
Strangers Among Us (Entertaining Angels)

The Power of God's Love

Pastor Wil Nichols

February 8, 2026

Victorious Praise Fellowship Church of God in Christ

2116 Page Rd. Durham NC 27703

WEBSITE: www.VictoriousPraise.org

EMAIL: PastorWil@VictoriousPraise.org, Info@VictoriousPraise.org

PHONE: (919) 957-7500

Sermon: The Power of God's Love: Strangers Among Us (Entertaining Angels)

Lesson Text

Hebrews 13:1–3 (KJV)¹ Let brotherly love continue. ² Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. ³ Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

Matthew 25:34–40 (KJV)³⁴ Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? ³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? ³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

Introduction

When God gave me the theme for 2026, “The Power of God’s Love,” I never knew it would be so pertinent to where we would find our society today.

- A society depicted by Matthew 24: ¹⁰ And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. ¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. ¹² And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.
- But Jesus gives us the answer in John 13: ³⁴ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. ³⁵ By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Last week I began a 3-part series of teachings on how this love should guide us in how we deal with three groups of people – our neighbors, our strangers, and our enemies.

In our first message on neighbors, we answered the question of “Who is my neighbor?” We learned that love for our neighbor is based on compassion not proximity, actions not good intentions, and obedience not sacrifice.

Today we will look at our strangers – people are not like us from foreign places and countries.

Whereas the Neighbor is the person that **God sends you to**, the Stranger is the person that **God sends to you**.

So how does God feel about the stranger:

- Exodus 22:21 (NLT)²¹ “You must not mistreat or oppress foreigners in any way. Remember, you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt.

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- Deuteronomy 10:18 (NLT)¹⁸ ... He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing.

Throughout scripture, the people of God have been strangers, foreigners, or aliens in foreign lands. From Abraham in Genesis 12 (Get thee out of your country), to Jesus in Matthew 2 (Where the stranger told his father Joseph to flee into Egypt because the King wanted to kill him).

Xenophobia is defined as fear, dislike, or prejudice against people from other places. Which has happened not only to the world without, but to the church within.

But what God requires of us is Philoxenia, which is love for the stranger or foreigner.

Hebrews 13: ² Be not forgetful to entertain strangers (Be hospitable): for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

We must have love for our strangers because they may have been sent to us with divine connection, divine purpose, and divine destiny.

Series and Sermon: The Power of God's Love: Strangers Among Us (Entertaining Angels)

(Love That Continues, Love That Is Hospitable, and Love That Remembers)

I. Love That Continues To The Stranger (Divine Connection)

Hebrews 13: ¹ Let brotherly love continue.

The Love of God always Continues to the Stranger.

To continue means to extend, persist, and be indiscriminate. Simply put, our love should extend beyond the familiar, be persistent regardless of who the person is, and must not discriminate against the unknown.

This is the Love that Jesus wanted us to be known by, but unfortunately too many of us are known by the opposite. That is, a love that fades away, is inconsistent, selective, and even nonexistent.

Why? Because our love does not continue. It stops at the boundary of friendship and familiarity.

Friends are those we are familiar with, people that are known to us, people that we click with. And we need friends.

- John 15: ¹² This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. ¹⁵ Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.
- Proverbs 18: ²⁴ A man *that hath* friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend *that* sticketh closer than a brother.

- Luke 16: ⁹ **And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.**

But we must never conflate our friendship with God's love; they are not the same. Friendship is based on familiarity, and must be developed, nurtured, and matured. And by definition, it is selective, inconsistent, and can fade away. But God's love continues.

God's love continues past Friends (Familiar Connection) to Strangers (Divine Connection)

Hebrews 13: ¹ Let brotherly love continue.

If our love ends at the border of familiarity and friendship, then it's not the love of God.

God's Love does not fade, it is practiced. God's love is not inconsistent, it persists. And God's love is not selected, it extends even to the stranger.

II. Love That Is Hospitable To The Stranger (Divine Purpose)

Hebrews 13: ² Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

The Love of God is always Hospitable to the Stranger.

Hospitality is defined as friendly and welcoming to strangers or guests. Biblical or Godly Hospitality is called philoxenia which is love for a stranger. Which is the opposite of xenophobia, which is fear of, dislike of, or discrimination against the stranger.

So why are so many of us xenophobic against strangers, as opposed to having philoxenia or love for the stranger? False prophets!

Matthew 24: ¹⁰ **And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.** ¹¹ **And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.** ¹² **And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.**

What false prophets cause us to turn on each other instead of to each other. You see, in times of trouble we should **turn to each other**, but false prophets and demagogues deceive us into thinking the stranger is the reason for our problems, and we **turn on each other**.

God's love is hospitable to the stranger because the stranger may be your salvation (Divine Purpose)

Hebrews 13: ² Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

We may not know the stranger, but God may have sent them to us with divine purpose. The stranger may be the answer to your prayers, the deliverance for your captivity, the blessings for the struggle, the salvation for your damnation and condemnation.

Abraham was a stranger, but he brought blessings: Genesis 12: ³ **And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.**

Moses was a stranger, but brought deliverance: Exodus 14: ¹³ And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever.

Jesus was a stranger, but through him came the salvation of the world: Matthew 1: ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

III. Love That Remembers The Stranger (Divine Destiny)

Hebrews 13: ³ Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; *and* them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

- The Love of God always Continues to the Stranger.
- The Love of God is always Hospitable to the Stranger.
- Finally, The Love of God always Remembers the Stranger

To remember means to personally carry the burden, suffering, and struggle of others.

When a stranger is sent to us, it is because they are sent from a place of pain and suffering. And when you have the love of God, you take on the pain, you put yourself in their shoes.

Weep with the Stranger: Romans 12: ¹⁵ Rejoice with them that do rejoice, *and weep with them that weep.*

Suffer with the Stranger: Romans 8: ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Be Afflicted with the Stranger: Psalm 34: ¹⁹ Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.

Be rewarded with the Stranger: Revelation 22: ¹² *And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.*

Matthew 25: ³⁴ *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵ For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶ Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. ³⁷ Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? ³⁸ When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? ³⁹ Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? ⁴⁰ And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.*

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Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Strangers Among Us (Entertaining Angels))

Lesson Text

- Hebrews 13:1–3, Matthew 25:34–40

Sermon Outline

- I. *Love That Continues To The Stranger (Divine Connection)***
- II. *Love That Is Hospitable To The Stranger (Divine Purpose)***
- III. *Love That Remembers The Stranger (Divine Destiny)***

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting to Know “Me”

1. You have to sing karaoke, what song do you pick?
2. What’s something you are looking forward to and why?

II. Into The Bible

1. In Genesis 18, Abraham welcomes three unknown men and offers hospitality without hesitation and learns that one of them is the Lord. In Genesis 19, Lot also receives two strangers, protects them and shows hospitality, later discovering they are angels sent by God. In both accounts, God’s presence and purpose are revealed through how strangers are received.
 - a. How does Abraham’s immediate response to these three men in Genesis 18 demonstrate what Hebrews 13:2 means by “entertaining strangers”? What details in the text show that Abraham acted without maybe knowing who they truly were initially?
 - b. How does Lot’s treatment of the men in Genesis 19 compare with Abraham’s hospitality and how do both accounts help explain Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:40 about receiving Him through “the least of these”?

II. Life Application

1. How does the statement in Hebrews 13:2 concerning “entertaining angels without knowing it” influence how you interact with people you don’t know?
2. What practical, tangible steps can you take this week to feed, clothe, or visit someone in need?