

“Parable of the Great Banquet”

Introduction – Luke 14:15-24

We are told at the end of the current age that there is going to be a great celebration! A huge banquet rewarding the servants of God throughout history! The writer of Hebrews brings across:

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV)

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. **2** Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

Just take that to heart. Jesus has completed His mission and as He says:

John 14:1-3 (NIV)

1 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God ; trust also in me. **2** In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. This is the great finish line that is set before us!

So let’s take a look at this parable:

I. THE WEDDING FEAST OF THE LAMB

Luke 14:15 (NIV)

15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

As we look in Revelation we find the apostle John bringing out about this exciting event that is set before us:

Revelation 19:5-9 (NIV)

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying: “Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!” **6** Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: “Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. **7** Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. **8** Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) **9** Then the angel said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!’” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”

So let’s dig into the parable.

II. THE INVITATION

Luke 14:16-17 (NIV)

16 Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. **17** At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’”

As followers of Jesus we are called to take the invitation to every tribe, language and nation! To all peoples on the earth! The God who created the heavens and the earth and made us in His image has taken care of the problem of sin that separates us from God and each other! The victory has been won by Jesus over sin, death and hell! We are now living in the church age where we take this message out to all the earth and invite people to faith in Jesus! Listen to all these passages:

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19** Therefore go and make disciples of all

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 16:15 (NIV)

15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.

Acts 1:7-8 (NIV)

7 He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

II Corinthians 5:16-20 (NIV)

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. **17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! **18** All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19** that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. **20** We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Romans 10:8-14 (NIV)

8 But what does it say? “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: **9** That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. **11** As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” **12** For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of

all and richly blesses all who call on him, **13** for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” **14** How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?

This is the job of every believer! This is the job of the church to take this gospel to everyone, everywhere! To speak the truth in love, to live out the eternal truths of God and to give the reason for the hope that we have with gentleness and respect yet boldness and courage!

God help us to see this!

III. THE EXCUSES GIVEN FOR NOT ACCEPTING THE INVITATION

Luke 14:18-20 (NIV)

18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ **19** “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ **20** “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

As a pastor I have heard and seen all these excuses that are given as to why people can’t come and join with the people of God in worship of Jesus!

Here are a few more:

1. “The church is full of hypocrites. That’s why I won’t come.”
2. “I don’t like the pastor or some of the people in the church.”
3. “My church is the great outdoors. I worship in my boat or tree stand.”

The bottom line is “the church – the body of called out believers in Jesus”, is not man’s idea! It is God’s calling! That we came together

and work together to accomplish this task! It is not easy but it is worth it!

Listen to Paul explain this:

I Corinthians 12:12-27 (NIV)

12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. **13** For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. **14** Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. **15** If the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. **16** And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. **17** If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? **18** But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. **19** If they were all one part, where would the body be? **20** As it is, there are many parts, but one body. **21** The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” **22** On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, **23** and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, **24** while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, **25** so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. **26** If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. **27** Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

So we are patient, we forgive, we work together, we encourage each other! We overcome every obstacle before us!

IV. THE INVITATION TO THE WHOSEVER WILL COME

Luke 14:21-24 (NIV)

21 “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ **22** “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ **23** “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full. **24** I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

Sadly many times churches like to pick and choose their mission field as the apostle James warns us:

James 2:1-4, 8-10 (NIV)

1 My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. **2** Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. **3** If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” **4** have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? **8** If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing right. **9** But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. **10** For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

C.T. Studd made a statement that is powerful. “Some want to live within the sound of chapel bells but I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell.” This is our calling! It is hard work! It is not easy but it is worth it! There are disappointments and battles! Listen to the apostle Paul:

II Corinthians 11:23-31 (NIV)

23 Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. **24** Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. **25** Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, **26** I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. **27** I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. **28** Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. **29** Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? **30** If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. **31** The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying.

So don't grow weary in well doing! Stay encouraged and be an encourager! We have a job to do!

Conclusion

Take this call from Paul to heart in closing:

II Timothy 4:7-8, 18 (NIV)

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. **8** Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. **18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.