

## Palm Sunday – Welcoming God

Hebrews 13:1-3

3-29-15

1. Pastor Jim mentioned that offering hospitality to strangers who you don't know is a chance for us to welcome God by faith. When was the last time you welcomed strangers or someone you barely knew into your home? Was this experience a blessing to you? Did you notice God actively at work in your encounter? What prevents us from being more hospitable to those perhaps that we know well?
2. Meals are a powerful expression of welcome and friendship in many cultures. We often see Jesus eating and drinking with people, including sinners and tax collectors (Luke 5:30; 7:39; 15:1–2). Why do you think sharing a meal with someone is such a powerful means of bringing people together? How has sharing a meal with others brought you closer to friends or enemies? Can you describe a difficult conversation that was made easier because you shared a meal together?
3. Pastor Jim mentioned that if you are looking for God only in the burning bush and not in the friend that he has brought into your life you will miss him. Jesus said the second commandment was to 'love your neighbor as yourself' (Matthew 22:39). Why is it so easy to pursue a religious experience but neglect the hurting and marginalized around us? How is it that we love God by caring for others? What can you do or what have you done to care for the stranger or angel in disguise?
4. Read John 8:1-12. How was Mary's washing of Jesus' feet an extravagant act of hospitality? What can we learn from Mary practically when showing hospitality to others?
5. Grace Beyond gives us an incredible opportunity to practice hospitality and faith with the giving of our finances. What amazing things has God done in your journey as you pray and give to Grace Beyond? Share any testimonies of God's faithfulness through this journey.
6. Take some time to pray with your group. Ask God to bless our next steps as a church as we move forward with Grace Beyond. Ask for courage to show hospitality to the stranger or perhaps new neighbor or person at church. Ask God to reveal at least one person you are to practice extravagant hospitality to within the next month.