

Dinner Directions for Disciples

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[0 : 00] I was in university when I first was introduced to broccoli and cauliflower and it was raw.

I'd never seen broccoli, I'd never seen cauliflower before and I turned to a friend that was with me in dinner etiquette class. I attended a military university in South Carolina and my friend was also from the country.

And I said, what's that? And he said, I don't know, but it looks like we're going to eat it. And they had carrots. I'd never seen carrots before uncooked. My dad would say that that, along with lettuce, was not made for man.

That was rabbit food. My teacher, my instructor, had very little to work with. Well, we had to learn how to properly hold the chair for a lady. We had to learn to never take the first bite before our host. We had to learn how to hold the chair for someone as well as place the napkin in her lap. It was quite a class. So here I am in a uniform and I'm told that I must learn dinner manners in order to be an officer in the armed forces.

[1 : 46] Probably one of the toughest classes that I ever took in my life. Boot camp was far easier. Tonight, we're going to look at dinner etiquette. Dinner directions to disciples.

But it's not how to entertain. It's who to entertain. And it's not Martha Stewart or it's not how to properly entertain with every bit of silverware set out in the appropriate order as much as who are the guests at our table.

And how are we hosting them? Look at the scriptures with me tonight. I want you to see in these dinner directions to disciples four things.

I want you to see, first of all, and observe in these scriptures that we're going to look at, Jesus is speaking directly to the host. Secondly, I want you to see that Jesus is speaking about the banquet. Not any dinner, but the banquet of heaven. And then thirdly, I want you to see Jesus speaking about the host.

[3 : 09] Here's where he gives directions directly to the disciples about how we are to be like the greatest of all hosts. And then finally, I want you to see in verse 24 that Jesus is speaking to us all.

Or if you're familiar with southern colloquialism, y'all. Jesus is speaking to y'all. First of all, Jesus is speaking to the host.

You see in verse 12, he says, He said also to the man who had invited him. Jesus is a Sabbath day. And perhaps it's like the day that we've enjoyed.

We've had a time where we have worshipped God. And as Wendy and I did, we had a wonderful lunch and an afternoon spent with very gracious hosts.

We had table fellowship around the dinner table. We spent an afternoon in conversation of edifying things.

[4 : 18] We learned more about one another and the time just flew by. Well, here Jesus has been invited by a Pharisee. And it says earlier in verse 1 of chapter 14, that it was the ruler of the Pharisees that had invited him.

Their eyes are on Jesus. But Jesus turns at this point and his eyes are on the host. And he begins to give him directions about hosting future dinners and banquets.

And he says, When you do give a dinner or banquet, there are four categories of people that you are inviting.

And I want to challenge you to flip that to include four categories that you never invite. He says, The four categories you invite are your friends, your brothers, which is brothers and sisters, your relatives, and your rich neighbors.

But the people that you should invite are the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

[5 : 49] The people you should invite are the people that are of a category that because of their poverty or because of their inability to work, because of their inability to ever invite you into their home to host a dinner or a banquet, their inability to ever repay you in any way.

Those are the ones that you should invite. Now let's be clear. What he's not saying is he's not saying to you and to me that we should not have rich fellowship and times of dinners and banquets and feasting with our family such as we've just had and we are yet going to have in this holiday season.

We certainly are called to love our family. We're certainly, Jesus welcomes us to meet with our friends. Jesus would do this often.

Meeting in the home of Mary and Martha. Meeting with his disciples. Meeting with others. But if we do that to the exclusion of the poor, the lame, the crippled, if we do that to the exclusion of those our neighbors who cannot repay us in any way, then he says there's something wrong.

When he says in verse 14, do invite them, you'll be blessed. He implies that you're not going to be blessed by them, but you're going to be blessed by another.

[7 : 41] And he says it. It may have to wait until you're repaid at the resurrection of the just. I have the ESV. I believe it says righteous and yours.

But this is imagery that every Jew would know. This is imagery of the great day of the Lord's coming.

When there will be a day not only of judgment, but it was called the golden age when the Messiah comes. And on that day there will be a great banquet.

And Jesus is saying to the host and he's saying to us, there's a payment now for our deeds, but there's a payment that yet awaits us when we minister to those that are less than us.

When we show grace and mercy to others. When we show charity to others. When we befriend others.

[8 : 52] when we open up our homes the most intimate place that we have in our lives to others. We're observed. And we can be the very hands and feet of the great host Jesus Christ who would not only feed his guests but he would wash their feet.

Even his disciples. Jesus was speaking first to the host and he was talking about hospitality. Rosaria Butterfield in *The Gospel Comes with a House Key* it's a lengthy quote but I ask that you bear with me.

Says this about hospitality. Be mindful. Hospitality. Christian hospitality is not only different from entertaining but it is radically different from what the world sees as hospitality.

God calls Christians to practice hospitality in order to build loving communities. To build nightly table fellowship with fellow image bearers to ease the pain of orphanhood, widowhood, and prison. To be qualified as elders in the church and to be good and faithful stewards of what God has given to us in the person of Jesus Christ. The Gospel call that renders strangers into neighbors into the family of God is all pretty straight up when you read the Bible.

[10 : 39] But this is not where it ends. God calls us to practice hospitality as a daily way of life, not as an occasional activity when time and finance allow.

Radically ordinary hospitality means this. God promises to put the lonely into families, and He intends to use your house as living proof.

In 2020, who will come through the doors of our home? Who will come into our life?

Who will we include in our fellowship? Will it be just friends, family, good-looking neighbors who have it all together?

or we would look to those that Jesus invites us to enter in even with Him and to minister to them as fellow image bearers through hospitality?

[11 : 53] This is a very, a very Lucan, meaning the author Luke theme, that we are to not simply love those that can repay us or compensate us or reciprocate us, but that we're to love those that are different than us, particularly those that can never repay us.

And in that is a reflection of the gospel that freely we have received forgiveness and grace and we can never repay, but we can serve our Lord even by showing the grace that we've received to others.

When Jesus says this in verse 14, there's a man in verse 15 that pops up. So, Jesus now, in response to this man, begins to speak about the banquet.

it says, when one of those who were reclined at the table with him heard these things, what did he hear?

What he heard was about the day of the resurrection, the day of the return of the Lord, the day of the coming again of the Messiah, the day of that great banquet, the messianic banquet, or as we would know, the great wedding feast of the Lamb, a day that they lived for, and they looked much toward.

[13:37] William Barclay, in his commentary, writes, the Christian should ever live with the wedding feast of the Lamb in mind, and his promised presence there.

Solomon would say we should live with eternity in our hearts and on our minds. This man, when he heard it, when he heard these things, he said, blessed is everyone, happy is everybody who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

And he's not saying that the bread there is better, though I do believe that in the new heaven and the new earth, I do believe at the wedding feast of the Lamb. I do believe that we will eat in heaven, and I believe in the feast of heaven.

I do believe that our taste buds will be enhanced. But he's not thinking about the bread. The bread here in the kingdom of God is symbolic of all dinners and all banquets and all feasts.

It's the table fellowship. It's who we're eating bread with. When he says, happy are those who eat bread in that world, in that place.

[14:55] He's saying, happy are all of those who dwell there. Happy are all of those who are at table there, and not because of the food, but because of who they're with.

Eusebius, a historian, wrote this about the author of Luke's gospel, Luke himself. Eusebius as a historian said, the author of Luke's gospel is one Luke.

He was not a disciple, an immediate one of the twelve of Jesus, but he was a traveling companion to Paul. He was a Gentile by race and a physician by profession.

there's a tale in there, there's a clue in there. Luke often emphasizes this banquet to come.

When Jesus begins to give directions here in just a moment about this table, even as he's at table in the Pharisees home, that future banquet was on his mind.

[16:08] That future banquet he alludes to by the resurrection of the just, and this one pops up and he says, man, that day is going to be great. Jesus doesn't correct him.

He doesn't say, well, now, wait a minute, you know, we won't eat bread in the kingdom, because that's not true. In Luke, earlier, in chapter 13, in verse 29, Jesus says, and people will come from east and west and from north and south and recline at table in the kingdom of God.

It's a real table. It's a real kingdom. It is our God. Elsewhere, in Luke, chapter 22, verse 18, Jesus, speaking at the Lord's table, the Lord's supper, Lord's prayer, I tell you that from now on, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

Luke, chapter 22, verse 29, and I assign to you, as my father assigned to me, a kingdom that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

This was a theme of Luke and he was a Gentile. it was something that even as one who was not a child of Abraham by race could say, I look forward to that table too.

[18:08] Throughout the gospel of Luke, more than the others, he emphasizes eating and drinking at the table that the Lord himself has set. Isaiah 25, verse 6, on this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food, full of marrow, of aged wine, well-refined.

Our host prepares this table for his, his saints, the righteous, those that are invited to come along and to join him.

Revelation chapter 19 says, let us rejoice and exalt and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. It may seem like a small point, but Jesus is speaking here about the banquet and he, just as he would not discourage this man, he would expand even on his dream and his longing for the day that he would eat and sup and fellowship with a living God, his God, in the new heavens and the new earths.

thirdly, Jesus begins to speak about the host. Now when I say that, there are many, going from this point on, there's many, a commentator, there's many, a sermon, I've even preached this text in the past with an emphasis upon the lost, with an emphasis on the excuses that people make to not

come when invited to the banquet.

[20 : 23] But the emphasis is not on the three individuals and their families who are invited and who give lame excuses as to why they cannot come.

the emphasis is not on those that turn down the invitation, busying themselves with commercial endeavors and domestic endeavors, the emphasis is on the host.

It's about the host. It's not, Luke doesn't want us to simply focus our attention on those invitees who refuse to come.

He's saying, keep your eye on the one who is inviting. Observe four things. Number one, it says, then verse 16, that this host, a man once gave a great banquet and invited many.

Some of your Bibles may say a certain man. Elsewhere, when this parable is recorded, it says a king. But this is certainly a person that is above all men.

[21 : 42] It's a reflection on God. God is the true host. He is the host who first invites many.

The many can be seen as those in Jesus' audience, the Pharisees, representing the Jews, the nation of Israel.

They were invited, but there were many reasons that they did not come. And I'm not going to focus on the reasons, but they were invited first.

He invited them. God. Verse 21 tells us that a servant came back. He reports that the many who were invited gave lame excuses.

Robert McQuilkin says that an excuse is a half-baked reason cooked in a lie.

[22 : 47] There's some self-justification as to why I'm not coming to your banquet. But it is offensive. During this day there would have been two invitations to a dinner to go out.

The first invitation would have been the formal invitation that an RSVP if you were not coming was expected because this would go out and then the calf would be slaughtered or the lamb the wine would be brought in the table would be prepared the home because it would be a feast a number of days and you would expect to host and to lodge the guest in your home.

They didn't say they would not come they just waited and waited and then the day arrives now servants go out and they say the meal is ready now is the time it is hot the beds are prepared come and they said no this was enough to make it says this is enough to make in verse 21 the master of the house angry for you see he realized they weren't turning down the food they weren't saying your lodging is inadequate they were saying we don't want to come into your home we don't want fellowship with you we don't want conversation with you we don't want to come into your intimate space we don't want to recline with you at your table and so now the host invites poor beggars now he begins to do what

Jesus had said earlier to the host he said this host then sends out his servants and he invites the poor the crippled the blind and the lame now these would have been found in the marketplace these are the folk that many times you'll see on Saki Hall Street they would be folks that would be known to many of the Pharisees they would have been yes Jane the poor woman John the crippled they would see them every day and he's saying servants go to those people I know they're there we see them all the time go to those who are begging for their living go to those who cannot work go to those that there's no way they can ever repay me and so the servants go they go to those that cannot repay widows orphans those that have no resume those that have no connections those that are without family those that are without friends those are who

Jesus is saying this host invites and then the host invited the homeless in verse 22 the servant comes back and he says you know boss we did what you said and we think that there was a great roundup the party is filling up people are now reclining around the places that are set up rooms are beginning to be occupied such with things that a beggar might have but boss there's still room there's a lot of food you know you're pretty extravagant I mean you went all out this is the best of needs it's the best wine it's the aged wine you've prepared this table yourself you've missed nothing the tables are overflowing you've provided for every want in fact some of the cripple they're not crying anymore some of the lame they're very comfortable now they're reclining and they're at table but there's still a lot of space

[27 : 45] I mean you are over the top in verse 23 the master said to the servant go to the highways and the hedges and in the NSV it says compel people to come in Jesus now as the host God says he's going to invite the homeless because that's where they're found they're they're found living in the shrubbery they're along the highways or I should say today they're under the highways these are the cardboard box and the tent and the sleeping bag people and I I say this meaning no offense

I have many friends and I can name them Reggie Molly these are the crazies these are the drug addicted these are those that they don't smell very nice they have no sense of dinner etiquette and this host this host does what no earthly host would do he says go and compel them this word compel augustine not to his credit not his best days but it was this word that augustine said we can use force and violence to bring the unbelievers to

Jesus Christ now we know because of the law of love as Paul would say that is what compels us it's best to see this as strong urging we're not going to reach the homeless we're not going to reach the shrub people we're not going to reach the people that live under bridges we'll never bring them into their home even by a simple invitation they're afraid of us and they're also very uncomfortable in our clean homes they know the difference it's going to take quite a bit of work Elizabeth asked me today we were talking after this morning service and I'm very grateful for some insights she asked a great question she said why don't churches go more into poor communities and deal more with the folks that have such struggles they just can't do life very well and

I said as a pastor of many years I know and I can speak only for myself I have to learn how to communicate with them and it's not easy and also there's no return it's not profitable it's all give it's all sacrifice but Jesus was saying don't look to them to repay you think about the banquet think about that banquet the repayment comes when we the homeless except he give us a home in eternity we the beggars except he make us rich by the forgiveness of our sins and the life that he gives to us we're going to be at his table and he invites us to bring others along and notice that finally about

Jesus speaking to the host the host did invite through his servants the servants are his disciples if God is the master of the banquet then we're his servants we're his voice we're the ones that in Christian community because we are not trying to justify our own self by our lavish surroundings or who sits at our table but because we have been justified by grace because we've been given a new life we can now like the host we can invite others we can serve them and not simply invite people that would serve us in verse 24 I see Jesus speaking to us all he says

I tell you there should be a foot note in many of your Bibles I'm not sure in the pew Bible but should be a foot note and the word for I tell you is you plural again in the south we solve the problem by saying y'all you all Jesus now speaks to everybody at this dinner party he speaks to everyone gathered after worship on this Sabbath and he speaks about his banquet prepared and he says I tell you none of those who were invited shall taste my banquet it was prominent at that time that if you were invited to a banquet and you made an excuse you're a rich neighbor and you've decided not to go to this when you've got a different banquet you've decided to go to that still the banquet that you were invited to because they respected you and they wanted for your company so much they would send food after you sorry we missed you here's your to go box

[34 : 30] Jesus says no if you turn down the invitation there is no to go box there's no benefit of my kingdom you won't eat at my table you won't be in fellowship with me who are you in this parable parable I find it helpful to place myself in this parable I like to think that I'm I'm the guy in verse 15 that Jesus mentions the resurrection and I pop up and I'm like oh I want to talk about new heaven and new earth it's my favorite subject let's talk about what heaven is going to be like it's much on my mind but I'm not sure I am maybe tonight you're a Christian but you're not at the table of fellowship Jesus is inviting you back he says if anyone he says behold

I stand at the door and I'm knocking and if you'll open the door if you'll invite me in I'll come in and I'll eat I'll sup with you I'll drink with you I'll be intimate with you I'll have fellowship with you do you have a better invitation maybe you're a grateful beggar at the king's table I sure hope so I hope you're like Mephibosheth you remember Mephibosheth he was the grandson of king Saul he was crippled he was lame he when Saul was overthrown and dead he was thrown out but David when he became the royal king he said are there any that I can show mercy to any that I can show grace to and he said there's just that crippled one Mephibosheth and he said he shall eat at the king's table as long as shall live what a day that must have been when

Mephibosheth came to David's palace and swung those crippled legs under the table I bet the bread and the wine and the meat and the cheese never tasted so well but I'll bet he never took his eye off the king not simply because he was his beneficiary but because of his love because he had received grace that he should be included in fellowship maybe you're a hedgerow dweller who needs compelling is heaven your home is that your destined home if not look at your home now how's it treating you can I compel you can I urge you to look at the life you have now and the

promise of eternal life that is yours in Jesus Christ what's holding you back how's self sufficiency working for you self reliance is a huge idol if not the largest what would it look like now to say I am homeless I would have my home with God I will heed this servant's urging and I will come and sup and drink at Jesus invitation even by his death on the cross and then lastly are you a servant eager to bring others into the home of the master I've got to tell you I wish I could spend more time on this but I can't so I'll just leave you with a vision what would it look like at Glasgow City Free Church if we invited folk different from us to come along on

Sundays when we feast on Jesus Christ we feast on the forgiveness of our sins we feast on his life in place of our life we feast on his death in our place he becomes to us wine and meat and strengthens us and we invite people different from us that really don't bring a lot to us they don't bring leadership they probably won't be teaching our Sunday school class soon I don't know if they could pass some of the requirements to even serve our little ones in Cresce what would we look like as a church to have people different from us would you be the servant prompted would you would you just follow your master's instructions and as he gives you opportunity in 2020 consider bringing one one person along

[40 : 14] I would submit to you it'll start by first bringing them into your life before we can bring them into Jesus life and Jesus into theirs it'll start by first bringing them into your home before we can bring them into God's home and God bless us for it will be an adventure but there's joy for we're about the master's business and he rewards his servants and he rewards them well let's pray heavenly father father i pray i pray tonight that we would be your good and faithful servants and that we would obey prompted by love compelled by love we would invite others to see you as the great host we would invite others to come to know you and your fellowship Jesus we pray Holy Spirit that you would not only give us opportunities by opening our eyes to see the poor the lame the cripple to see neighbors that we don't even know their name to look father to see folk that are so far away from our culture our society that we may not even know how to begin that not only will you open our eyes but that you'll prompt our invitation to have fellowship first with us and then with you you'll prompt it by your grace shown to us such that we poor sinners should be invited to have fellowship with you father that's what moves us that we should be such beneficiaries of this grace father we ask that we would be like minstrels ambassadors God our King that we leave your presence even tonight and we sing the invitation to all oh father we ask this for our church we are a friendly church we're a welcoming church we don't think that we would close the door to any we will receive all would you now send them would you bring them even through us and we ask this in Jesus name amen amen