

The Parables of Jesus #25
The Parable of the Great Supper
(Lk. 14:15-24)
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INTRODUCTION

A. Have you ever been invited to something you just didn't want to attend?

1. Most of the time I really appreciate invitations and look forward to attending the events
2. There have been a few times, however, that the invitation came at a bad time, or the event wasn't something that appealed to me, and a few times, I just didn't want to be with the people involved
3. My wife came up with a label for those occasions -- "Forced Fellowship"

B. I once knew a fellow who had the same reply to every invitation

1. I only noticed his standard reply when it occurred to me that he almost never attended anything he was invited to
2. When invited, he would reply, "I'll be there unless something else comes up."
3. I invited him to something one time, and when he gave me his standard reply, I called his hand on it -- I told him, "No, this is what has come up. Put it on the calendar, and if something else comes up, tell them that you already have a commitment."
4. He didn't want to do that, and I knew he didn't really want to attend the event I had invited him to

C. The gospel of Jesus is very much an invitation

1. Rom 1:5-7
Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NKJ)
2. Rom 8:28
And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. (NKJ)

3. 1 Cor 1:2

To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: (NKJ)

4. The word for "called" in these verses literally means "invited"
 - a. we are invited into God's kingdom
 - b. we are invited into a relationship with God
 - c. we are invited to enjoy spiritual blessings
5. Like any invitation, it is one that is either accepted or rejected

D. That's what the parable in our study today is all about

1. This story was meant to reveal a sobering truth to Israel
2. It also challenges us to rethink how we respond to the Lord's invitation through the gospel

I. BACKGROUND TO THE PARABLE

A. The setting is the dinner party Jesus attended at the home of a Pharisee

1. Remember, there has already been conflict over healing on the Sabbath
2. Jesus has told two parables already
 - a. the first condemned pride and self-centeredness shown by the guests who sought the places of honor for themselves
 - b. the second condemned the selfishness of hosting such events only to be repaid in kind by one's friends

B. Having heard the stories Jesus told, one of the guests made a comment

1. Luke 14:15

Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, ""Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (NKJ)

2. There is no indication as why this guest made this statement
 - a. it does not seem to be spoken to mock Jesus
 - b. yet, it still reflects an element of common Pharisaic attitude
 - c. perhaps the meaning of the parables had not registered
 - d. the man seems to understand that Jesus is talking about the kingdom of God
 - e. it is as if he is thinking, "How great it will be for all us Jews to enjoy the blessings of God you are talking about."
 - f. perhaps it did not register with him that he or other Jews might miss those blessings entirely

II. THE PARABLE (Lk 14:16-24)

A. A certain man gave a great supper and invited many people

1. It does not seem that anyone actually rejected the invitation
2. It would be interesting to know what they thought when the invitation came to them

B. When the supper was ready, he sent his servant to tell them to come in

1. It appears that the guests were all nearby, so it must not have been a burden on them to attend
2. The man did everything he could to prepare for the guests

C. However, the guests began to make excuses about why they couldn't attend

1. Luke 14:18
But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused."
2. Luke 14:19
And another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused."
3. Luke 14:20
Still another said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. (NKJ)"

D. The excuses reflect the general attitude of all the invited guests

1. Concerns with material possessions were more important than accepting the invitation
2. Concerns with business and the potential for rewards were more important than accepting the invitation
3. Concerns with family and social responsibilities were more important than accepting the invitation
4. Every guest believed he had legitimate reasons for not attending the great supper

E. When the servant reported the excuses, the master invited others

1. Specifically, the poor, lame, maimed and blind
2. Lk 14:13 --- this is exactly the same group Jesus had earlier said they should invite
 - a. these are people who cannot return the favor
 - b. these are people who would appreciate the invitation
3. The servant went out, gathered these people, but there was still room
 - a. those out on the highways and among the hedges
 - b. these are ones not so near, out on the fringe, who probably did not even think about being invited to such an event

F. The master's reasoning

1. Luke 14:23-24
Then the master said to the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper." (NKJ)
2. The great motivation --- "that my house may be filled"
3. The great unininvitation --- "none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper"

III. LESSONS TO LEARN

A. We should think more seriously about God's invitation

1. Earlier we looked at some verses that tell us that the call of the gospel is actually an invitation
2. How do you treat the invitation?
 - a. Matt 22:14
For many are called, but few are chosen. (NKJ)
 - b. Mark 7:6-7
He answered and said to them, "'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' (NKJ)
 - c. Titus 1:16
They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work. (NKJ)
3. If God's invitation is not treasured, it is doubtful if it will be accepted
4. God can invite, but God cannot accept the invitation for us

B. Is your life full of excuses why you can't accept the invitation?

1. Are you too busy to accept?

a. Matt 16:26

For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? (NKJ)

b. 2 Tim 2:4

No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. (NKJ)

c. Phil 3:8

Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ (NKJ)

2. Are you too wrapped up in material things to accept the invitation?

a. I Jn 2:15-16

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- is not of the Father but is of the world. (NKJ)

b. Rom 12:2

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJ)

c. Rev 3:17-18

Because you say, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing"-- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (NKJ)

3. Are you too wrapped up, even in your own family to accept God's invitation?

a. Luke 14:26

If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. (NKJ)

b. Luke 14:33

So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (NKJ)

c. Luke 18:28-30

Then Peter said, ""See, we have left all and followed You." So He said to them, ""Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come everlasting life." (NKJ)

C. You may lose the opportunity to accept the invitation

1. In the parable, the master finally finds enough who will accept his invitation, and then he bars access to those who were invited first
2. What is God's responsibility to you?
 - a. how many times must he invite you?
 - b. how often must he invite you?
 - c. how desperately must he plead for you to accept his invitation?
3. Judgment is reflected in the following:
 - a. Matt 25:10-12

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us!" But he answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you." (NKJ)
 - b. Mark 10:14-15

But when Jesus saw it, He was greatly displeased and said to them, ""Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it." (NKJ)
 - c. Jer 8:19-22

Listen! The voice, the cry of the daughter of my people from a far country: ""Is not the LORD in Zion? Is not her King in her?" ""Why have they provoked Me to anger with their carved images-- with foreign idols?" The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved!" For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt. I am mourning; astonishment has taken hold of me. Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there? Why then is there no recovery for the health of the daughter of my people? (NKJ)

INVITATION

A. At the end of a sermon, it is our custom to offer an "invitation"

1. It is the invitation of the gospel
2. It is the call of God through the message concerning His son
3. It is the beckon of the Lord to come and feast on his eternal blessings

B. Would you answer that invitation today?

1. 2 Cor 6:1-2
We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: ""In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. (NKJ)
2. If not today, then when will you accept the Lord's invitation?

C. Should the Lord go ahead and invite someone else in your place?