

# Matthew 10:11-15

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-10/matthew-1011-15/>

*Jesus continues to instruct His disciples on their mission throughout Israel. He tells them how to respond when a town receives them favorably and how to respond when a town receives them unfavorably.*

The parallel gospel accounts of these instructions are found in Mark 6:10-11, Luke 9:4-5, and Luke 10:5-12.

Jesus tells His disciples what to do as they approach and *enter a city or village* from among the House of Israel. *Whatever city or village they enter, they are to ask and inquire who is worthy in that town, and stay at that person's house until they leave that city.*

Hospitality to travelers was an important and cultural value throughout much of the ancient world. Smaller towns and villages often lacked official accommodations such as inns for its guests, and so many overnight travelers stayed in *the house* of a local resident. Travelers were considered vulnerable. It was customary to always accept a traveler as an overnight guest and provide him with a meal and lodging if he asked. Moses taught that Israel should be hospitable to foreigners who reside with them in their land. The practical implications of Moses's command could easily extend to Jewish strangers traveling from out of town:

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 19:33-34)

Jesus used the value of hospitality as an example describing faithfulness in action and as a kind of measurement at the judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). In this warning He said, “The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me’” (Matthew 25:40). Jesus once visited the home of Simon the Pharisee. When Simon silently questioned Jesus's character because a sinful woman washed His feet, Christ contrasted Simon's failure to perform this customary duty for guests while the penitent woman went above and beyond to show kindness (Luke 7:44-48). Timothy 5:10, Titus 1:8, Hebrews 13:2, and I Peter 4:9 also exhort the virtue of hospitality

A *house* would develop a reputation for being kind or unkind to its out-of-town guests. This is likely what Jesus meant when he told his disciples to *inquire who is worthy in it*. In other words, when you come to a town, ask which houses are hospitable and stay there *until you leave the city*. It was very practical advice.

As guests would stay in houses, it was customary for them to *give it a blessing of peace*. “Peace be upon this *House*” was how travelers greeted their potential hosts when they approached *the*

*house* as a sign of respect. This *blessing* demonstrated their good will to the hosts and was recognized as a promise to do or show no ill-will to their hosts.

*If the house is reputed to be worthy of being hospitable, give it your blessing of peace. And stay there. If the house proved to be worthy of its hospitable reputation, let your blessing of peace stand. Thank the people of that house for being generous hosts. Thank God for their kindness. Ask Him to show that house favor in return for their hospitality.*

*But if the house turns out to not be worthy of its hospitable reputation, take back your blessing of peace. Jesus is not saying show them harm and pay them back “an eye for an eye.” But let God deal with them for their unkindness. Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. If the people of that town are inhospitable or reject the hopeful message you preach, do not take it personally. Don’t hold a grudge. Just shake it off and move on to the next town. God will deal with them.*

Jesus assures them with His own divine authority, that *it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Sodom and Gomorrah* were towns destroyed by God for their wickedness (Genesis 19:24-28). Jesus could mean two things by this remark. He could mean that *it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah* because those cities have already been judged for their sins, while the cities that refuse them have not been. Or He could mean that *Sodom and Gomorrah* were less accountable for their wickedness, while the cities of *the house* of Israel should know better. *Sodom and Gomorrah* were not God’s chosen people and were not privy to His covenant commands, while *the house* of Israel belongs to God. They know about His kingdom and should be eager to receive it. In either case it seems clear that it is a very bad idea to fail to be hospitable when the opportunity arises.

### **Biblical Text**

**And whatever city or village you enter, inquire who is worthy in it, and stay at his house until you leave that city. As you enter the house, give it your greeting. If the house is worthy, give it your blessing of peace. But if it is not worthy, take back your blessing of peace. Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet. Truly I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.**