

Whoever Welcomes You Welcomes Me
Dialogue Sermon on Matthew 10:40–42

June 28th 2026

Miriam: Dear friends, when we hear today's Gospel, it is all about hospitality. About being welcomed. About people opening their doors to other people. And when I read this text, I immediately thought of a story that happened to Kornelius and me in January of 2024. I think it was somewhere in Illinois?

Kornelius: No, it was Indiana. Near Terra Haute.

Miriam: That's right. We were on our way home from Florida. As many of you know, I love sunshine and warm weather, and we were trying to escape the cold Midwest winter for a little while.

Kornelius: Stay focused. Because the story doesn't take place in Florida. It takes place in Indiana.

Miriam: In January.

Kornelius: With temperatures below freezing.

Miriam: And somewhere in the middle of nowhere.

Kornelius: Really in the middle of nowhere.

Miriam: The kind of place where even your GPS might ask, "Are you sure?"

Kornelius: Anyway, our car broke down.

Miriam: Now you might think this is where a miracle happens.

Kornelius: You mean the car suddenly repairs itself.

Miriam: No.

Kornelius: Or a mechanic magically appears out of a cornfield.

Miriam: Also no.

Kornelius: Or God sends an angel.

Miriam: Well, if God did send an angel, it may have been the police officer who stopped and offered us warm blankets and hot tea and recommended a repair shop. Or maybe it was the tow truck driver who showed up in the middle of the night and took us there.

Kornelius: To the repair shop that was Friday 8pm, of course, closed. So we spent the night in the car.

Miriam: In front of the repair shop.

Kornelius: Below freezing.

Miriam: But we had our camping gear with us.

Kornelius: Sleeping bags.

Miriam: Blankets.

Kornelius: And probably enough camping equipment to move in permanently.

Miriam: The next morning the repair shop finally opened. And now you might think the employees were annoyed. Two strangers who had spent the night in their parking lot. Not exactly the customers you hope to see first thing in the morning.

Kornelius: But no. They welcomed us warmly. There was coffee. There was water. And there was warmth for you—a little bit of Florida in Indiana.

Miriam: And then came the most amazing offer. If the repair couldn't be completed until Monday, we could stay in the home of one of the employee's fathers.

Kornelius: We didn't know these people. And they didn't know us. We were strangers. But they were willing to welcome us.

Miriam: When I hear today's Gospel, that's exactly what I think about: Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me." And honestly, I find that statement remarkable. Jesus could have said many things. For example, "Whoever welcomes you is doing a good deed." Or, "Whoever

welcomes you is being especially kind." But that's not what he says. He says, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me."

Kornelius: That means Christ identifies himself with his disciples. With those he sends. With those in need. With those who depend on others.

Miriam: And suddenly hospitality becomes something much bigger. Because then it's no longer just about being nice. It's about making room for the presence of God.

Kornelius: That may sound like a big idea. But Jesus makes it surprisingly small. At the end of the passage, he talks about a cup of cold water. Not a fancy hotel guest room. Not a five-course meal. Not a generous inheritance. Just a cup of water.

Miriam: And I think that's exactly where the challenge lies. We often think God works through big things. Big projects. Big decisions. Big heroes of faith.

Kornelius: But Jesus talks about water. Something ordinary. Something almost anyone can offer.

Miriam: Maybe that's what the kingdom of God often looks like.

Someone listens. Someone visits a person who is sick. Someone sends a card. Someone brings a meal. Someone welcomes a newcomer to the congregation. Someone says, "I'm glad you're here."

Kornelius: And perhaps we should talk about something else as well.

Miriam: What's that?

Kornelius: The fact that we needed help.

Miriam: That's true. That's the part of the story we'd rather skip.

Kornelius: Because we'd rather be the ones helping. Than the ones needing help. We would rather give than receive. We want to be independent. We want to handle everything ourselves.

Miriam: But that wasn't possible then. We depended on the kindness and generosity of others.

Kornelius: Maybe that's the second message of this Gospel.

Not only to welcome others.

But also to be willing to be welcomed ourselves.

Because sometimes God's love comes to us through other people.

Through strangers.

Through neighbors.

Through friends.

Or through a repair shop somewhere in Indiana.

Miriam: Who would have thought that on a winter road trip in the middle of nowhere we would learn something about the Gospel?

Kornelius: Not me.

Miriam: Not me either.

Kornelius: But sometimes Christ meets us precisely where we least expect him.

Miriam: In an open door.

Kornelius: In a kind invitation.

Miriam: In an offered guest room.

Kornelius: Or, as Jesus says—

Both:

In a cup of cold water.

Amen.