

Why Is Welcoming So Powerful?

Sermon Notes for July 2 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 13 & Matthew 10:40-42



**Whoever welcomes you welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me.
(Matt 10:40)**

Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- Welcome is a powerful theme in the Bible – God welcomes, so those welcomed can in turn welcome others – the Greek word here is *dechomai* – it implies being received with respect, being accepted in love - there are no restrictions on that welcome – strangers, foreigners, tax collectors, robbers being crucified, the poor, the outcast, the oppressed – the list goes on to encompass the whole of humanity, all the families of the earth
- God welcomes them home – another powerful image - home into the Commonwealth of God – that’s how the great 20th century theologian Karl Barth talked about the Kingdom or Reign of God – the community of all of God’s beloved human beings living in the reconciliation that God gifted us in Jesus Christ – as the words in the second verse of ‘O Canada’ in our hymn book say, “...be ours a nation evermore that no oppression blights, where justice reigns from shore to shore, from lakes to northern lights.”
- What makes this vitalizing act of welcoming so powerful is the depths it reaches in energizing our living as beloved friends of God – hospitality of this kind, rooted in the bounty of God’s merciful love, satisfies our deepest desires as human beings – the desires for safety, acceptance, and potentiality – SAP is my acronym for these core needs – if they are not met in relationship with Jesus Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures, then we desperately rush around looking for this kind of love in all the wrong places – I’ll leave it to you this morning to remember, then release, the specifics of that rushing around in your lives – but let’s take a brief look at what makes God’s welcoming so powerful for God’s beloved human friends:
 - **Safety** – found in the security of God’s love alone – casts out fear – encourages our contributions in this world
 - **Acceptance** – found in God’s purpose for creating us – to be stewards of all creation as we respond in gratitude for God’s gifts of justice, peace, and joy
 - **Potentiality** – the power to bless – to use our gifts to nourish flourishing for all

At this point in our ponderings, then

When Cindy Johal, in her Masters project, asked people in this congregation what solidified their participation at Brentwood, to a person they said, “The welcome” – by the grace of Jesus Christ, that attitude and behavior is in the DNA of this congregation – continuing to nourish it will help us flourish in our mission of sowing the seeds of God’s SHALOM in all our circles of influence where we show up accepting, appreciating, and assisting the potential of people to grow into their God-given authenticity as contributors to God’s Commonwealth

Notes for a sermon preached by Brian Fraser,
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