

“The Invitation of God”
Luke 14:12-24

12 He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. **13** But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

15 When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” **16** But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. **17** And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ **18** But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ **19** And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ **20** And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ **21** So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ **22** And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ **23** And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. **24** For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”

Outline:

Jesus begins in v. 16- by saying... This is a picture of how God invites all people into his kingdom. As we work through this, I want to encourage you to consider God’s personal invitation to you.

Look who’s inviting you and what you’re invited to!

- The banquet imagery and mention of the resurrection of the just provoke the statement about the feast of all feasts, the party of all parties, in the coming kingdom of God.
 - The greatest invitation: to feast in God’s presence at God’s table forever. To be welcomed in by the King of the universe. This is an invitation to relationship.
 - Think about what this means...
 - Not just satisfaction & Joy that comes and goes, but unending fulfillment, fullness of joy, as we fully experience what God made us for in the very beginning.
 - Eternal rest & peace... Total freedom from all anxiety, discouragement and disappointment. God wants that for you/us!
 - “You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.” (Augustine)
 - “On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples, a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine... [when God] “will swallow up death forever.” (Isaiah 25:6-8)
- In Christ: death to life... turned from their old way of life to embrace a new life altogether!
- Make no mistake: for those who enter the kingdom of God, it will be an experience like beyond all earthly comparison. It is appropriate to remember on the day we celebrate the resurrection of that the Christian life is a feast not a funeral. To truly know Christ is to experience life in the fullest possible sense. Jesus is alive!

What’s your response? Enter or Excuses?

- Verse 17 says. The food was almost ready, the tables were set, the decorations were in place, the music was playing. The host is waiting with anticipation (GOD!)
- In Jewish culture, there would have been two invitations: the initial invitation you RSVP to, and then the customary reminder announcement, everything is ready! Come!
- But narrative is about to take a major turn as excuses began to pile in. Verse 18-20. Luke tells us of three people, who had originally accepted the invitation, but no gave different excuses with a common thread. These all were matters that should have been taken care of or could be temporarily set aside.
- The common thread in all of these excuses is that they viewed something else as more valuable and important than attending the celebration (in these instances it was property, possession and relationships)
- And Jesus says, this is how we are tempted to approach God. The problem was one of priority.

- To fail to come at this point is insulting, it's an affront, not only to the generosity of the host, but to the host himself. I don't want your party, and I don't want you.

Excuses:

- Too busy... Other priorities... Want to live for me...
- Love stuff.. more than God.
- Timing... I'll get to that later. I'll make sure I'm good with God before I die... (but if that's your attitude – not only is it presumptuous, but it shows you don't really know God to begin with, because if you see who he is and what he invites you to, you won't wait, you won't put him off, not for a second.)
- Relationships... what will they think? I want to prioritize them...
- **All excuses look pathetic when we consider what is offered!**
- God is inviting you to his feast, so let me say very lovingly and directly: if you miss out on the kingdom of God, you only have yourself and your excuses to blame and you will miss life's greatest gift.

God's love and grace!

- BUT the next verse tells the resolve of the master is unflappable. *Read 21.*
- It also would have been scandalous to those who heard, but this is just like God. The spiritually rich & proud who reject his generosity will find themselves on the outside looking in to the kingdom of God while the humble and spiritually poor will come rushing in. "Bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame." This is the heart of God!
- This is the paradox of the feast! Those who appear to be the first in line will miss out, while those who appear not to be in the stratosphere of invitation are eating, drinking, and enjoying the benefits of the master's invitation.
- Verse 22. There's more room. So a third invitation goes out in verse 23.
- Verse 23-24. Go everywhere and "compel them to come in."

What does this tell us?

God is love. He wants us there. This is why he sent Jesus to live a perfect life, the life we could never live, and die the death we deserved to die. **"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."** (John 3:16)

God is gracious. It's not on the basis of what we do. This is implied throughout. The guests are there, not on their own merit, but simply by the invitation of the host. But it is made explicit, in the end, where he says: "bring the poor, crippled, blind and lame!"

Do you see what Jesus is saying? Salvation is a free gift. All you have to do is come.

These friends who have been baptized... God is first. I'm coming to the party.

A – Admit your need to God

B – Believe in Jesus and receive gift to you.

C – Commit to follow him as the priority of your life.