

# “Gracious Hospitality”

*Psalm 89: Select Phrases & Matthew 10:40-42*

Pastor James York

June 28, 2026

**Prayer for Understanding** Gracious God please help us understand and live your grace. Open our hearts to love as you love. Amen

Everyone is called to share God’s love providing gracious hospitality to everyone. The psalmist sings: **Psalm 89:Select Phrases MSG “Your love, God, is my song, and I will sing love! I am forever telling everyone how faithful you are. I will never quit telling the story of your love, how you built the cosmos and guaranteed everything in it. Your love has always been our lives’ foundation, your fidelity has been the roof over our world. You pledged your word to your servant, David, saying, ‘Everyone descending from you is guaranteed life. God! Let the cosmos praise your wonderful ways, the choir of holy angels sing anthems to your faithful ways! The holy angels are in awe before you, for you are powerful and faithful from every angle. You own the cosmos, you made everything in it, everything from atom to archangel. You positioned the North and South Poles; the mountains sing to you. The Right and Justice are the roots of your rule; Love and Truth are its fruits. Blessed are the people who know the passwords of praise, who shout on parade in the bright presence of God. Delighted, they dance all day long; they know who you are, what you do, they cannot keep it quiet! Your vibrant beauty has gotten inside us, you have been so good to us! We are walking on air! All we are and have we owe to God. God will preserve us eternally in God’s love. God will never abandon or disown us. Praise be to God forever and always!”**

Jesus said: **Matthew 10:40-42 NLT “Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone who receives me receives God who sent me. If you receive a prophet as one who speaks for God, you will be given the same reward as a prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their righteousness, you will be given a reward like theirs. And if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded.”**

Everyone will be rewarded for every act of love. Each person is of equal, infinite value to God. You equally welcome Jesus whether you give a cup of cold water to a wealthy person or the person society labels the least, a popular person or someone oppressed, a powerful person or someone in prison. Each act of love for another is love for God.

We are able to love, because God loves us. Everyone is capable of gracious hospitality. Notice the detail of “cold”. Anyone who gives a cup of cold water. Jesus was speaking before refrigeration and running water. To get cold water involves going to a spring, not dipping a cup into a clay vessel from water drawn earlier and stored. A cup of cold water relies on the flow of a spring representing the constant outpouring of God’s love. The spring is available to everyone, no home needed, no clay vessel needed. God’s grace is freely given to everyone. Cold water is available to be fetched by everyone. Everyone can give a cup of cold water if they are willing to put in the extra loving effort to make a special trip to the spring and return with the water quickly. You do not need a grand plan. You do not need to understand the good news. Find someone who needs something you can offer. Even the easiest, simplest gift enhances the cosmos and will be rewarded for eternity. How do you provide gracious hospitality, metaphoric cups of cold water, to others?

Ponder the metaphor on an expanding, corporate scale. Building wells, infrastructure, and houses, so all people can enjoy a cup of cold water in a safe place. Loving together to create a united worldwide community where all needs are meant and everyone thrives. Love is the foundation to God’s realm. Love is transforming human power structures to usher in universal flourishing. What does a global cup of cold water look like to you and how can you contribute to your vision?

Everyone needs water to sustain life. Everyone needs love to thrive. How do you receive love from others?

Everyone can give love and everyone needs love. Every act of love welcomes God. Every act of love will be rewarded.

Jesus is teaching us that gracious hospitality, transformation love, is like trips to the spring to fetch a cup of cold water to give away to all who are thirsty. Gracious hospitality is cool.

Robert Cobb explains: “It is noteworthy that Jesus made mention that the water was cold. Water at any temperature will satisfy thirst. But the gift of cold water is a gift with a little extra attached. It is the “extra” that touches the heart. A missionary to a South Pacific island had ministered for one year. The people held a celebration in

his honor. One gift particularly intrigued him. It was a vase of flowers; but these flowers were unusual. He had never seen any like them. He asked one of his parishioners where he could find more like them. The parishioner responded, 'The only place you can find them in the world is on the other side of the island.' The "back side" of their island was almost uninhabited and very difficult to travel. Later the missionary asked the giver of the flowers, 'Why did you go to so much trouble getting me the flowers? You must have walked for miles just to find them.' The islander responded, 'The walk was part of the gift.'"

Thomas Ogletree said: "To offer hospitality to a stranger is to welcome something new, unfamiliar and unknown into our life-world. Strangers have stories to tell which we have never heard before, stories which can redirect our seeing and stimulate our imaginations. The stories invite us to view the world from a novel perspective."

A cup of cold water given in love transforms the world. In the book, *Open Heart, Open Home: The Hospitable Way to Make Others Feel Welcome and Wanted*, Karen Mains explains that a simple dinner party for your neighbors enhances the world. Karen wrote: "Entertaining says, 'I want to impress you with my home, my clever decorating, my cooking.' Hospitality, seeking to minister, says, 'This home is a gift from God. I use it as God desires.' Hospitality aims to serve. Entertaining puts things before people. 'As soon as I get the house finished, the living room decorated, my house cleaning done, then I will start inviting people.' Hospitality puts people first. 'No furniture, we will eat on the floor! The decorating may never get done, you come anyway. The house is a mess, but you are friends, come home with us.' Entertaining subtly declares, 'This home is mine, an expression of my personality. Look, please and admire.' Hospitality whispers, 'What is mine is yours.'"

Anne Lamott wrote: "Most of the time, I simply have to remember to breathe and have a sip of cool water. Spirit is breath, breezes and living water, poured over us, poured into us, into our dark, thirsty lives. Sometimes water streams down our faces in tears. Water cleanses us, hydrates the ground at our feet, grows things, buoys us up and cools us down. Unfortunately, I do not actually like to think about breathing, it leaves me gasping like a fish on the dock and I do not like water at all. I personally would have preferred the Spirit to be experienced as lemonade." Anne continues: "People help us, and we help them. Some days I just try to give glasses of water to everyone. Maybe that means having patience with the children in my church school or talking with old people at the health-food store or offering chocolate bar communion to the people in line at the DMV who do not have appointments because they are the most seriously afflicted of all God's creatures. In my old days, I was so isolated and disgusting on the inside that I had to run around with my glass empty, hoping other people would have extra water sloshing out of theirs that they would share with me. I thought their glasses were special, while mine was a grape jelly jar with the Flintstones stamped on it. Lots of people gave me water. But what quenched my thirst was the spirit that animated their kindness, and telling the truth, which was that they had grape jelly jars, too. That we all do."

Everyone is called to share God's love providing gracious hospitality to everyone. Amen