

Read

Luke 14:1, 7–15

Consider

It may seem as if I am obsessed with wondering what the new normal is going to look like for you and me in the post-Covid era, whenever that happens. But I do think that those commentators who tell us the world has changed in these past two years-plus are right, and none of us are sure exactly what that change is going to look like.

Last month my wife and I travelled to Nova Scotia for the wedding of one of our sons who has lived in Halifax for the past ten years. We travelled by train, first from Oshawa to Montreal and then boarding VIA's Ocean train which travels from Montreal to Halifax overnight. We had a cabin and dining car meals are included in the cost. It's a throwback to another era; certainly not the quickest way to travel but for me the most relaxing.

We had lunch as the train made its way through New Brunswick to Nova Scotia. We struck up a conversation with the couple on the other side of the aisle. I thought afterwards it would have made a funny video for YouTube. Masks came off, of course, for eating, but should I put it back on for speaking to anyone other than my wife. But then with masks on, both myself and the other husband had difficulty hearing what was being said.

When I read the text for this Sunday, the thought occurred to me, what is hospitality going to look like going forward. Three years ago I was hosting a weekly Bible Study in our living room and making coffee and tea and usually a brownie or lemon square to go with it. When might that happen again? Some folks give me the impression they will be happy to have ZOOM get-togethers forever. But is there such a thing as "virtual" hospitality? Someone younger than me likely needs to answer that question for me. And what about the catching up I have been promising to do with a number of people for more than two years. For someone like me the only way that will get done is if I start contacting those people and putting dates in my calendar. In other words, if we are going to do anything more than talk about being hospitable we need to be intentional about it.

Tomorrow at SCBC, we are going to worship both in person and online. Worship is going to include the witness of baptism by immersion. I told Pastor Jon that I am looking forward to being a witness to this act of witness, "the visible and outward expression of an invisible and inward commitment." If you have been waiting for a Sunday to be back with the EM family in person, perhaps tomorrow is it! See you then.

The Rev. Dr. Bill Norman

Pray

Here is a prayer of St. Augustine to use in your personal worship this week:

O Lord, who though you were rich yet for our sakes became poor, and has promised in your holy gospel that whatever is done for the least of your sisters and brothers you will receive as done to you: give us grace, we humbly ask, to be always willing and ready to minister, as you enable us, to the needs of others and to extend the blessings of your kingdom over all the world; to your praise and glory, who is God over all, blessed forever.

In Jesus's name. Amen.

Diving Deeper

Have you ever been “employee of the month” or received another sort of recognition on the job? What was your reaction to that? Do you possess some extraordinary abilities that make it difficult to be humble?...be honest!

Is there an area of your life where you need more humility? Why this particular area of life? What can you do *this week* to move in the direction of humility?

Jesus tells us that our expressions of hospitality need to be without any calculation of what might come to us in return. What steps can you take to practice Christian hospitality leaving repayment for God to give at your resurrection? (Luke 14:14)

How can we live closer **WITH GOD** in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?