your life. Yeah. That's a big deal. Especially in those moments of crisis.

You're so thankful to get somewhere they can at least try to figure you out. And this is like, I don't know if you guys messed with WebMDV. Is that what it's called? WebMD. That was like the worst thing ever invented for a hypochondriac.

You know? It could be a headache or it could be cancer. I don't know. It's one of these two. You know? But you see what I'm pointing at. You got this very vastly different idea that we associate with the word hospital.

And yet, there is a connection between these two words originally. In fact, if you look at the origin, the etymology of this word, the relationship between hospital and hospitality actually runs really deep.

Both share the exact same Latin root, hospital. Or hospitale. How do you say it? You look like you're about to speak Latin to me. So, I just wanted to hear it.

[19:42] I wanted to hear how you really are supposed to say it. I have no idea. Okay. So, it originally referred to a guest house or a place of shelter for strangers and travelers. And you can see this even in like older books.

If you think about Les Misérables as an example of this. Jean Valjean is put up by a priest of some sort in his home. And if you've ever seen the movie, he clocks him over the head, tries to steal his candlesticks, clocks him over the head.

And it's in the context of a home that all that's taking place. He's extending care for a stranger who's traveling and passing through. So, it originally referred to kind of this guest house idea or a place of shelter for strangers and travelers.

But over the centuries, their meanings evolved into two distinct but overlapping concepts. Hospital and hospitality. But they bring out kind of different values, don't they?

When you think about it. So, the hospital started to focus more on this idea of meeting medical or physical needs for the injured or sick.

[20:48] So, that's kind of what we tend to associate there. Whereas, hospitality, it kept its focus on welcoming, on entertaining, on providing a warm, generous, comfortable environment for guests.

So, you see these two different entities that started to develop and diverge. Here's what I want to drive at. Biblical hospitality actually puts hospital back into hospitality.

This is going to be vital for what we talk about in the coming sessions. Biblical hospitality puts hospital back into hospitality. Biblical hospitality. Now, I have a text on your paper, Mark 2.

And it's worth us considering for just a moment. Jesus himself draws our attention to this. He's at a table, right? In this episode. And as Jesus reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and the disciples.

For there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?

[22:09] And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, Listen to what he says. Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Very fascinating. You have in here the language of both hospital and hospitality.

Both of those things that came to our minds are embedded in this one text. So let me ask you a few of these questions and let's brainstorm on this together.

Why is there tension in this moment? What's the tension here? Who is Jesus eating with? Who? Unrighteous. Yeah. Tax collectors and sinners. Bad people. Not the good people. Bad ones. Not the churchy people.

[23:19] The bad people. And here he is just lounging with them. Are you kidding me? You can't do that, Jesus. What kind of company are you expected to keep?

Who are you supposed to eat with? People who are like you. Good people. Righteous people. Right? But who does Jesus say he came for?

The who? Yeah. And notice the language that he connects with that. It's not just those that are like physically disabled or physically poor.

He connects the sickness with what? Sin. Huh? Sin. Sin. Those who are sinners.

Those who know they need to get to the ER. Those who know they need help. Those who know that they are messed up. That they are broken. That they are unrighteous.

[24:23] And here's the big problem for Jesus. Here's his big issue. This is the thing that he came to fix. This was his mission.

And here he is sitting around a table with this ragtag bunch of disciples with all of these sinners. And he's talking to the Pharisees to help them understand.

He's demonstrating not just the Pharisees, demonstrating to everybody. The sinners, the self-righteous, the unrighteous, all at the same time. So let me ask you this question.

What does the role of table fellowship play in what Jesus is doing here? Sitting around the table.

What does sitting around the table do for forwarding this mission? What's that? Acceptance. Yeah. It's a very visible demonstration of what Jesus' mission is all about.

[25:21] Very visible, physical, proximate, geographically bound display of Jesus' mission.

What else? What else does this accomplish here? Very relational. Very relational. You think about if the issue really is relational brokenness in all of these different ways.

First and foremost, vertically with God. But also with how we understand who we are. How we understand how we relate to those around us. And how we interrelate with the world. It would make sense that Jesus' emphasis would be to cultivate context of relational restoration.

Isn't that amazing? That's what's going on here. Jesus is going from party to party, table to table, to teach us something very important about what he came to do and who he came for.

Biblical hospitality puts hospital back in to hospitality. So you can see that biblical hospitality is leveraging the good that we see in both the worlds of hospitality and of hospital.

[26 : 37] If you think about the good of hospitality, you mentioned some of these things. What are the good things of hospitality that we think of? What are the good things about it? Of course, there's the commercialism and all that stuff.

What's the good stuff? Conversation. Yeah, absolutely. Building relationships. Relationships.

Building relationships. Building trust. Yeah, what else?

Storytelling. Wow. Just think of how that fortifies relationships when you tell a story from your own life. It could be funny stories. It could be meaningful, deep stories.

It could be stories of redemption. It could be stories of trouble and need for help. These all are invitations to one another for trust to be forged. Absolutely. What else?

What else? Food. Food. It is a good gift from God. It is to be received with thanksgiving. You're actually able to demonstrate the goodness of our God by receiving it rightly.

[27 : 38] By receiving drink rightly. By receiving these relationships rightly. You're actually demonstrating what it looks like to be more profoundly human in the way God designed us.

Isn't that amazing? What about the good of the hospital? What are some of the things we associate with hospital that are introduced in this? What are the good things? Right diagnosis?

Yeah, right diagnosis. You're looking at the right thing. Yes. Healing. Who said? Healing.

Absolutely. There's real healing going on.

Absolutely. Comfort. Comfort. Yeah. I can't tell you how many times I've been to the doctor. Got a good nurse or a good doctor that has good bedside manner. It's like, yes.

Thank you, Lord. Someone that's like, not only knows what they're talking about, they're actually kind of compassionate. I love when I get a compassionate person because I get my man cold or whatever. I'm like, Elizabeth doesn't want to listen to me anymore.

[28 : 35] You know, so here comes the doctor. Thank you. Someone's finally taking my misery seriously. You know? Give me some medicine I can work with here. No, I'm just kidding.

Elizabeth's very kind. But yeah, you want someone compassionate. That definitely comes through. It's one of the reasons so many people want to get into medicine. It's because they love to extend compassion to people that really need help.

And this is a very practical way to do that. I think about, even in a hospital setting, you're in an ER. I mean, there's a mission going on.

They try to figure out as quickly as they can, what is the problem? And can we fix it? And they throw all their resources. They all work together and just run at it. Give me what I need. I need a scalpel. And they do the thing. You know, whatever they do there. They're like urgently, quickly rushing to the compassionate aid of someone who's dying on the table.

[29 : 35] Just think about the imagery that comes along with rescue. Help. Sometimes it's hard help. Some of these surgeries are gnarly.

But it takes place in proximity. It takes place in closeness where we can get messy with one another. So these are some of the images that come from both the hospitality world and the hospital world.

We need both. We need both. We need both. The biblical hospitality I have in mind and the Bible has in mind. It requires serving. It requires communication.

It requires generosity. It requires proximity. It requires proximity. Jesus is healing what has been broken. And the primary problem in the world is ultimately moral and relational.

And because of our sin, because of our sin, we've been cut off relationally from God. And that has warped our relationship with ourselves and with others.

[30 : 32] Think about the night before going to the cross, what Jesus prayed in John 17. He says, and this is eternal life.

You want to know what restoration looks like in its fullness? You want to know what it's all headed toward? You want his mission was trying to correct and hold up as the end goal?

This is eternal life. That they know you. Let's talk it to his father. That they know you. And Jesus Christ, whom you've sent.

Oh, we scramble so hard and so fast in so many different directions. And there's good to be done. But the ultimate good, the ultimate good that can be done is to say, do you want to know what eternal life is?

Do you want to know what real, abundant life is? It's not in more things. It's not in circumstances just getting just right. That's never going to happen in this world.

[31 : 37] You want to know what real, true, eternal life is? To know the God who made us. To know him. To know him through Jesus Christ.

It's found in knowing God through Jesus Christ. The knowing part is not just informative. It's intimacy.

It's relational. At its deepest level. So the first relationship with God was broken at the beginning of time. Jesus came to reconcile this relationship.

If you want a definition for reconciliation, this is what it's headed toward. If this is what biblical hospitality is aimed at, creating a context for it. Reconciliation means the restoration of broken relationship.

Bringing hostile or alienated parties back into peace and into harmony. The Bible emphasizes that because of human sin, people are alienated from God and live as his enemies.

[32 : 40] Sinners, the unrighteous. Reconciliation is entirely initiated by God. And he chose to chase us down with his grace and to remove the barrier of sin through the substitution of Jesus Christ's perfect sacrifice on the cross.

That's why his eyes were set like flint towards the cross. That's why he didn't stop to make a publishing house and a hospital. That's why he kept going.

And that's why he was high and lifted up on a cross so that we could undo the worst thing that has ever happened.

Brokenness in relationship with the living God. One author described Jesus's fellowship around the table in terms of contagious holiness.

Think in terms of sickness, right? Talking about hospitals. Jesus's interaction with people around the table. And he's sitting there with sinners.

[33 : 51] Those who are unrighteous. He's not sitting there freaking out about catching their unrighteousness. He's not thinking, oh, they're going to they're going to taint me somehow.

They're going to mess me up somehow. They're going to ruin me somehow. Instead, what we see is the opposite flow. Jesus has a contagious holiness.

A purification that flows from him into the relationships around him. He demonstrates what it looks like to be in right relationship with food, with beverage, with people around him, with the God that made him in submission to his will.

What if we lived like that? With a contagious holiness, with the spirit that dwells inside of us. Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

Who in here hasn't been on the receiving end of his contagious holiness? Every one of us. Every one of us.

[34 : 55] I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. If you've never responded to this good news, I want to invite you right now. I know this is hospitality class, but I want to lay it out there.

Jesus came to make you right with God, and you can have that even today. Call out to him. Sit with him. Dine with him. Enter into relationship with him.

Receive his grace and his forgiveness. Biblical hospitality. It is threaded. Not just in the Gospel of Luke, but throughout the entire story of God's reconciling plan.

If this is what his mission is all about from beginning to end, from the time it was broken to the time it's fully restored. If that's what the Bible is ultimately about, it would make sense that we would see biblical hospitality threaded throughout the whole thing.

Think about this. In Genesis 3, way at the very beginning of our Bibles, we were estranged from God as his enemies over a meal of rebellion.

[36 : 07] A meal of severance and rebellion disconnected relationally with the God who made us. Think about that. Genesis 3. Genesis 3. A meal of rebellion.

But by the end of time, if you flip all the way almost to the other cover, right before maps, you get to Revelation 19 where you have a people united with God as his family over a meal of celebration. The marriage supper of the Lamb. Isn't that just amazing to think about? So I hope you'll join me on this journey starting next week.

We're going to look through just a survey of this blossoming of the storyline of biblical hospitality and Christ's mission to reconcile the world to the God who made us.

And the implications for us as ordinary church people are profound. And I hope that you'll join us. So in our next class together, what we're going to do, we're going to look at snapshots of hospitality. [37 : 15] As they unfold in the Bible. And then the last session together, we're going to seek to apply the principles to our own practice of biblical hospitality with those that are in the church.

Believers and unbelievers both. Oh, it does so much good. This vision, biblical hospitality, could produce so much good in our own hearts and in our church.

The unity, the flourishing of our church, but also to reconcile other people who don't know him yet. To bring them into the family. So that they can experience the marriage supper of the Lamb with us. With us. Won't that be a beautiful day that won't ever end. So let's pray together. Oh, Lord, we so look forward to that day and rest in this day knowing that you chased down the unrighteous to sit down and feast with us.

Thank you that you counted us among those that you wanted to bring into your family by your grace. And so, Lord, we enjoy good food together.

[38 : 27] We feast on your word together. We ask that you stir us up to love and to good works. And especially this good work that we're stepping into a biblical hospitality.

Pray you give us a vision for this and energy by your grace to practice this. So that we can see what's broken in the world restored.

We entrust these things to you now. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.