

7092023 The Parable of the Great Banquet...Who's coming to Dinner

Sabbath day hospitality was an important part of Jewish life, The people who have gathered around the table in today's narrative have accepted an invitation. They have come for different reasons. Some wanted to hob-nob with people of a high social status. Some have come because they heard that Jesus would be there. For others it may have been a social obligation.

So it was not unusual for Jesus to be invited to a home for a meal after the weekly synagogue service. Sometimes the host invited Him sincerely because he wanted to learn more of God's truth. But many times Jesus was asked to dine only so His enemies could watch Him and find something to criticize and condemn. Everyone who was present that day had received a dinner invitation and everyone who was present had responded in the affirmative. They only had one thing in common. They all came.

The host invited Jesus to sit him up...But Jesus set him up...which we spoke about last week... **The Religious leaders did not see the log in their own eyes...so he continues to expose it... It was more important to sit in the right places than to live the right kind of life.**

**So Jesus addresses the Host again**

*NLT Luke 14:11 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.* <sup>12</sup> Then he turned to his host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," he said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. <sup>13</sup> Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. <sup>14</sup> Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those

*who could not repay you.*” Experts in management tell us that most people wear an invisible sign that reads, “Please make me feel important”; if we heed that sign, we can succeed in human relations.

- On the other hand, if we say or do things that make others feel insignificant, we will fail. Then people will respond by becoming angry and resentful, because everybody wants to be noticed and made to feel important.
- In Jesus’ day, as today, there were “status symbols” that helped people enhance and protect their high standing in society. If you were invited to the “right homes” and if you were seated in the “right places,” then people would know how important you really were. The higher you stood on the social ladder and the more attention (and invitations) you would receive from others. The emphasis was on reputation, not character.
- **Jesus has made everyone present feel uncomfortable, there is a moment of uncomfortable awkward silence. It is finally broken by one of the guests. He is a Pharisee. He does not want to be confronting, so he makes what he considers to be a "safe" statement.**

*NLT LK 14: 15* Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed, “What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet<sup>[c]</sup> in the Kingdom of God!”

- **He is the guy in the family that is the peace faker...the one who dislikes confrontation and awkward silence...**
- So he has just got to say something to bring everyone back together... Maybe even loosening up the table because things have gotten a little tense due to Jesus’ teaching.

There was hostility in the room but let's ignore that and talk about something happy...He was referring to he says in essence... boy isn't this a great banquet ....ah but what about the one we will all share...the religious leaders...in the kingdom of God...His statement refers to Isaiah 25...

*ISA 25:6* On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food **for all peoples**, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines.

*ISA 25:7* On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds **all peoples**, the sheet that covers **all nations**;

*ISA 25:8* he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will **wipe away the tears from all faces**; he will remove the disgrace of his people from **all the earth**. The LORD has spoken.

*ISA 25:9* In that day they will say "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

**Except he forgot all of the 'all's' in this passage.** Everyone is invited Just what Jesus had been saying...

It is the launch pad for Jesus teaching. **He takes advantage of this statement to talk about his banquet... his feast in the Kingdom of God...**

*NLT LK 14:16* Jesus replied with this story: "A man prepared a great feast and sent out many **invitations**."

**The certain man is God, the invitations were the work of the prophets and those who have been invited are Israel....over and over again they are invited ... The prophets...**

*NLT Luke 13:34* “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, **the** city that **kills the prophets** and stones God’s messengers! How often I have wanted to gather your children together as a hen protects her chicks beneath her wings, but you wouldn’t let me.

- This man was throwing a Banquet a "mega-dinner" (that is literal meaning from the Greek). It was not merely a fancy luncheon. **It was a feast that would last for several days. It demanded a commitment of time.** "The Kingdom of God is a Party."
- It reflects the truth that is presented here.
- **When we were invited to come to Christ, we were invited to something joyous and wonderful.**
- We Christians have no right to be sour and dour. We have been invited to a party and we have opportunity to invite others, too.
- The Kingdom is a joyous occasion. We ought to express that joy.

*Back to the parable...*<sup>17</sup> When the banquet was ready, he sent **his servant** to tell the guests, ‘Come, the banquet is ready.’

- *The servant is Jesus...* But Jesus left heaven to come as a human being ...the earth suit is what all people wear...it is not about ethnicity...it is about humanity ...sheep are sheep and their were other sheep...
- **including...** is a key aspect of the mission Jesus...and it goes against our natural inclination...
- **Jesus is the door to the banquet...**he is the messenger and the message must be received...

Now...There were two invitations here and this is a totally normal fact of life for people in Palestine at this time and even now in some parts of the world.

- You don't have refrigeration so you send out your servant to go and ask people, people at that point say whether they are coming or not, the servant comes back with a number and depending on the number of guests you decided how many animals and what kind of animals to slaughter.
- If you have 5 to 8 people coming you are going to use a goose. If you have 15 you will use a goat. If you have 35 or 40 you will use a calf.
- And so then the right animals are prepared for the feast and then the following day or later that day, week or month when everything is prepared, again the servant goes out to all those people who said yes already and says, "come now, the meal's prepared."
- So far everything is just a normal story for the people who are listening.

### **The surprise comes in the following verses. Verse 18-20.**

*LK 14: 18* But they all began making excuses. One said, 'I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.' <sup>19</sup> Another said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.' <sup>20</sup> Another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

### **The Excuses of the originally invited...**

- Culturally speaking this is an absolutely, horribly rude thing to happen.
- These people already said yes, they said yes earlier and now when they are saying the feast is ready, we are on the edge of being able to celebrate together they are saying no.
- Three Excuses and they are not throw-away ones! They are actually at the other end of the spectrum. Each one is important...

- They are significant and dramatic. The first about possessions, the second about career and the third about relationships.
- But none of them should really keep the person from attending.

"Oh, I bought a field and I must inspect it.

- Who buys land without looking at it first? " With the paperwork that went along with the transfer of property even in this era, every single detail of the land was listed.
- If you had a spring on your land, if you had a creek on your land, if you had a well, if you had a cave, it was all written down and when you bought the land, you bought the land with this stream, this major tree, this well.
- It was all delineated and it sometimes took years to negotiate this, because land was so important.
- And so the idea of somebody buying a field and then having to go look at it is like us saying, "Oh I just bought a half million dollar house, now I have to go take a look at what neighborhood it is in and what kind of house it is. I bought it on the telephone." It's unthinkable.

And the guy with 10 oxen: he's bought the oxen, but hasn't even seen if they work well together. People didn't do it that way ever.

- They would always go to the farm and watch the farmer use them. The farmer would let everybody know that "I am getting ready to sell these oxen.
- Come and check me out on Tuesday morning because I am going to be using them and they would actually try them out." This guy has done the equivalent of us saying, "Oh I just made a check out. I just laid down \$180,000 for five cars and now I am going to go check out and see what kind they are and whether they start."

- It's just a ridiculous excuse. But at least these two guys are polite. "Please excuse me."

**The third person is the rudest of the bunch**, because he uses in this culture, he uses a private family matter having to do with woman in his family as an excuse not to live up to a social obligation. Absolutely unthinkable.

- You didn't even talk about women in your family in these sorts of cultures. It was a very private thing and so for him to even talk about it is rude and then he doesn't even ask for forgiveness.
- He just says, "So I can't come." Can't go, Bring her along!

**Everyone listening to Jesus would have been horrified at the behavior of these people.**

In the text, each of those persons invited to the wedding made an excuse not to attend. The honest truth is that none of these people wanted to attend because they had other priorities. The first about possessions, the second about career and the third about relationships.

- They all must really not want to attend. Why? The reason for the excuses is due to the nature of the feast.

**Those invited realize the feast is not what they had expected.**

- Aren't these the classic excuses we use? And we use them when we discover the banquet isn't what we expected.

**What is Jesus saying to the religious leaders at the table?**

The invitation having gone out earlier, there came a time when the guests were expected to respond with their presence.

The Old Testament is the invitation. It was read repeatedly by all of the prophets, at the synagogue They proclaimed the coming of the Messiah. And then the day came when He arrived.

He was now in their midst and He was calling them to come... This is a parable of Israel's leaders rejection of the kingdom. The invitation to enter the kingdom had been given for a thousand years.

They Jews had replied that they would come. Now at the appointed time, they are called to the feast. They respond with excuses. And they aren't even good excuses.

These people all said yes we will come...then changed their mind...they did not like who Jesus invited they did not like his way of representing God...they changed their mind...

➤ Now what is the master supposed to do? Cancel the party? The people he has invited have decided not to come. That is not what he does. Let's take a look at what this God actually does.

*NLT Luke 14:21 "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'*

- God is angry here because He has invited His chosen people to come to His dinner and they all made excuses after excuses.
- Invitation Redirected to Others: *"The poor and crippled and blind and lame"* (14:21).
- Notice the recipients of this redirected invitation: The poor and crippled and blind and lame. Does it sound like a familiar list?



- Do you see the point? The invitation to the Pharisees and to the experts in the Law and to the high and the mighty had already been given and the excuses were already registered.
- The parable reflects what had already taken place. And now, Jesus was reaching out to the poor and crippled and blind and lame.
- That is what He had just done by healing the man with dropsy.

*22 After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.'* <sup>LK 14: 23</sup> *So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full.'*

- **Luke's reference to the outer most parts of the world. There is still room!**
- Commission to the Gentiles: "*urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full.*"
- **They did not come in so easily because they did not think they were really invited...urge them come...means convince them to come**

This pictures the Great Commission. It is that every effort be made to bring in every person. We have been charged with filling the house of God.

*Luke 14:24 For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.'"*

Jesus is sitting in a wealthy home as He tells this parable. He is surrounded by the cream of the social strata. These people had it all. And they have accepted an invitation to attend this feast. But they have not accepted the invitation that Jesus has extended to others.

- **So from the time we accept the invitation to the time of going to the feast lots of things can happen....**
- Here is the irony of the kingdom feast: It doesn't look worth waiting for attending when it seems distant...
- Only when you trust the invitation so much that you taste it before you actually go

So the question is...How can we reconcile an authentic desire for possessions, career and relationships while desiring the kingdom?

Only when we can genuinely believe that God will meet our needs while we seek his kingdom above all else

And God's inclusion of us because of Love... ought to compel us to reach out to those in need and bring them to the table.

An infinite God has infinite room...there is still more room...

For those who feel they are not invited for they have nothing to give...you are invited today..

For those who have accepted the invitee I offer the invite to you today

NLT [Romans 15:4](#) Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait **patiently** for God's promises to be fulfilled.

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