

Heartbeat



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Welcoming as the First Step to Community

By Pastor Scott Roberts

Welcoming is an important first step in developing a community. Unless people feel like they have been greeted with a warm and endearing greeting, it is unlikely they will stick around and seek to find a real community. We all know this from our own experience. Have you ever walked into a space and the people at the door had big smiles, a warm handshake, and words that put you at ease? They introduced you to some others. They asked you some questions about yourself or your family and they expressed a genuine desire to get to know you. That type of welcome made you want to come back and get to know more of the people in that community, didn't it?



But conversely, have you entered a space filled with people, but no one came to speak with you? There were people all around and they didn't seem to care that you were there? Or maybe someone met you at the door, but they didn't say anything more than hello

and they didn't help you to feel welcomed or desired. They just moved you on so they could say hi to someone else. I have had that experience way too many times in life. Even as an introvert, an unwelcoming environment doesn't leave me wanting more of that kind of community.

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Welcoming as the First Step to Community

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A hearty welcome and a genuine concern for others is the first step in developing a real community. But it is not the sum total. True community is so much more than merely welcoming people. Welcoming leads to incorporation and hospitality which leads to community. But without a welcoming posture, a true community will never become contagious and inviting to others. Without a welcoming posture, a community may exist for those on the inside, but it will never expand to those outside. Without a welcoming heart, a group is doomed to extinction.

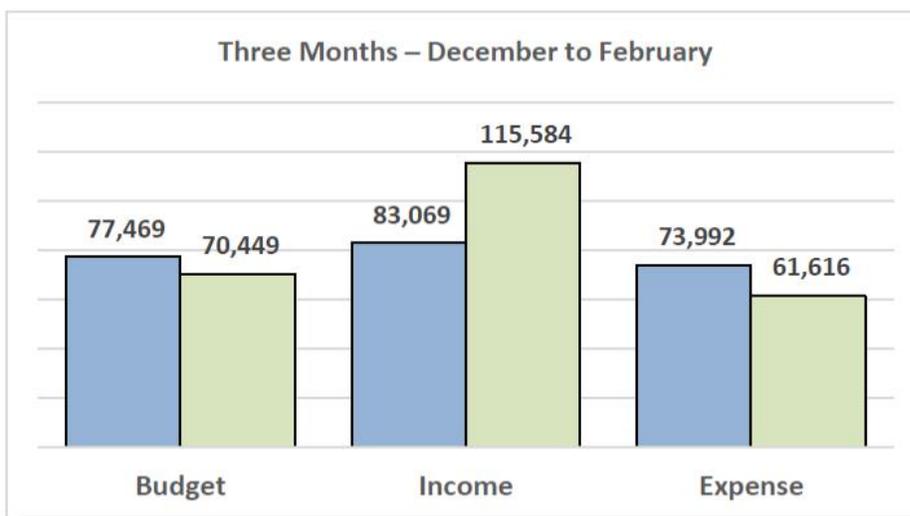
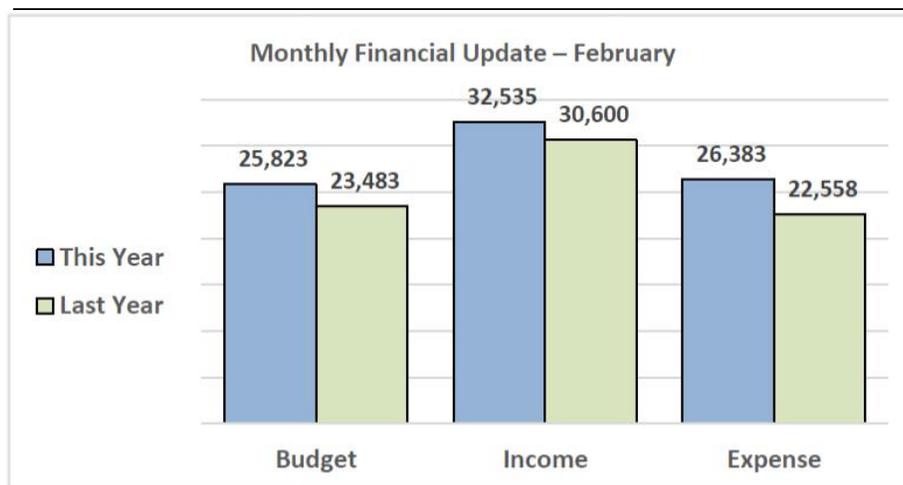
Where do we see welcoming at work in the Scripture? We see Barnabas' welcoming of Saul and his introduction of Saul to the church in Jerusalem. Notice what the Bible says,

“And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him...But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord... and how at Damascus he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus. So he went in and out among them...” (Acts 9:26-28).

Without the welcome of Barnabas, his introductions, and his learning about Saul, it is doubtful if the Jerusalem Christians would have ever been blessed to have this apostle among their fold. But because one man welcomed him, introduced him, and incorporated him into his life, the story of the Church was changed.

So how can we practically welcome people at HCC? Many of the keys to welcoming have already been relayed in the above narrative. Let us put on smiles at the doors. Let us jovially and heartily greet those who enter. Let us ask them questions about themselves. And when someone new enters our space, don't just pass them through the doors, make sure to introduce them to someone else. Make sure that you seek them out before and after service and find a way to help them join your circle of friends. Invite them to Sunday school, to coffee, to your small group. Remember, it takes great courage to visit a new place, but we can make it easier for people to join in worshipping with us, as we will welcome them well. Our welcome is their first taste of what true community can be like.



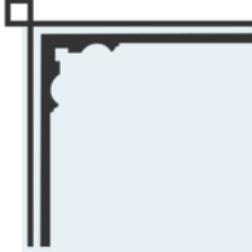


RESOURCE FROM FAITH FORMATION MINISTRIES: “Faith Practices” is an entry-level introduction to some of the practical spiritual disciplines Christians throughout the centuries have used to draw closer to God. This booklet is a great starting place for individuals or small groups who would like to become more aware of and sensitive to God’s voice in their everyday lives. Included are resources (such as lectio divina passages, journaling prompts, and creative action ideas) for exploring 12 faith practices. Visit crcna.org/faitformation to learn more.

SHARE GOD’S HOPE WITH PEOPLE OF UKRAINE: Millions are displaced within Ukraine and over 1.5 million people have fled to neighboring countries as refugees. The growing need is heartbreaking, but you can share hope with people impacted by this crisis. World Renew is responding by supporting fellow members in Integral Alliance as they work with on-ground partners in the region. Your gift, through World Renew, will give temporary shelter, emergency non-food items, such as blankets and hygiene items, and much-needed health support to people left vulnerable by this conflict. To donate go online to worldrenew.net/ukraine-response

HCC February Giving

Community News



GOODNESS
IN THE
FACE OF EVIL

Part I

By
Pastor Ethan
Rogers

There are many difficult passages in Scripture; difficult to study, difficult to understand, difficult to explain, difficult to accomplish. Yet, among all the difficult acts set before us by our Lord and Saviour, I doubt many should tower above us quite so menacingly as does the command, “Do not repay evil for evil.”

Christians are not the sort of people to openly disagree with a command such as this. **For one**, it comes directly from the Lord Christ (Matt 5:39), and is here echoed by Paul in Romans 12, and elsewhere echoed by Peter,

***Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling,
but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called,
that you may obtain a blessing.***

(1 Peter 3:9 ESV)

Christians are not free to contradict these three authorities. **For another**, it is precisely the sort of thing Christians know they ought to do, not only because it is in Scripture, but because the urging of the Spirit in them tells them as much. However, though the Christian is not likely to openly disagree, it is quite apparent that many of us regard ‘Do not repay evil for evil’ with the sincerest contempt, and implement it in the most zealous drudgery. Why is this so? I suspect it is because it is a perfectly sound and good doctrine to follow, until, of course, one must actually put it into practice. Every bone of mankind screams against injustice, rages at the prospect of unfairness (unless it happens to be in their favor), and so desires deeply to repay kind in kind. Injustice, when visited upon a person, is thought by that person to be mended best in vengeance, in retaliation. The absurdity of this action is quite apparent to all of us when we observe it in a brother or sister, but it remains quite persuasive when we ourselves experience it. Forgiveness and forbearance are the easiest virtues to commend to others, and the most difficult to advocate for ourselves.

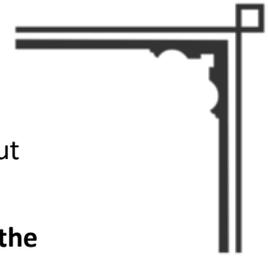
But the question is then begged,

“Why is restraining ourselves against vengeance so difficult?”

I believe there are a few reasons.

The first reason we are inclined toward vengeance is pride, and vanity.

The line of thought may well go as such, ‘Mr. X has done something horrid to me; what will society think if I do not defend my honor? I must prove my strength against him.’ This reasoning supposes my honor before men is best defended by revisiting pain or humiliation upon them; it also values society’s view of the self over the society itself, which is an atrocious fallacy. In the end, this is simply the self lording itself over anything else;



it is only concerned with preserving and glorying in itself, and seeks to put down anything that might impugn that glory. In a word, it is selfishness.

A second, and perhaps the most noble reason is, quite simply, to have the offending party be made aware of the offenses they have committed; the heart cries, “Let us ensure he knows what he has wrought upon us.” or perhaps, “Let us teach him a lesson.”

Yet, these are not the vices that Paul addresses in this text; he does not say, “Do not be proud” or “Do not speak of the wrongs done you.” Rather, he says,

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

For Paul, vengeance is justified only through impatience with or ignorance of God’s justice, and what is worse, presumes a sovereignty not granted to humanity. The Lord Christ promises that He will deliver justice, and He asks that we trust in His judgment rather than our own. We, however, can grow impatient in waiting for the Lord to deliver on His promise; even Asaph, the author of Psalm 73, very nearly blames the Father for the prosperity of the wicked before remembering the justice of the Lord. Yet, if we read this too quickly, we may not be able to see Paul’s aim.

The reassurance Paul grants us (for it is, indeed, a reassurance) is that, though we cannot revisit the ills done us on the miscreants that commit them, God will deal justly with them; their deeds will not go unpunished. Paul, in so doing, comforts us by reminding us that justice will yet be done, but he also reorients us toward God. We are concerned with a relationship on this earthly plane; one between two people. Paul encourages us to consider God and His relationship to those two people, not only to hold us fast, but also to remind us that any wrongdoing is, first and foremost, a crime against God. We are not the only party to take the sin against us personally. The pain often blinds us to this fact. This is the great danger of vengeance: that we should take on an authority not ours, render a judgment we’ve no license to render, and disobey a command from our Lord.

So, over the course of this month, should you be wronged and tempted to repay it, consider the exhortations of Paul and the commands of our Lord; He will deal justly with us all, and it is His role to exact vengeance, not ours. In this, do not be discouraged or fearful, for it is good to desire justice, but we trust it, and ourselves, to Him who knows both it and us best. Next month, we will look at the next few verses, Romans 12:20-21, and see that our responsibility as Christians does not end at not multiplying evil, but by repaying it with good.



Northwest Hispanic Ministry Report for March 2022

By Joe Strong

Stefanny is a 29 yr. old mother of a healthy 1 year old daughter, Hannah. Her husband works at least 12 hours every day. They immigrated to our area last year from Venezuela. Recently during some counseling, she told me that she was depressed. She is alone all day long in her apartment in Lynden, while everybody else in her household is at work. Then of course, she is coming from sunny Venezuela, and we have at times harsh winter weather. I told her that she was very normal. It is easy to get depressed being indoors all day. So, I told her I would try to find a woman from Lynden who would help her with English an hour or two a week. I am still looking for one. She is a very bright and fun person. Pray for this.

As I try to work my way out of a job, I am closely connected with Resonate CRC Ministries in order to educate our churches in leadership. There are about 20 people from Vida Nueva CRC and Amor Viviente CRC that are taking online courses through Revelation University in Miami. Our people are very active and want to see the churches grow. My task at this point is to let others practice preaching, practice leading worship and evangelism. This makes for lively church services. On average our Sunday services last between 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

We continue to have immigrants arrive. One Sunday last month in Lynden, we introduced 7 new adults who had just come from Venezuela. Most immigrants already have family here. It is quite dramatic for the immigrants to make their way through Mexico, past the gangs that are waiting for them on the Mexican side of the border and cross safely into the U.S. It is dangerous. The U.S. government allows all citizen of Venezuela to apply for asylum status. It then takes up to 3 years and a lot of money for lawyers to receive Resident Status.

Apart from the above, I do so many other things. Marriage counseling, premarital counseling, legal wranglings, lead the young people every week, visit families, visit prisoners, work with Department of Corrections for Bridges of Hope, and a lot of Zoom meetings. No wonder I have gray hair.

Thank you for supporting NWHM. Keep praying for this important work.



IF THESE WERE SILENT...



I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.

Luke 19:40

But could the stones cry out? Assuredly they could if He who opens the mouth of the dumb should bid them lift up their voice. Certainly if they were to speak, they would have much to declare in praise of Him who created them by the word of His power; they could extol the wisdom and power of their *Maker* who called them into being. Shall we not speak well of Him who made us new and out of stones raised up children unto Abraham?

The old rocks could tell of chaos and order and the handiwork of God in successive stages of creation's drama; are we not also able to talk of God's decrees, of God's great work in ancient times, in all that He did for His church in the days of old? If the stones were to speak, they could tell of their *breaker*, how he took them from the quarry and made them fit for the temple. And aren't we also able to tell of our glorious Breaker, who broke our hearts with the hammer of His Word, that He might build us into His temple? If the stones should cry out, they would magnify their *builder*, who polished them and fashioned them into a beautiful palace; and shall not we talk of our Architect and Builder, who has put us in our place in the temple of the living God? If the stones could cry out, they might have a long, long story to tell by way of memorial, for many a time a great stone has been rolled as a memorial before the Lord; and we too can testify, stones of help and pillars of remembrance.

The broken stones of the law cry out against us, but Christ Himself, who has rolled away the stone from the door of the tomb, speaks for us. Stones might well cry out, but we will not let them: We will silence their noise as we break into sacred song and bless the majesty of the Most High; we will spend all our days glorifying Him whom Jacob calls the Shepherd and Stone of Israel.

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April 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 9:30 a.m. Worship & Communion 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 6:00-9:00 p.m. Youth Event	4	5 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer 6:30 p.m. Boer Bible Study	6 HCC Day2Pray 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study 11:45 a.m. Elders Meeting	7 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Deacons Meeting	8	9
10 PALM SUNDAY 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 4:30 p.m. Jesus Gathering 7:00 p.m. Kaemingk Bible Study	11 Friendship Bible Study	12 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer	13 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study	14 6:30 a.m. Men's Group 7:00 p.m. Council Meeting	15 GOOD FRIDAY 7 p.m. Service 	16
17 EASTER 9:30 a.m. Worship 	18 GEMS	19 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer 6:30 p.m. Boer Bible Study	20 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study	21 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	22 May Heartbeat Articles Due	23
24 9:30 a.m. Worship 11:00 a.m. Sunday School 7:00 p.m. Kaemingk Bible Study 6:00-9:00 p.m. Youth Event	25 Friendship Bible Study	26 12:15 p.m. Lunchtime Zoom Prayer	27 9:45 a.m. Ladies' Bible Study	28 6:30 a.m. Men's Group	29	30

Happy Birthday !

4 Dan O
6 Roland V
15 Debra R
16 Lauren C
16 Clair A
19 Elisha R



20 Gloria G
22 Jerry H
24 Gina N
25 Mark R
27 Scott R

It is never our intention to leave anyone's name off of the birthday list. Please let us know if that has happened. 8 Thank you!