

National Diaconate Summit IV, 2022
Dr. Deryck Barson
Friday, June 3rd
Ministry to the Stranger

A theological consideration, and four practical topics:

1. First, seeking opportunities for the gospel with those who are seeking assistance from us
2. Second, appropriate policies for interacting with those outside of the church seeking help.
3. Third, community resources
4. And fourth, how do we resist becoming cynical in our ministry to the stranger

1. A theological consideration: ministry to the stranger

1.1 Jesus and the Stranger

What is our thesis?

We treat the stranger as a neighbor, while we pray that they become part of the family of God through the gospel of Christ.

Welcome → Neighbor → Family

1.2 Welcome

“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Hebrews 13:2

1.3 Neighbor

If you treat a stranger as a stranger rather than as a neighbor, you automatically keep them at a distance from yourselves.

Who is our neighbor?

2. Four practical areas

2.1 Seeking opportunities for the gospel through acts of mercy

2.2 Appropriate policies for those seeking aid from outside the church

Resources and points for policy and procedures:

1. Have a policy
2. Don't let it collect dust
3. Don't give out money

4. Again, no cash
5. Don't give to someone under the influence
6. If someone becomes belligerent, remove yourself, find safety, call for help
7. Almost no request is so urgent it cannot wait for a call or email
8. Have an updated list of community resources
 - a. Medical
 - b. Counseling
 - c. Physical
9. Communication with the outreach committee of your church
10. Set expenditure limitations
 - a. Walk in cases
 - i. Needs an appointment
 - ii. Two deacons for contacts with non-members
 - iii. Needs are to be classified
 1. Need assessment
 2. Resource assessment
 - iv. Disperse up to \$50/\$100 in food or gas coupons
 - v. Requirements for additional or continuing assistance
 - b. Phone-in cases
 - c. Repeat cases

2.3 Utilizing community resources

2.4 Resisting cynicism in ministry to the stranger

How do we do this?

1. Meditate upon Christ and His love for you
2. Feed your soul
3. Set limits in ministry
4. Cultivate practices for rest and refresh
5. Be humble
6. Remember the only antidote to sin is the gospel
7. Confess your sin and need for absolute dependence upon God
8. When sinned again, you need healing
9. Remember, it is God who builds the church

Scriptural References

Genesis 42:7	Matthew 22:37
Matthew 25:31-46	1 Peter 3:9
Ephesians 2:12	Genesis 17:5
Ephesians 2:19b	Romans 13:8,10
Hebrews 11:13	Romans 12:16
Ephesians 2:14	Mark 6:34
Romans 8:15, 17a	Acts 6
Luke 10:27, 36	Isaiah 38:15b
Romans 13:10	Hebrews 3:12; 12:15
1 Corinthians 13	Probers 4:23

Matthew 25:31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. 32 Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, 36 I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ 37 Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? 38 And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you (ξένος ἡμῶν καὶ συνηγάγετέ με), or naked and clothe you? 39 And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ 40 And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

41 “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 42 For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ 44 Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ 45 Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ 46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.” Mt. 25:31-46

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Theological Overview & Consideration

1. Seeking Opportunities for the Gospel with those who are seeking assistance from us
2. Appropriate policies for interacting with those outside of the church seeking help
3. Community resources
4. Resisting becoming cynical in our ministry to the stranger

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Theological Consideration

Ministry to the Stranger

Stranger, 'strān-jər:

“someone who is unknown and unfamiliar, as in a foreigner, a resident alien, a person we are unacquainted with.”

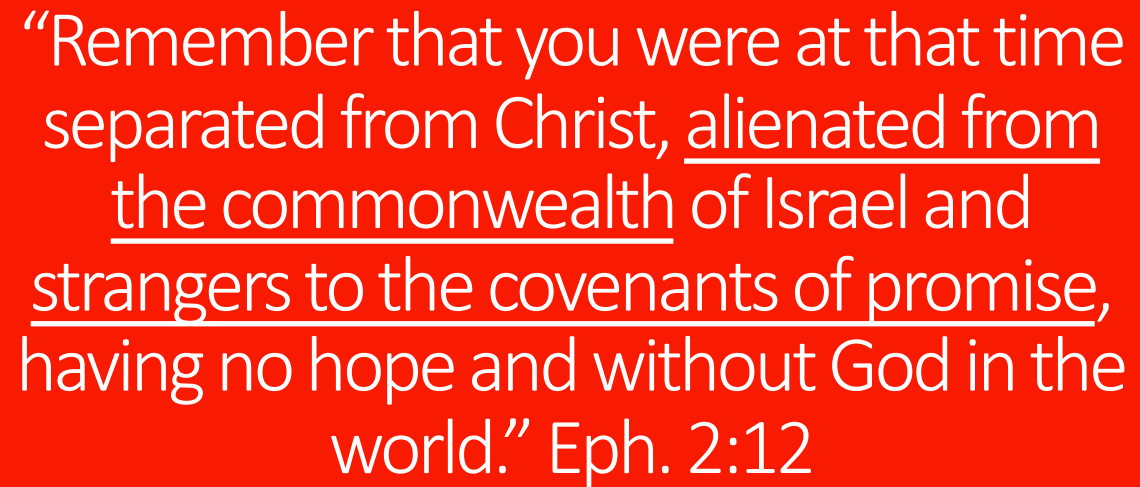
- **Genesis 42:7, “Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he treated them like strangers and spoke roughly to them. ‘Where do you come from?’ he said.”**

Jesus and the Stranger

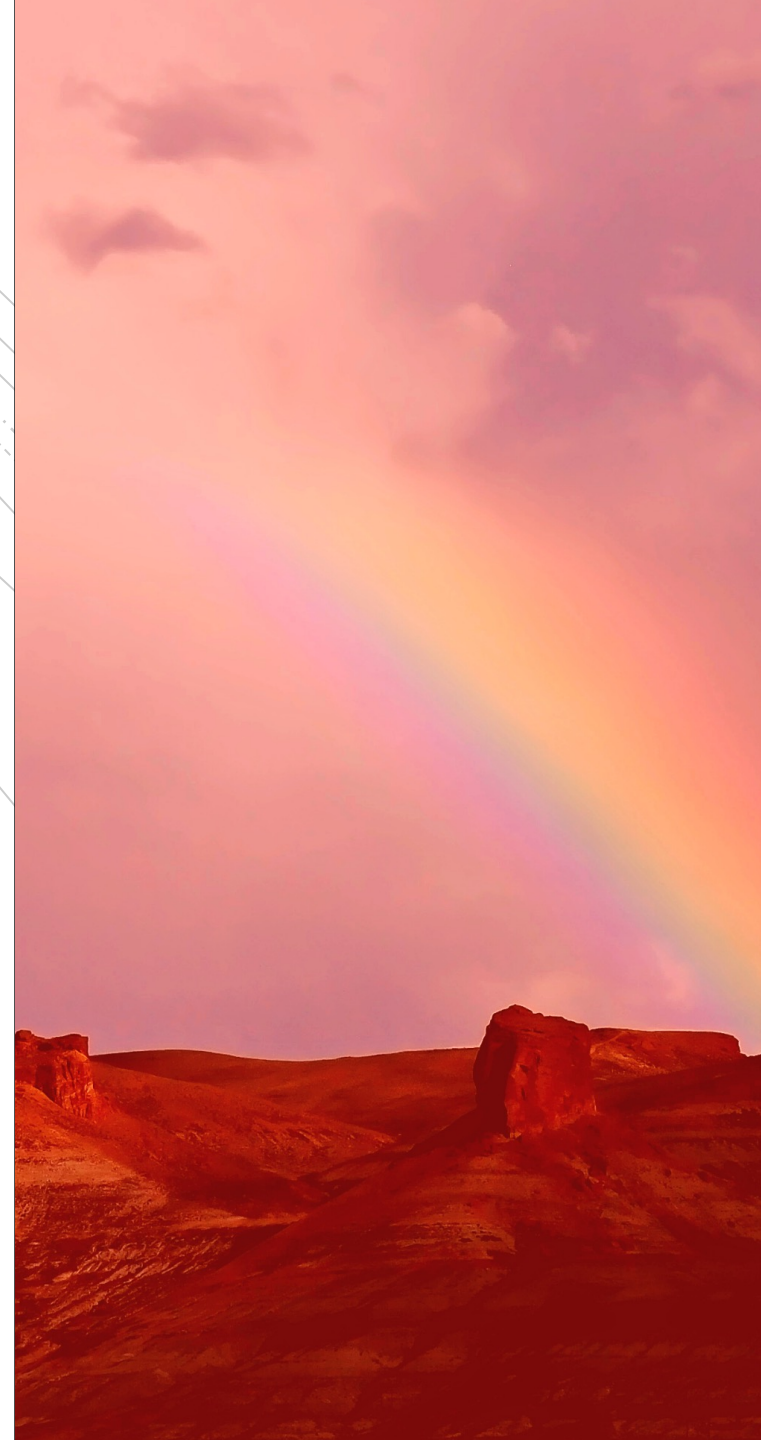
■ Matthew 25:31-46

Passage on back of handout.

- v35. “Jesus said, ‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me.’”
 - In the Greek, the original word translated as *stranger* is the word xenos.
 - Xenophobia: “fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners.”



“Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.” Eph. 2:12



What is our thesis?

We are to treat the stranger as a neighbor, while we pray that they become part of the family of God through the gospel of Christ.

Overseeing the
movement.

Welcome



Neighbor



Family

WELCOME

■ **Hebrews 12:2**


“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

NEIGHBORS

- If you treat a stranger *as a stranger* rather than *as a neighbor*, you automatically keep them at a distance from yourselves.
- Jesus concludes that the Samaritan “proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell among the robbers” (Lk. 10:36).
- Luke 10 provides a twofold characterizing of a neighbor:
 1. “You shall love... your neighbor as yourself.”
 2. Being neighborly to the one in need.

The image features a central red speech bubble with a white outline and a downward-pointing tail. Inside the bubble, the text "Who is our neighbor?" is written in a white, sans-serif font. The background consists of several concentric circles of varying radii, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. The overall color palette is white, red, and light gray.


Who is our
neighbor?

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- Rom. 12:10, “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
 - 1 Cor. 13:4-8, “Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”
 - Matt. 22:37, Loving “your neighbor as yourself” is consequent to loving “the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind”

Paul describes
the mission of
the church...

“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

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Our calling to be a blessing is the other side of “go and make disciples of all nations.”

- *We are to proclaim the good news of Christ and reflect His grace and mercy in our deeds.*

Four practical areas

1. Seeking opportunities for the gospel through acts of mercy.

Seeking opportunities for the gospel through acts of mercy.

- If mercy ministries are divorced from the central mission of the church, which is to make disciples of Jesus Christ, not only will mission creep set in within each of our churches, but we might lose the doctrinal distinctives of the gospel as well:
 - Mission will be pitted against doctrine
 - Mercy against evangelism
 - Acts against works

Seeking
opportunities for
the gospel
through acts of
mercy.

Paul says, “*Do not be haughty,
but associate with the lowly.*”

Rom. 12:16

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Four practical areas

**2. Appropriate policies for those seeking aid from
outside the church**

Appropriate
policies for those
seeking aid from
outside the
church

**The issue is not whether or not
we help people, but rather, *how
do we help them?***

Appropriate
policies for those
seeking aid from
outside the
church

**The first deacons installed in the
church needed to be “*of good
repute, full of the Spirit and
wisdom.*”**

Acts 6:3

Appropriate
policies for those
seeking aid from
outside the
church

**“Those chosen to this office
should be of great faith,
exemplary lives, honest repute,
brotherly love, warm
sympathies, and sound
judgment.”**

FOG XI.2

The background features several concentric circles of varying radii, some solid and some dashed, creating a ripple effect. A large red callout box is centered on the page, containing the text. The box has a pointed bottom edge.

Four practical areas

3. Utilizing community resources



Four practical areas

4. Resisting cynicism in ministry to the stranger

The background features a series of concentric, light gray circles and dashed lines that create a ripple effect. A prominent red callout box is centered on the page, containing the word "Conclusion" in white text. The callout box has a rectangular top and a pointed bottom, resembling a speech bubble or a drop.

Conclusion

Conclusion

We need the heart of God for the stranger, His love, His gospel, His wisdom, and His power so that by His grace we may treat the stranger as a neighbor, and in His mercy, the neighbor would become a son in the family of God.

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