

A Great Supper

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[0:00] Luke 14, if you've got your Bibles, we might just stand for the Word of God, shall we?

I like to stand when we can. Luke 14, from verse 16. The Lord Jesus says, Then said, He answer them, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to them, That were bidden, come, for all things were now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must need to go and see it. I pray thee, have me excuse.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to improve them. I pray thee, have me excuse. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came and showed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the holt, and the blind.

[1:20] And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto his servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. Amen. Please be seated.

A great supper. Don't you just like to have a feed? It's not lunchtime yet. Don't get hungry yet. Still got another hour or two to preach.

No, not really. But you think, sometimes your tummy rumbles, and you just think of that, whatever your favourite meal is. Whether it's, I don't know, chicken curry.

What's some other meals you like here? Roast. Roast lamb, maybe. Or, what's something else you like?

[2:28] Steak. Steak. Hungry Jacks. Oh, no. Think of what is it that you like to eat. There's a great feast here. There's a great supper here.

And what an invitation. It's extended. Far and wide. A gracious invitation. This was a great occasion. A feast. A banquet. A banquet fit for the king.

A great supper with many guests. And the master himself had personally sought to invite many guests.

It's supper time. It's time. The master says it's time. It's time. It's now. It's time.

Banquet time. Supper time. And the master says, now. Now. Time. to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready. There's no time for waste.

[4:02] It's been cooked on the griddle, it's just reached that perfect temperature, all the marinade has just worked its way through the lamb, the chicken, whatever it be, and it's just perfect, it's just ready. He says, it's now ready, all things are now ready. Notice he sent his servant, he sent his servant at supper time. The master has servants, master, lord, same word. The lord Jesus Christ is the master Jesus Christ. And we that trust him, we're his servants. We are each one of us. We know the lord, the master, we are his servants. So we're in here, in this passage if you like. And the master, it says, verse 17, sent his servant at supper time. And we see what happened. Come, for all things are now ready. And verse 18, and they all with one consent began to make excuse. They're all making these excuses. This, that, and the other. The first said unto him, I bought a piece of ground. And I must need to go and see it. I pray thee, have me excused. He brought some real estate, some

rightly so what on the front how rude his offer was refused and so the master extends the invitation again and he wants people at the supper imperfect people wow glad i'm glad he extended the invitation i'm glad he widened as it were the invitation to include imperfect perfect people such as me imperfect perfect far from perfect he extended the invitation he widened the invitation to the poor the beggars the diseased the sick the hurting the crippled the blind the needy the outcast the underprivileged the derelict the rejected the hopeless the fatherless the forsaken the abused the neglected the lonely wow everybody they would not be able to repay him what could they bring now when you invite someone to a meal sometimes they bring something nice along so just give that little bit extra back to the host but we can bring nothing to his table amen we can bring nothing to his table other than ourselves other than our hunger other than our appetite and yet he widens the invite doesn't he oh a feast it's now ready and we cannot repay as it were as we as it were as we come to the lord's table as it were

to his feast to his banqueting house we can bring nothing we cannot repay we cannot bring anything to the table it's like that with salvation isn't it he is not willing that any should perish there's space at the table still space at the table there's a seat there yet to be filled as we know ultimately all the seats will be filled they'll all have a name on them as it were a name will be written down as it were you know you can imagine maybe there's a seat with your name on it now you see when there's a big fancy meal sometimes and the tables are all spread and the tablecloth is just neatly ironed and the cutlery and the crockery is all laid out on the table and then there's a little name card and you get there and you you know if you've ever been to such a thing and you you look around and you say oh there's my name that's my seat that's what it's going to be like brothers and sisters hallelujah but maybe there'll be an angel that'll come and take you by the arm and take you along to your seat as it were

I'm just being a bit kind of fanciful here but you can imagine that kind of picture that even the less well off those that might be disabled those that might be in need those that might be imperfect those that might be poor and blind and crippled he says get them here they're invited we want to see this place packed and the ones that others might discount or care less for whoever you may be you are precious in his sight amen as that song goes you are precious in his sight whatever your circumstance you've got value in his eyes amen and what a blessing that is to think of there was a missionary called Tom Tipton who was in a village in Uganda and he related a story how he went to this little isolated little village in far away Uganda in some hidden away spot and he went to this village and he came to this village to tell the people about the Lord Jesus Christ about salvation and there was only one person who was willing to listen to him one person was willing to listen to the gospel and he was a leper who had lost both legs and part of one arm and he just had a little stump here with his arm his hand and part of his arm must have fallen off with the leprosy and the leper accepted Christ and Tipton taught him some bible verses and a few songs to sing and Tipton left and returned less than a month later to find the people gathered together singing those songs as the leper led them with the stump of one arm and asking how this happened

Tipton was told that the leper had crawled from hut to hut to hut just using the stump of that one arm and had shared the gospel with everyone in his village the invitation went far and wide and the quote here goes on if you and I will be faithful less reliant on ourselves and more reliant on God and dependent on the fullness and the power of the Holy Spirit working through us we can see fruit that will honour God we have this treasure in an earthen vessel yeah he sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden come for all things are now ready the master says to us to you to me to you

[18:08] I'm sending you to bring them in to bring them in not into a church not into a building not into a particular meeting you could do that but to invite them to Jesus to invite them to know him and I know some of you do that down at garage sales they're like terrorists at these garage sales they just they just take take people and they want to tell them they're not really there to get anything at the garage sale they're there to talk to the people running the garage sale or the other customers that's what we need to be like isn't it that we've got a message to deliver and so we're missionaries we're ministers we're servants sent to bring them in to seek them out to hurry out get out quickly is the picture go out quickly that's what it says there I think in that one there that I just read yeah verse 21 go out quickly there's

an urgency to this there's an immediacy there's a compelling nature to this message go out quickly don't think you've got to wait before you get more qualified now I think that can be a big mistake it's good to have training it's good to have learning it's good to prepare but don't spend all your time preparing get doing get doing make it practical learning action based learning as it were put your faith into action so he says to the missionaries to the servants to the ministers go out quickly the Lord Jesus commands us to share our faith it's too good to keep to yourself isn't it it's like

I think there's a book called how to give your faith away you want to give it away don't you it's not like you lose it because you're sharing it you're multiplying it because others are receiving it and so we're to go out go as fast as you can run you know I know I've sort of irreverently said it's my excuse for speeding fines you know that how does it go the king's business requireth haste but no there's no justification in the speeding fines of course we've got it we're doing the king's business we should get busy get hasten hasten there's quickness to it and so go out as fast as you can make no delay he says go after people look for the lost and he says where do we look for them into the streets wide and narrow fetch them all in here bring them in bring them in from the fields of sin can our church be more like that

I think we can do more I think we can because the mission is all consuming it's it's huge isn't it it's massive the mission field is needy and souls are at stake and we've all got a part we can play souls to win souls to rescue souls to save and the core goes out worldwide far and wide to the ends of the earth it's limitless really isn't it and so it's said that some people were undertaking a missionary project that would cost a million dollars and the speaker who was raising the money said if just one boy should be saved it would be worth the entire amount and after the meeting someone said do you think one boy is worth a million dollars as was suggested tonight and a thoughtful father replied yes if that boy should be my boy amen and some lost boy might not be our boy in the flesh but when we take him on our heart and begin to fast and pray for him and seek his salvation he becomes our boy you know those that have got a passion and a heart and a hungering and a soul driving mission to reach the young people in this church the children's program the youth group we adopt them don't we it's like

Paul said I labour for you like I'm giving birth and he talks about he almost talks about I can't think of the reference now but Paul talks about having children as it were in faith that those that he came to he gave birth to them as it were as a what's the when someone helps a woman give birth a midwife he acted like a midwife of sorts and he brought them to birth spiritually and I guess that's like with us too that we've got a sense where we can bring others to know the Saviour and we can bring them to the new birth and we can see them one to Christ such that their souls are precious to us and I'm trying to articulate here that when you have them run a ministry like a children's ministry and you see them come to

Christ it's such a blessing to know that you played a part in passing on the message and what a precious thing it is that one boy's worth a million dollars I mean you can't put a price on a soul really so mission is costly it is costly but we must reach the lost at any cost that's our mission so we see as we travelled so far he sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bid and come now come for all things are now ready we see the servant we see his sending and we see the supper time supper time supper time as illustrated here you could imagine reflecting that ultimate heavenly feast that we'll have well think of that ultimate supper time when you know as sometimes you hear it talked about in songs that it's almost like it's a picture of salvation isn't it it's a picture of ultimately the bible speaks about the marriage supper of the lamb we'll see that moment when we'll all be together those that know the lord that are here our loved ones that have departed and those that come to know the lord worldwide imagine how big that table's going to be it's going to be massive isn't it we'll all have a seat there if you know the saviour you'll have a seat at that table as it were so we're talking about supper as reflecting salvation as reflecting the ultimate heavenly feast as it were the servant was sent because of supper time and verse 22 and the servant said lord it is done as there has commanded and yet there is room still there is room he hasn't closed the door yet he hasn't stopped extending the invitation yet one day he will it's like in

[26:13] Noah's day God shut the door Noah didn't shut the door God shut he said time's up no more people are going to enter into the ark they're

going to be wiped down friends one day it'll be too late supper time but yet there is still room there is still room there is room still we have a message to take while there is still time while there's still room to stand for to declare this message it's ultimate it's so vital the message of salvation God's ready supper's ready still there is room won't you come and dine let's imagine that you have somehow come into possession of an important piece of information that affects every single person you know everyone in your neighborhood everyone in your street everyone in your family everyone you work with everyone you meet at the bank or the grocery store or the mall as you go through the day what would you do what if this were good news very good news the best news you had ever heard in your whole life not something you could make money from but something that would change people's lives for the better what would you do you would start telling people right of course you would you wouldn't want to keep it to yourself you couldn't keep it to yourself think what you would do first you would call your family and your close friends and tell them then you would tell your acquaintances the people across the stream the people you rubbed shoulders with here and there you'd send out messages to them whatever means you could maybe you'd go as far as calling the TV stations or the newspapers to get the word out you wouldn't want to tell as many people as possible by any means possible that's what you would do for instance if you found a cure for cancer or a way to reverse the aging process or whatever it be some amazing finding some amazing good news and friends we have such good news don't we we've got the good news the best news the greatest news and so it's supper time almost supper time it's almost there you can almost smell it can't you it's like when you stand outside some of these restaurants and they deliberately blow the flavor towards you to entice you and you imagine it's nearly supper time you can almost smell it cooking you can hear it sizzling and you can start to start to feel hungry and just draw the picture the parallel here verse 23 and the

Lord said unto the servant go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled for I say unto them I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper some people aren't even going to get a taste there's still more people to reach there's still more people to reach there's still more streets to walk there's still more places to go and seek out the lost and there's ways we can I know there's some in our number are dedicated to that on a weekly basis on a regular basis going down to the shopping malls and passing out tracts there's people that I hear about sometimes when I get all the hate calls some of you go letter boxing I get the hate calls thank you for that please do more of it I haven't had a lot of hate calls in a long time actually so come on people let's get busy

I know someone was telling me one of the folk who come to our night meeting was saying he's got a big bundle of tracts and he's going to start stamping! means we can we must we have to go out into the highways and hedges the task is ever more pressing it's almost supper time and there's still seats to fill not that we are doing it but God is using us as messengers of his message and he's the one who saves not us of course but we are part of the task it's ever more pressing and ever more serious the early Christians had to be put in jail to stop witnessing and they still couldn't shut them up amen that's what we need to be like and some people are going to miss out it's nearly supper time time is running out and here's a quote here our motivation is not to sell something or impose our beliefs on outsiders the motivation for evangelism is generosity we're not here to buttonhole people and win an argument with them or Bible bash them or drag them into submission and you know try to you know try to all kinds of unethical ways to try to make people trust

Christ it's not about our flair or our articulate ways and words it's not about us but we're just messengers that's all we are and this quote goes on you know it's generosity we witness because this is the greatest blessing we can ever give anybody it's the greatest news the quote goes on there is a basic human concern to share the good things of life with those we love it does not reflect a desire to sell or dominate it arises from love and compassion we have a message and we want to

impart it because of our love for the saviour because of our compassion for the lost it goes on we have found something wonderful and want others to share in its joy evangelism is as the old adage says like one beggar telling another where to find bread that's all we are that's all I am a beggar telling another how to find bread so think of these things now as we just start to wrap this up here it's like it cranks up another notch here in the account where our master says compel them to come in in other words constrain them make them urge them now the literal word from which we translate our

English word compel it means to compel them by the force of your love compel them by the truth of your message compel them by the power of your prayers the deeds of your charity the argument of your reason and the counsel of your wisdom there's that wholeness to it that we're compelling because of our love because of our prayerfulness because of our compassion of our reason we want to use all of our senses and ability to just give of ourselves because this message is urgent it's vital there's an old time printer called Whitfield who said this I'm not ashamed to come out this day into the highways and hedges and to confess that my business is to call the poor and the maimed and the hot and the blind self condemned helpless sinners to the marriage feast of the supper of the lamb and the back in Whitfield Wesley's day they would go on the on the plains and the paddocks and the fields because they were rejected from the churches their message was too radical and he goes on my cry is come believe on the

[34:19] Lord Jesus throw yourselves at the footstool of his mercy and you shall now be saved for all things are now ready God the Father is ready God the Son is ready God the Holy Ghost is ready the blessed angels above are ready and the blessed saints below are ready to welcome you to the gospel feast a perfect and everlasting righteousness is now wrought by Jesus Christ God now upon honourable terms can acquit the guilty God can now be just and yet justify the ungodly for he hath made Christ to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him the servant was sent supper time notice it's a great supper there is enough provision they're not going to be hurrying in the back room trying to cook up a bit extra because they are only running short it's a great supper it's just a bountiful abundant delicious and there's enough provision for everybody

God wants heaven filled have we lost our intensity our fight our passion that was William Booth died died There was a poor lost girl upon the streets.

While there remains one dark soul without the light of God, I'll fight, I'll fight to the very end. Have we lost our passion, our fight? That was William Booth. D.L. Moody was called Crazy Moody in his time.

He was an evangelist. He had a real heart to reach, especially children, families, souls. They called him Crazy Moody. He had a Sunday school, a children's Sunday school, for underprivileged children that grew to 1,000 in two years.

He had a passion. He wanted to invite them, compel them. It's nearly supper time. Some will miss out. People, how sad it would be. And they still make their flimsy, pathetic, weak excuses.

[36:37] Still today, don't they? Reasons why God takes a poor second place, maybe third, fourth. Maybe he's not even on the list. God doesn't rate a priority for them.

They won't even get a taste. Don't miss this. Don't miss out. Friends, people hearing this today, taste and see that the Lord is good.

Taste and see that the Lord is good. All things are now ready. We see the danger of neglect. One after one, made excuse after excuse after excuse.

Consider neglect. Here's what Spurgeon said. How shall we escape if we neglect? So great salvation. A little matter of neglect brings you to ruin.

But our Master's words are, strive to enter in at the straight gate. For many, I say unto you, shall seek, merely seek, to enter in and shall not be able.

[37:35] Striving is wanted more than seeking. He says, strive to enter in. He goes on. Let us pray that God the Holy Spirit would always enable us to be in downright awful earnest about the salvation of our souls.

May we never count this a matter of secondary importance. But may we set first and beyond everything else, the kingdom of God and his righteousness.

May we lay hold on eternal life. May we so run that we may obtain. End quote. How we need that passion.

Neglect. Neglect. The servant was sent. It's nearly supper time. We're servants. If he is your Lord, your Master, you are his servant.

You are sent. Each one. It's nearly supper time. Time's running out. Neglect. We can neglect our mission. There's a survivor after the Titanic disaster.

[38:42] She remembers this survivor, Eva Hart. Remembers the night. April 15th, 1912. You know, this might put some of you off going on a cruise.

But this was April 15th, 1912. On which the Titanic plunged 12,000 feet to the Atlantic floor. Some two hours and 40 minutes after an iceberg.

Saw a 300 foot gash in her starboard side. And this is what this survivor, Eva Hart, says. I saw all the horror of it sinking. And I heard even more dreadful.

The cries of drowning people. Although 20 lifeboats and rafts were launched, too few. And only partly filled. Most of the passengers ended up struggling in the icy seas, while those in the boats waited a safe distance away.

Lifeboat number 14 did row back to the sea after the unsinkable ship slipped from sight at 2.20am into the icy waters.

[39:56] Alone, it chased cries in the darkness, seeking and saving a precious few. Incredibly, no other boat joined in.

Some were already overloaded. But in virtually every other boat, those already saved, rowed their half-filled boats aimlessly in the night, listening to the cries of the lost.

Each feared a crush of unknown swimmers would cling to their craft, eventually swamping it. What a picture. Listen. Rowing away the already saved in their half-filled boats.

Ignoring the ones in the sea. You know, neglect. People of God, we cannot neglect. We must not neglect. The Lord Jesus says, I came to seek and save the lost.

He's commissioned us to do the same. We've got his same mission. The same call. And we face a large obstacle. Fear. You know, we're scared to say anything.

[41:20] While people drown in the treacherous waters around us. And we're tempted to stay dry. And make certain no one rocks the boat. Yet the boat is not ours.

And our safety came only at the expense of the one who overcame fear with love and saved us.

Now let's not be like those lifeboats when the Titanic went down.

If our lifeboat is only half-filled. Let's go back. Where the people are calling out.

They need this message. Friends, the servant was sent. It's nearly supper time. Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you that you are our master.

We call you Lord. Lord, let it not just be that we call you Lord. But you will be Lord. And that we will be your servants to descend where you bid us to go.

[42:25] To speak to those you bid us to speak to. We know it's nearly supper time. We see signs very evident of the world's demise.

We see much need. We see the darkening days. We know Lord that time is short. Lord, help us to consider the value of every soul.

Lord, give us a passion Lord. Help us not to be selfish or prideful. Not to be fearful. And for those of us who have yet to even open our mouth, Lord, give us the guts.

And the boldness. The boldness. The passion. The compassion. Lord, we know it's only because others care to tell us that we know.

And we need to tell others too. While it's still time. Until it's supper time. Pray for anyone here today that is still making excuses.

[43:34] Why not? Why I'm not a Christian. That I put the excuses aside. Just bow their hearts to you. Lord, to know your saving grace. To know that wonderful good news.

Of your saving love. Because of the cross it's all paid for. If we just receive the payment. And trust you. Lord, we pray. Each one will.

Know that trust. Know that saving grace today. And Lord, help us to be such servants as we'll be.
Responsive to your call. Give us souls, Lord, that we can talk to.
And even if they reject us and they reject our message. We'll know that we've been faithful in
declaring it. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Thank you.