

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (Heb. 13:2)

Hospitality is not only a sacred duty (Be not forgetful to entertain strangers); it carries within it the promise of glorious surprises (for thereby some have entertained angels unawares).

It had started out as just another ordinary day for Abraham. Suddenly three men appeared before him as he sat by the door of his tent. The patriarch reacted in the typical middle-eastern manner—he washed their feet, arranged a cool resting place for them under a tree, went out to the herd for a calf, asked Sarah to bake some bread, then served them a sumptuous meal.

Who were these men anyway? Two of them were angels; the third was the angel of the Lord. We believe that the angel of the Lord was the Lord Jesus appearing as a Man (see Genesis 18:13 where the angel is called “the Lord”).

So Abraham entertained not only angels, he entertained the Lord Himself in one of His many preincarnate appearances. And we may have the same privilege, startling as it may seem!

How many Christian families can testify to the blessing received from entertaining godly men and women in their homes. Impressions for God have been made on children that followed them all through their lives. Zeal for the Lord has been rekindled, sorrowing hearts have been comforted, problems have been resolved. How much we owe to these “angels” whose very presence was a benediction in the home!

But it is also our incomparable privilege to have the Lord Jesus as a guest. Whenever we receive one of His people in His Name, it is the same as if we received Him (Mt. 10:40). If we really believe this, we will spend and be spent in the wonderful ministry of hospitality as never before. We will “use hospitality one to another without grudging” (1 Pet. 4:9). We will treat every guest the same as we would treat Christ Himself. And our homes will be like the home of Mary and Martha in Bethany—where Jesus loved to be.

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