



BIBLE STUDIES THAT WORK

Pentecost 5 (Proper 8), Year A

June 28, 2026

[RCL] Genesis 22:1-14; Psalm 13; Romans 6:12-23; **Matthew 10:40-42**

Opening Prayer |

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Context |

Today's gospel reading is estimated to have been written around 80 CE, and forms part of what is called the "Mission Discourse" in the Gospel of Matthew. This text concludes an extended conversation on discipleship and mission between Jesus and his disciples. In addition to addressing the trials that will be faced by those who are sent out, the text also takes up the responsibilities of those who host them. The passage encourages us to recognize that when we welcome and show hospitality to others in the name of Jesus, we act as missionaries of his love. We are called to behave with compassion, welcoming all visitors with love, not only through physical acts of service but as an expression of our faith in Christ. Acts of love and kindness should not be reserved for specially-created ventures, or certain guests, but should be woven into our everyday routine behavior as part of our own Christian character.

Theological Reflection |

This week's gospel reading shifts our focus toward compassionate welcome—or hospitality—as a form of service to Christ. This welcome can—and should—be offered to those in need of it at any time. It should not be reserved for heroic moments, special guests, or accompanied by grand fanfare. Christ's encouragement here is simple: Look around and see who needs help or support, and then contribute to their improvement as best you can.

We can see models of this form of welcome—opening our hearts, homes, talents, and resources to those who need them most—in the way Jesus practiced hospitality: when he fed the five thousand or avoided a potentially embarrassing situation at the wedding at Cana by turning water into wine. The most significant example of Jesus’ welcome and hospitality, of course, is the ultimate price he paid for our salvation, when he offered himself, suffering and dying on the cross.

We all have the capacity to be caring, hospitable individuals who can create welcoming spaces for our fellow humans. However, too often, when we are presented with opportunities to show such welcoming acts of goodwill, we fail to rise to the occasion. When we depend solely on ourselves, our efforts in this are likely to fail. To become people who naturally live this way, we must recognize that we need God’s help to be clothed with this fruit of the Spirit. As those who welcome in the name of Christ, we are invited to shun all forms of hate, pride, ego, or feelings of superiority in engaging with those around us. When we welcome each other through God’s grace, in the spirit of God’s love, we hope that others will experience the compassionate hospitality and love of Christ himself through us.

In a world filled with so much division, hostility, prejudice, and exclusion, love is hardly the norm. Practicing compassionate welcome can be challenging. Yet how we engage in even the simplest acts of kindness has the potential to be individually and socially transformative. The news has been full of stories about groups of Christians—clergy and lay—gathering at airports or outside detention facilities to protest unjust detention procedures. The protesters face teargassing and arrest, but this does not dissuade them from raising their voices in defense of those who need it most. How and where would Christ himself show up today in compassionate witness and welcome?

While today’s gospel text promises that acts of welcome will be rewarded, we should not engage in compassionate hospitality with the expectation of receiving a conventional reward in return. As Jesus prepared the disciples for his departure, he reminded them that they were called to continue the good work he had begun, living and serving in the same spirit that he had embodied. Yet, just as his ministry was met with rejection and suffering, so too should they expect that faithfulness to God’s mission will sometimes bring persecution rather than praise. We should not be surprised if our experience is similar. As we offer compassionate love, we act as believers following God, not seeking earthly reward.

Ultimately, offering compassionate hospitality is no simple act of kindness, but rather an embodiment of Christ’s love, manifested through our actions towards one another. Living in a world marked by division and opposition, Christians are called to serve others with humility, courage, and faithfulness, trusting God rather than seeking earthly recognition. As we open our hearts to others, relying on God’s spirit and Christ’s example, we become living witnesses of the transforming power of God’s compassionate love.

Discussion Questions |

- In what practical and simple ways can acts of compassion, hospitality, and kindness become daily expressions of our faith in Christ?
- What are some challenges Christians face in sharing compassionate love and hospitality today? How can we overcome these challenges?
- How can we, as Christians, offer genuine love, care, and welcoming hospitality without the expectation of honor or reward? What biblical sources inspire you to follow this call?

Faith in Action |

This week, identify someone—or some situation—in need, to whom you can show compassionate hospitality and welcoming care, as an expression of God’s love. Reflect on how you might make such acts of kindness part of your daily Christian life.

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