

The Great Supper

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[0:00] Luke 14 is the story of the Great Supper. I love this story. It's an telling account that we can learn much from it.

Luke chapter 14 from verses 16 through to 24. The Lord Jesus is speaking and He says from verse 16 of Luke 14, Then said He unto him, 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 are 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 hath me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee hath me excused. 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 the servant, Go out into the highways and henthes, 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. It's a story about a great banquet, a huge banquet, to which many were invited.

There was a lot of guests invited to this feast. And an invitation was issued. Now I received an invitation lately in a lovely envelope with beautiful writing on it.

And I opened it up and there was a card in there. Someone had taken great pains to make an invitation to invite me to a meal. And it had my name there, and somebody had written my name in gold letters, and it was a beautiful presentation.

I could imagine how perhaps this man had taken the trouble to send out invitations far and wide to personally invite people to join him for this great dinner.

[2:40] And the Father, as the Father, can think as the historic pictures of how God extends an invitation. And this invitation is precious.

This invitation is precious. It's open. It's extended to all. The Father extends his invitation to everyone. Now the guests weren't expected to invite themselves or to earn this meal by their own efforts.

They didn't have to pay something when they walked in the door. It was a precious invitation. A personal invitation. It was all of grace. It was all because the inviter to the feast had extended the invitation.

And it's like that too with salvation, isn't it? Whosoever will may come. He's extending his invitation. And he's still extending that invitation today to our world today.

And it says from verse 17, when it was the time for the banquet, he sent his servant. He said to tell them, to tell those who had been invited, please come.

[3:57] Come right away. Everything is ready. And our Lord says still, come. He still beckons, come. Come unto me. He says, all you that labor and are heavy laden.

Matthew 11. He says in Isaiah 1, come now. Let us reason together. He says, Isaiah 55. Come. All you who are thirsty, come.

Revelation 22. Right at the back of the book. He says, come. Whoever is thirsty can come. Whosoever can come.

And it says, come. Not just come. But it says, come now. In Luke 14, verse 17.

He says, come. He says, now. Things are now ready. It's still, his invitation is still, come now. Come just as you are.

[4:57] Come to this invitation, to this invitation so full, so free. He bids us come to his table. It's like 2 Corinthians 6, verse 2.

Behold now. Today. Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation. Now. Come now. Now is the accepted time.

Do not delay. Accept his invitation today. I know when we witness at times different ones, some people will say no. They'll outright say no.

They'll curse Christ to your face. As happened on Friday night. They don't want to know. I don't give a bleep about Jesus Christ. That's what they say. And, you know, they're saying where they stand. They've made their stand. They've stepped over the line to the side that they stand on. Some people, it's hard to tell which side of the line they're on. But when the chips are down, they don't come to Christ.

[5:58] They don't come to him on his terms. They don't come to him on bended knee with a broken, repentant, contrite spirit. They don't come to him. They will rather do things their own way.

And, friends, the gospel is an invitation. It's still an invitation extended today to those that will receive it. And yet some would rather have something else.

There's a story told of how a gospel preacher was speaking to an infidel, an atheist, a Christ rejecter. And this avowed infidel, he challenged the preacher, this preacher, Brother Hughes, to a debate.

And this preacher, he was head of a rescue mission in London, England. And he accepted the debate, the challenge with the condition that he could bring with him 100 men and women who would tell what had happened in their lives since trusting Christ as their saviour.

And they would be people who once lived in deep sin. Some who had come from poverty-stricken homes caused by the vices of their parents, the drunkenness, the waste of a Christless life.

[7:09] And he said that they would not only tell of their conversion, how Christ had converted them, but they would submit to cross-examination by any who doubted their stories.

And furthermore, the preacher invited his opponent to bring a group of non-believers, non-believers who could tell how they were helped by their lack of faith. And when the appointed day arrived, the preacher came with him 100 transformed people.

But the infidel never showed up. The result, the meeting, turned into a testimony time about the grace of God, about the wonder of conversion.

And these sinners testified of how Christ had saved them. And some folk followed them too, to trust Christ.

When they gathered to hear the scheduled debate, they were converted as well. It's an invitation.

And it's an invitation that makes a difference in our hearts, in our lives. It's a transforming invitation.

[8:15] And he says, come now. Come now while there's still time, while everything is ready. And then from verse 18, we see how their response to the invitation, the initial guests who were invited.

One guest after another, they began to make excuses. Excuses. people make about accidents that they have with their insurance companies. Here's some unusual explanations for automobile accidents, for car accidents. An invisible car came out of nowhere, struck my car and vanished. The other car collided with mine without warning me of its intention.

I had been driving my car for 40 years when I fell asleep at the wheel and had the accident. The pedestrian had no idea which direction to go so I ran over him.

The telephone pole was approaching fast. I attempted to swerve out of its path when it struck my front end. The guy was all over the road. I had to swerve a number of times before I hit him.

And this one he says, the cause of the accident was a little guy in a small car with a big mouth. You know, people make excuses for all kinds of things. You know, as a preacher, people make all kinds of excuses. Why? They're not in church. Why they don't want to come and fellowship?

[10:09] I could write a book about it. About the excuses. The excuses people make. And weedy, weak excuses. It's a poor excuse, really.

Oftentimes. I mean, there's valid ones, certainly. But friends, there's excuses that people make about salvation. What a tragedy that people would make excuses.

And these ones, one by one, they say, please excuse me. Have me excused. And number one, you see the first one here. He's bought some land. In verse 18, he's bought some land and he's got to go and look at it.

Wealth. Wealth can be a reason why men are not Christians. I think it's going to cost them too much. I think it's going to be too much inconvenience. Excuses. It's like the excuses people use of the gospel.

It's not an outright refusal, yet it's not an acceptance. They kind of excuse it. They're putting it off. They're pussyfooting around. They refuse to accept the offer of the gospel. They're too busy.

They've got other commitments, other priorities, seeking gain or gold, pursuing pleasure. Wealth was more important to him. Making money or making a show of looking after his property that he had. That was more important to him, looking at the piece of ground that he had bought. Likewise, the second one, he's bought five teams of oxen. Verse 19, he wants to try them out. Work was an excuse for him to put ahead of the kingdom of God. Work. It says, labor not for meat which perishes. Don't put work ahead of Christ.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Let's place all our attention on that which matters. Really, the kingdom of God we should seek first. Not putting off, getting right with God God. By putting material things or business interests ahead of the things of God. And thirdly, we see worldly pleasures. Verse 20, he's just got married so he can't be there. But then why did he bring his wife along? Why couldn't he have taken her along with him too to the feast? Why couldn't he have brought his wife along to the feast instead of using her as an excuse? And he was just using his wife, his new wife as an excuse where his social interests were more important than to be at the master's feast. Where his social interests were more important, his searching for pleasure or social things whilst he was neglecting friendship with the invited to the feast. And that can be true true. Two for people with salvation. They put their worldly affections, their social interests ahead of friendship with God. What a tragedy that you lose having that one who can be the friend of your soul. That one who offers a friendship that is eternal, that is so precious and critical and beautiful. And yet some other affection takes his place. Whether it's pursuing pleasure, material interests as the man with the land. Whether it's pursuing business interests as it was the man with the oxen. Or whether it's pursuing secular and social interests and affections ahead of God. And some truly do make that choice today still. Where it's the cares of this world. It's the deceitfulness of riches. It's the pleasures of this life that trap people, that tie people, that are a barrier to people from trusting the Lord and taking Christ as Saviour. And so it says in verse 21, the servant reports it back to the master about all these things, about the excuses that people made. So this is precious invitation. This invitation is precious. It's written with the very blood of Christ to you.

[14:14] The invitation for salvation. It's extended with his nail pierced hand as extended to you. And it's simple faith is trusting him. I was reading of late how the thief on the cross, the cross. His hands were nailed. He couldn't work. His feet were nailed. He couldn't even walk.

All he could do was say, Lord. And that's all we can do. Is extend our faith towards him and trust his invitation and receive it. It's simple faith.

Trusting him. It's not any working of our own. And Christ assured that man, this thief, this unworthy, vagabond, deservedly dying for his crime, next to the sinless one, extending that invitation. And he trusted him. And that made all the difference as he trusted Christ.

The invitation was accepted. But many reject it still today. The invitation, that precious invitation. And secondly, this invitation, it's a pressing invitation. This invitation is something that is pressing. That is urgent. That is for a limited time only. There's a time limit on this invitation.

It's like you're seeing the junk mail sometimes. You know, I've got this very bad habit with junk mail, of taking the junk mail and where it's a KFC or a Hungry Jack's voucher and in fine print it's got an expiry date. And I sometimes, I cheekily go to these fast food places, and I know I shouldn't, it's one of my failings in life, and I go to these fast food places, and they say, oh, sorry sir, it's expired.

[16:10] But sometimes they let you off, you know. But you know, God has got an expiry date on salvation. It's for a limited time only. It's like, you hear the story of Noah, when he boarded the ark and he had been preaching for what, how many years? Hundreds. Over a hundred years he'd been preaching.

And his own family was all he had to show for his many years of preaching. And they entered the ark and God shut the door. And for all their crying and screaming and yelling and banging on that door, it was closed. It was over for them. And like that too, it will be the same for salvation that it's for a limited time only. And so for the meantime, it's an urgent invitation.

It's urgent. Come with an appetite to this feast. Come with an appetite. Quick. There is no time to lose. The gospel is ready. Here they were. And it starts from verse 21, that the master of the house, the master of the house, he became angry.

What an insult. What an insult it was to the master of this feast, to the, to the inviter to this feast. What an insult it was that they would reject his invitation.

God is angry with the wicked every day. For those who spurn his call, his invitation, his plea.

[17:53] He's angry. He's got a right to be angry. He has got every right. The feast is neglected. That salvation offer is rejected. It's spurned. It's hated. It's spat upon. They still spit on him.

Today. Everyone gets an invite, an opportunity. It's pressing. It's urgent. And God is angry at those who reject salvation.

He says, hurry out. He says, go out quickly into the streets, into the lanes of the city, into the alleys, into every place you can imagine in that city place, in the town, in the streets.

And bring them here, he says. Bring them here. Everyone who is poor, who is maimed, who is crippled, who is blind, who is lame. Those who are very poor and low in the world are welcome.

As Christ welcomes all. From the rich and great to the very poor and low, everybody is welcome at his table.

[19:04] Those who are looked down upon, those who are overlooked. Everyone can have a seat at his table. Isn't that great? That our Saviour, as pictured in this parable, that our Lord, our Master would have that open invitation.

And we could think of those, as you can see pictured here, those who are spiritually bankrupt. Those who are, you know, you can't bail them out. You can't.

They're so bankrupt, spiritually bankrupt, morally bankrupt. And they can't walk straight. They're crippled. They're blind. They're incomplete.

Now some would scorn them. But Christ does not scorn. He invites. Christ invites. And you can still be saved, even though you've been crippled by sin.

Even though your life is tied you down with all the mess and mire and muck. It talks about how he lifted me up out of the miry clay.

[20:06] And he set my feet on the rock. That's what Christ does. That is what Christ is. He takes us out of the stinking, filthy mud and muck and mire of sin.

And he lifts us up onto his shoulders upon his rock, upon Christ. And the invitation is pressing today. There's still opportunity for anyone.

There will still be room. Till the angel declares, time shall be no more. Then the door will be closed and the everlasting feast will begin. There will not always be room.

One day he's going to put a sign on the door. Full house. Full house. There's a hymn in our book here. There's room at the cross for you. Though millions have come, there's still room for one.

There's room at the cross for you. Who knows who will be that last one? Wouldn't that be amazing to be the last one? The last one to trust him before it's over.

[21:05] He closes the door. You know, but then maybe you just won't quite make it. Someone will beat you to it. They'll be the last one. And it will be no more time for you.

One day his mercy is going to be exhausted. But meantime, the blood has not lost its power.

There's still room at the cross for you. There's still room in the love of God for you.

There's still room in heaven for you. There are fountains which no number can drink dry. Heaven is not full. And there is still room.

There is still room tonight. Acts 17.31, it says that he has set a day. He's set a day. We don't know when that day is. I don't know if it's in my... I've got it marked in my diary, but maybe it's this year.

He has set a day in which he's going to judge the world. There's going to be judgment and it's coming. And yet there is still room. Verse 23, he says, urge them. He says, urge them.

[22:05] He says, compel them to come in. There's an urgency. There's a compulsion. There is an offer of salvation that is extended. God wants his house filled.

He wants heaven filled. With those that will respond. Verse 23, it says, he says, compel them to come in that my house may be filled.

It's got the sense in the Greek, the word filled, it means crammed. God wants heaven crammed. God wants... The master of the feast wants his house crammed.

He wants it to be standing room only at this feast. That's how wide the heart of God is. He wants as many as will, will come. And the poor and the needy can come.

He seeks us out in all our wanderings and he knocks often at our heart's door. There is still room. There is still room today. It's interesting. Someone said this about Christ and his ministry.

[23:03] What Christ did when he was about his work on planet Earth. It's an example to us. It says, Christ met unbelievers where they were. He realised what many Christians today still don't seem to understand.

Cultivators have to get out in the field. According to one count, the gospel records 132 contacts that Jesus had with people. Six were in the temple, four in the synagogues, and 122 were out with the people in the mainstream of life.

It's an interesting thought, isn't it? That our Saviour went out. It was the ones he spoke to were the ones out. They weren't in the religious institutions, in the religious gathering places.

They were out in the streets, in the marketplaces, in the world. And friends, we need to have that pressing sense of the pressing nature of the urgency of the hour, of the need to seek them out, to press them urgently.

David Brainerd was a reputed missionary of old, an esteemed man of God, who ministered in some faraway places, reaching souls for Christ.

[24:19] And he said this, he said, I cannot where I go, or how I live, or what I endure, so that I may save souls. When I sleep, I dream of them.

When I awake, they are first in my thoughts. Do we have that kind of urging, that kind of sense of the critical nature of the times in which we live, of the invitation that is soon to come to an end?

Do we have a sense of the anger of God? It's not something you often hear spoken of, of the anger of God.

The master of the house became angry. He was angry. The master of the feast was angry. He was insulted. And it says, I've got a quote here, There are more than 20 words used to express the wrath concept, as it applies to Jehovah.

There are, these are used so frequently, that there are over 580 occurrences to be taken into consideration. So in other words, 580 times it talks about God being angry or having wrath.

[25:37] Now, sometimes we just think of God as a light and fluffy, airy-fairy and warm and fuzzy.

But sometimes God has got an anger, an anger, a rightful anger, a stern, righteous anger, an indignation against sin, against disobedience, against the Christ-rejecters of our world today.

God is angry at the wicked every day. And it's said of Whitefield, an old-time preacher of long ago, that he was preaching about John the Baptist's appeal to the Sadducees to flee from the wrath to come.

And as he preached, Whitefield burst into a flood of tears and then cried with all his might, Oh, my hearers, the wrath is to come! The wrath is to come!

The word sank into the young man's heart who was listening as he followed. And he could think of little else after the preacher Whitefield had spoken of this phrase, the wrath to come.

[26:47] And he later became a considerable preacher. That was a conversion, a genuine conversion. Because this man got a picture, he got imprinted on his mind, that sense of the wrath to come, of fleeing the wrath to come, and of his sin as something that he, was something that God hated and he had to deal with.

So there's a sense of that pressing nature of the invitation. And just lastly, to think of this, brother, sister tonight, if you're a Christian tonight, you should be like the servant who the Master wants to send out, to compel them, those outside of the feast, to come.

That as a Christian believer, we are all to be his servants, to be extending the invitation, on behalf of the Saviour, of the Master of our Lord, to the world around us.

How critical it is, how essential it is, that there is this awesome responsibility to invite others. And friends, if you're not one of his servants inviting others to come, perhaps you're one of those who can become his guest.

You can come, as those that were invited to the feast, you can come, as a sinner, to the gospel feast. You can come, as a needy one, as a poor and humble one, to come, to this banquet, that is salvation, that is, a free and full feast, that you can be a partaker of, today, if you're not already.

[28:27] And yet, in verse 24, we see, the rounding up of the story, where, the Master of the feast says, not one of those, others, this is verse 24, not one of those men, who are bitter, shall taste of my supper.

For some, they're not even going to get a taste of it. Wouldn't it be horrible if you, I know sometimes you, you walk around, and you walk past someone's house, and you can, oh, I've got a barbecue or something, you can smell that food.

You can almost hear the, the sausages, and the onions cooking, and you, you can almost imagine, the flavour of the, of the tomato sauce, going on that, lovely snag sandwich, and, just makes you, oh, yeah, just, I do that when I go to Bunnings, sometimes, and, and you, you smell that, the sausages, it's so appealing, but, you know, it's going to be like this, for some people, maybe they can get a sniff of it, but they're not going to get a taste of it, and it's for some, they're going to get so close, just so close, so close, that, they were invited, that, that, they got reminded, the servant went out, and knocked on their door, and said, come on, it's ready, he's, the cook's just dishing it up, come, come to this feast, it's ready for you, oh, I'm not feeling quite hungry enough just now, or, you know, I'm not quite, I've got this and that to do, to occupy myself with, oh, maybe later, or, you know, oh, I'm not just now, I'm too busy, or whatever it is, some excuse, was something that, that made them miss out, and, friends, what a danger it is for many, they reject the gospel,

I was reading of, how, it's true that, sometimes, especially for those later in life, the minute proportion of those who trust Christ, in their older years, when they turn like, in their 50s, 60s, 70s, the minute proportion of people, they trust Christ, because they've put it off so long, they've rejected him so long, their heart has been hardened so long, that they've left it too late, and they will not even get a taste, of heaven, it's vital, it's essential, you can't afford to miss this, that salvation is free to all, while it's extended, come and partake of it, the feast is prepared, it's ready, the invitations are being issued, will you decline your invitation, will you decline your invitation, or will you accept your invitation, will you say, yes, I'm hungry, and thirsting, I want to taste, and see, that the Lord is good, I want to get a taste, of, that satisfaction, that only Christ can give, that, salvation, that, can satisfy, that, soul hunger, that I have, that only he can, fill, or will it be, for you, that you'll miss out, you won't get a crumb, you won't get a crumb, you won't get a bite of it, for some, they'll miss out, friends, Christ, is extending the invitation, I know for many here, you're believers, I don't know, whether you've trusted him, everyone here tonight, but I urge you, I urge you, I urge you, as, the servants, sought, for the master of the feast, to compel them, to come in, I just want to, hold you, and pull you, into heaven, with me, I want you, to be saved tonight, if you're not already, I want to compel you, I want to drag you, kicking and screaming, to the cross today, to come to Christ, don't put it off, don't delay, don't miss this, it's too great, it's too awesome, to miss this, accept the master's call tonight, you know, God doesn't, drag you into heaven, he'd love to, but, he invites you, he doesn't force you, against your will, he extends the invitation, whosoever will, may come, it's got to have that, will, it's got to have that, yes, it's got to have that,

[32:36] I see it, I receive it, it's a priority tonight, friends, just to close, as a Christian tonight, I urge you, each one, let us be faithful, as the servant was, to the master of the feast, as Christ would have us be, as the ones, his ambassadors, sent to this world, just to, invite others, to trust him, that you have this precious invitation, on your lips, this invitation, that is precious, that he wants you to communicate, you are his voice, he has no other lips, to speak through, other than your lips, they must speak, this invitation, is precious, this invitation, is pressing, it's a time limited, invitation, it's an offer, that will expire, it is a pressing, urgent invitation, that you must deliver, believers tonight, this offer of salvation, you must declare it,

fully and soundly, and widely, this pressing invitation, and it's a priority, it's a priority, it must be a priority, for every believer, every true, solid, born again,

Christian believer, it must be your priority, that nothing else, takes precedence, over this, than you being his messenger, that you being, about, the work of inviting others, and, impressing on them, the danger, of rejecting the gospel, not to pat people, on the back, and say, you'll be right, you're a good person, you know, there was a folk, some folk, Wednesday, Friday, a man, as I mentioned, he couldn't give a bleep, about, Jesus Christ, and I said, as, as, kindly as I could, I said, look, you've chosen hell, you're going to hell, you're going to burn, for eternity, in hell, and, you know, I didn't say that, to make me look any good, or, or make him look any bad, that, that, people need to be gripped, with the sense of eternity, gripped with the sense, of their destination, gripped with the, peril, the danger, the, the absolute, dreadful, state, that they're in, their estate, is, is desperate, desperate, and, they're damned, they're doomed, unless they turn, and, how we need to, impress on them, to press on them that, and,

I didn't make him, my friend, when I told him that, he didn't like that, and, you might not be liked, it's like, you know, I've had to challenge, some Christians, about certain things, and, people I've, spent many years, trying to help, and, encourage, and, and, exhort, and, help them to grow, to be grounded, in faith, to trust him, and, you know, I had the door, slammed in my face, virtually, and, told to, to leave them alone, someone that I tried, to, disciple, and minister to, and help, and, it reminds me of the, verse how it says, I am crucified, with Christ, and, it's almost made me feel like, going up that, and say, yeah, put another nail in, put another nail in, and, and not, not, refusing it, or feeling, you know, but I almost felt like, that was what was happening to me, that I was being nailed, and yet, that's all we can be, isn't it, it can all be just messengers, and sometimes, you're going to be crucified, with Christ, and that's okay, that's what we, what we are to be, isn't it, we're not, we're not here to, win a popularity contest, to, to, have people patting us on the back, and saying, what nice things we say, sometimes, what we'll say, is what people don't want to hear, and yet, that is what they must hear, that is what they need to hear, and we must be faithful, in delivering it, friends, there's a preacher, just one last quote, a Robert Moffat, a missionary, as well, he said, we'll have, all eternity, to celebrate our victories, but only one short hour, before sunset, to win them, we've only got, a little time, before sunset, it's going down, we've just got, a little bit of time, on this planet of ours, and it's not about, living it up, and having a wow of a time, it's about making, the most of our time, it's about, redeeming the time, because the days are evil, we'll have all eternity, to celebrate our victories, put yourself, out for Christ, put yourself out, where you're willing to be, hurt for Christ, to be crucified for Christ, with him, let us pray,

Lord, we thank you, for the wonderful invitation, that you extend, to humanity, that, in Christ, at the cross, you, bore those nails, that pain, that sin, most of all, of ours, that, you took our punishment, for our sin, Lord, we don't, deserve heaven, by anything, by anything of ourselves, but everything, of what you have done, and Lord, we trust you, I pray, Lord, each one, here tonight, would trust you, that we'd call upon you, that we'd find that, place of repentance, of, bowing our hearts, our wills, to your, to your cross, Lord, to you, to think of you, to love you, to follow you, to obey you, and dear Lord, for each believer, that we'd be challenged, to be about the work, or extending the invitation, to those around us, that, wherever we have, that opportunity, Lord, we'll be, wise to take it, and, that you'll be pleased, to use us, we pray, by your Holy Spirit, and power, and by your wonderful, grace and mercy, we thank you,

Lord, in Jesus name, Amen, God bless you, everybody, go with God, God bless you,