

# Invitations Refused but the Party Goes On!

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now if we turn this evening to Luke chapter 14, we can look at verses 12 to 24. Luke chapter 14 and the verses from verse 12 to where we finished our reading at verse 24.

Now we're still following this journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and Luke of course is giving us a flavour of the kind of journey it was. And it must have been a fascinating thing to have accompanied or to be part of this crowd that followed Jesus and saw all the things that he did and heard all the things that he spoke on the way to Jerusalem.

And you can get a glimpse of that as you come to this incident in chapter 14 which was on a Sabbath day as the Lord dined in the house of this ruler of the Pharisees whoever he was. Because the chapter really or this part of the chapter from the beginning to verse 24 revolves around that time of eating in that house.

And how Jesus used the whole imagery of eating or being at a meal or what he calls a feast or a banquet as well to convey more of the truth that he is setting forth about himself and who he is and about the kingdom of God.

[ 1 : 23 ] And how the kingdom of God is to be entered into and taken into our possession in all that it provides for us. Now the focus is tonight on verses 12 to 24.

We're not going to look at the early part of the passage. We saw something of what's in that in previous passages especially the way that the Lord challenged the Pharisees with their regard of the Lord's day which made it such a severe thing and which forbade and didn't allow even such healings as Jesus himself did on the Sabbath day.

Well here he was again showing that he was Lord of the Sabbath by healing this man who had the dropsia disease that affected joints and affected him in such a way that would swell up and not be able to move very much.

But Jesus healed him and then put this question again to the Pharisees. And then he moved from that to a parable of the wedding feast.

Still using the imagery where he's there. He's there at the meal in this ruler of the Pharisees house and all of these people around. So what he's doing is just using that situation, using the very place they're gathered in and what's happening in that room to actually convey this important teaching.

[ 2 : 50 ] So he's really saying now that he noticed that people chose the places of honor. That there was a bit of a scramble amongst them as to who would get the seats associated with the most important people.

And of course that was something that was found even in the disciples themselves as they came on to what we call the Last Supper. There was a dispute amongst themselves as to who should be the greatest.

They wanted to have that place at the table that was associated with the most important or the highest or the dignitaries. And Jesus uses that occasion here to actually say that the important thing is to humble yourself.

Because then the only way is up. Whoever humbles himself shall be exalted. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled.

And humility of course plays such a great part and is such a part, an important part of discipleship and what the life of a disciple is about.

[ 3 : 55 ] But then we move on to another teaching of the Lord still following the same imagery of the dinner or the banquet. And using that occasion to convey this teaching.

He said 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 your rich neighbors and so on.

It's the imagery of a great banquet, a really important feast. And what he's saying to him is, first of all, in terms of who you invite, don't invite people who can then repay you by asking you to their house in return.

Who will extend an invitation to you and therefore that's a kind of repayment. The best thing that you can do, he's saying, is invite people who can't repay you.

Who don't have the means of paying you back. Because that's how you come to be really blessed. Not by people who can do the same as you're doing yourself. But by you doing these things to people who cannot repay you.

[ 5 : 00 ] Because he says you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. Now we're looking at two things tonight. First of all, the invitations that are sent out by the man who has organized this banquet.

And of course all of this is an image of God. And especially of Christ himself inviting us to the dining banquet. To this great banquet.

To dine at the banquet in his kingdom. In salvation. The banquet of redemption. The banquet of salvation. Where you have all of those wonderful things on the table.

Forgiveness of sin. Fellowship with Christ. And adoption. And being children of God. These are the things that are inside. These are the things that God has put on the table.

That he's inviting us to come and partake of. As we'll see from the rest of this passage tonight.

Right. But the invitations. First day verses. In the first part of the parable.

[ 5 : 58 ] Are actually invitations returned by the ungrateful. You can see how they all actually began to make excuses. The first ones that were actually invited.

But then secondly. There's invitations extended to the unlikely. Put it that way because. The unlikely. The people who are poor and crippled. And blind and lame.

In the eyes of the people who got the first invitation. Especially the Pharisees. The religious leaders. The ones who saw themselves as already in the kingdom of God. They would look down on these people.

They would despise these people. They would say. These people are not part of the kingdom of God. They're not on the same level as us. And Christ is making a very important and a very powerful point.

As he said earlier on in the previous chapter. Those that are first shall be last. And the last shall be first. Those who put themselves. In verse 30 there.

[ 7 : 00 ] Those who put themselves ahead of others. Will actually find that they're left behind. And he's now saying. This is the invitation. I've sent out to the unlikely. To those who many people would say.

Are not likely candidates for salvation. Or for the kingdom of God. Or to be looked unfavorably by God. And these are the ones. That were called in by God.

When the rest refused. So let's look through these two points. First of all. The invitations that are returned by the ungrateful. This is what he's saying. First of all. When you're invited. Don't invite your friends.

Your brothers. Your relatives. Your rich neighbors. Lest. They also invite you in return. And you notice there he's saying. You will be repaid. At the resurrection of the just. Why is that an important emphasis?

Because Jesus is reminding them. And he's reminding us. Through this passage. That whatever we do in this life. Will always have a relation to eternity. And that the things that we are to do in this life.

[ 8 : 03 ] We are to do with a view to eternity. Our life in this world. Is a tiny little fraction. Of time. A tiny little slice. Of time. And it's.

As nothing at all. In the light of eternity. What's beyond this life. Which is without end. And what Jesus is saying. You will be repaid.

At the resurrection of the just. Some people think that. You know. The Christian life is just. The last thing you want to consider.

And that being a preacher of the gospel. Is the last thing you want to really take up. And give your life to. And of course Jesus goes on. And the other part of the chapter.

We'll see God willing later. In another study. The cost of discipleship. In the final part of the chapter. But. What this is reminding us of. Of course. Is that. When you come to be a disciple of Jesus.



That when a man had decided to give a banquet. Invitations were then sent out. Giving the time and the place of it. And then there would be a second invitation. When the meal was actually ready. When everything had been prepared. Those who had originally had the invitation. Would get the other. The next invitation. The next stage of the invitation. Which would say to them. Come. Now everything is now ready. This is the banquet that you were told about. So many weeks ago. But it's now ready. So now you can come. Everything is already prepared.

[15:13] And this is what the picture is about. At the time for the banquet. He sent his servants to say. To those who had been invited. Come. For everything is now ready.

The table is actually laid. The food is ready. It's all prepared. All you've got to do. He's saying to them. Is now. Come. As those who have been invited.

And take of the banquet. Now that's how it is. With the gospel. Tonight. For you and for me. And this is really something. That we have to make.

Absolutely plain. And simple. And I hope we don't complicate this. In any way whatsoever. The invitation. That God sends to you. And to me.

In the gospel. To come to the banquet table. In the kingdom of God. Is sent out to you. Because. Everything is now ready. Because the table has already been set.

[16:13] The table has been spread. By God himself. Who is the great host. How do we know that everything is ready? Because Jesus died. And Jesus rose from the dead.

And Jesus is at the right hand. Of the father on high. That's what makes the table. Already set. Everything that is needed. To provide a great banquet.

A spiritual feast. For you and for me. In the kingdom of God. Everything that's needed. To make the table ready. Has already been done. You don't need to take anything with you.

There's no appeal. Sent out for here. Like there is for Point of Life. For those who can donate baking. To come to bring that with them. To the banquet.

Because when you try. And bring something with you. To yourself. That you want to contribute. To the preparation of the table. You will find that it's not appropriate. Because God.

[17:14] Has already done this for us. It's not needed. It's a free invitation. It's. Without complication.

The table is ready. Come says God. For all things. Are now ready. You need your sin forgiven. It's ready here for you.

You need to have a proper relationship. With God. And fellowship with him. To be his friend. To have that righteousness of Christ. Covering you. As a garment.

That will admit you to the wedding feast. It's ready. It's done. It's already been completed. You need to have something. Greater than the hope.

That. Somewhere else. Things will work out. All right for you. As many people in this world have.

The hope that you have. In Christ. Is a hope. That is based upon. His own.

[18:13] Completed work. On the cross. And in his resurrection. In other words. The people who hope. Towards heaven. And towards. The. The coming of Christ.

And being received. To sit at the banquet. With him then. That hope. Is a hope. That's going to be. Fully realized. It's not going to be disappointed. Because it's already.

It's been prepared. Now look at yourself tonight. Look at every aspect of your need. As far as you are able to see it.

Look at your circumstances in life. Look at yourself in relation to God. Look at yourself in relation to eternity. Look at yourself in relation to the judgment of God.

Look at yourself in relation to preparing to die. To leave this world. Look at yourself in relation to what you need. To be an effective Christian in this life. Look at yourself in relation to every single aspect of your being.

[19:12] You. It's all matched up on this table. It's all already prepared for you. Everything you need. Is actually here. Without exception.

Isn't it therefore amazing that people stay away? Isn't it amazing that people will say this is not good enough for me? Isn't it staggering that anybody actually shown this table in the gospel could really in any sense at all not want to go and take what's on that table.

And come into the kingdom of God by the door which God himself has appointed. Where is it with yourself? Are you already at this table?

Are you inside the kingdom? Are you still looking through the door from outside and catching a glimpse of this table as it's preached in the gospel? As it's read about in the word.

But you haven't gone in. Or you're afraid to go in. You're afraid of what might actually happen. What the implications or the consequences might be. If you go in. But what about if you stay out?

[ 20 : 28 ] Surely that's what should make us really afraid. Not to be afraid to go in and to take our place at the table when the invitation of God is clearly addressed to us. Be afraid of not going in.

Be afraid as we saw last time of having the door shut in your face. When the Lord returns. When the master rises. And comes to shut the door. The banquet then is not accessible.

So here's tonight another emphasis from the Lord himself of the importance. The critical importance of using your time well. Of accepting this particular occasion here and now.

To come to the Lord's banquet. Well they all without exception began to make excuses. That's interesting isn't it? They all began to make excuses.

Now then you're given samples. Because I think we should understand that there were far more than three people invited. But these examples of excuses are really samples if you like.

[ 21 : 38 ] Of the kind of excuses that they all made. For not coming to this banquet. First one said. I have bought a field. And I must go and see it.

Please excuse me. It's unlikely that you would buy a field without having gone to look at it first. Next one said. I bought five yoke of oxen. And I'm going to examine them.

Please excuse me. It's unlikely again. That a person would actually go and buy a yoke of oxen. If he didn't know whether they were up to the job or not. Another said.

I have married a wife. And therefore I cannot come. Well. He was at least basing his conclusion. Or his excuse on something that he knew in the scripture.

Because in Deuteronomy. You are allowed. Deuteronomy. In the book of Deuteronomy. You find that. There's a reference to. When it came to a time of war. And when males were recruited into the army.

[ 22 : 36 ] Or to go out to fight at wartime. If you are newly married. You are accepted. From going out to war for the first year of your married life. And it looks like this is what's behind this kind of idea here.

This kind of excuse. And I have married a wife. Please excuse me. Didn't really fit with the situation. But he tried it on anyway. Now the three excuses that are given us.

As samples of the excuses people make. They really come to the same thing. We don't need to look into them any more closely than we've done.

We don't need to go into them and try and expand on them. And look in more detail at what they say. Because they come to the same thing. What is it? A sense or a view of priorities.

That's what it's about. Because these people. These excuses. All of these excuses came to the same thing. They did not have their priorities set in the right way.

[ 23 : 40 ] Their priorities were in this world. Not in the kingdom of God. Their priorities were with the present things. That they had to attend to. Not with the things of the kingdom of God.

Not with the marriage. In the kingdom that they were being invited to. And that's a very sad thing. And it's not uncommon.

That people. Will say of coming to Christ. And coming into the kingdom of God. And coming to take up the invitation. To sit at the banquet table.

In the kingdom. I don't have time for that now. My life is too busy with other things. I have more important things to attend to than religion.

Or people will simply try and make an excuse of the number of religions that are there. Or try and listen to what atheists say. That religion just harms you. All religion is bad for you. Therefore you are far better off without it.

[ 24 : 46 ] Listen to the Lord of the feast. Listen to the Lord who sends the invitations out to sinners like you and I to come and sit. Come.

For everything is now ready. There is no excuse. There is no acceptable reason for not coming. There is nothing that you or I or anyone can think of.

That will be a valid reason. To stay away. They all. With one purpose began.

To make excuses. What is more important to us? The here and now. Or the world to come. What is more important to us?

The present. Or serving Christ for the future. Where are our priorities? In the kingdom. Or in this world? These are the questions that come from the passage to ourselves tonight.

[ 25 : 53 ] So invitations were returned by the ungrateful. They just didn't want this. They made excuses. So then invitations were extended to the unlikely. The servant came and reported these things to the master.

Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant. Go quickly out to the lanes. Streets and lanes of the city. Bring in the poor and the crippled and the blind and the lame. You see there is a point to be made there. That may just not be obvious as you read through it. And the point is this. The banquet goes on. This great party or banquet or celebration that this man had organized.

For which he sent out these invitations. He is not going to stop it just because those who first got the invitation refused. It is going to go on despite the refuser.

The Lord is going to fill his house with or without you or I. The Lord is going to have everybody that will fill his house at last.

[ 26 : 56 ] He is going to have them all come in. And if it has to be someone other than yourself or myself. Then the Lord is saying well so be it. But I am going to build my kingdom with or without you.

Though I extend the invitation to you. Don't think for a moment that it is going to make any difference. Whether the house is going to be full or not.

Whether you and I accept it. The banquet goes on. The feast goes on. The excuses will not stop the party. It is going to be completed.

This man who organized the banquet. He is going to have it enjoyed. He is going to have his table full. Even if these first invitees will not be there.

So he sends out new invitations. And you can see that there are two new invitations. Or two types. Sent to two types anyway. First of all he says.

[ 27 : 55 ] To those. Go out to those in the streets and lanes of the city. And bring in the poor and the crippled and the blind and the lame. And then the second widening. Wider circle really if you like.

Is the highways. The hedges. Compelled people to come in. After he was told that there was still room. So let's just go through these data. Let's first of all see those who are still inside the city.

But are out in the. But are called the poor. Poor and the crippled and the blind and the lame. Now these people would. Usually be regarded as not ceremonially pure.

Because they weren't able to attend. Things such as would make them pure. Services in the temple or rituals or whatever. That would make them pure. That would make them pure.

And ceremonially clean. So they remained outwith if you like. Those advantages. That were afforded to other people. And they were very often to the Pharisees. At least would be despised.

[ 28 : 56 ] The poor. The crippled. The blind. And the lame. They're just. People who are not complete. They're not. Really. Candidates at all. For the kingdom of God. And the Lord says.

Go and call them in. Go and bring them into the banquet. This banquet. Is for them. It's not just a banquet. In accordance with what.

The dignitaries think. Ought to. Who ought to sit there. This is. What the Lord of the feast says. You go and. Call them in. That would be seen of course.

By the Pharisees. As scandalous. It's a terrible thing. These people. You don't mean to tell me. That these people.

Are actually going to sit. At an important banquet. People who are poor. People who are lame.

People who are crippled. People who are blind. People who have these defects. People who are not ceremonially clean.

[ 29 : 59 ] Who are unable to actually meet. The standards of us. The Pharisees. That's a scandal. Surely you don't mean that. Maybe sometimes. Our thinking is like that too. That there are certain.

Categories of people. That really don't belong. Within the confines. Of the church of God.

Therefore. Yes they are to be pitied.

But not really. Invited meaningfully. To take. Of this feast. Well that's not what the Lord is saying.

We'll come back to that. In a minute. With the next. Lot of invitations. So. The report came back to him.

And he said. So what you commanded. Has been done. And still. There is room. Now there's. A whole lot of. Verses. As we've seen.

In this passage. That. Have. All down through the year. Forms. The basis of great. Evangelistic appeals. By preachers of the gospel. And this is one of them. There is still room.

[ 30 : 56 ] Everything had been done. They had gone out to. These extra people. And he had invited. These extra people. And these extra people. Had responded.

And they had come in. To the feast. And the report back. To the master of the feast. Is. Yes all that's been done. But there's still more room. There are still. Empty places. At this feast. And that's. What God is saying. To you. And to me. There are empty places. At this table. That are waiting. To be filled up.

They're designed. For you. They're made. For people. Exactly. Like you. And I. People. That don't deserve it. People.

That would say. Of ourselves. Who am I. That I should sit. With the Lord Jesus Christ. At a banquet. Well yes. Of course. That's what we say. About ourselves. Rightly. But the Lord.

[ 32 : 01 ] Has said. But everything. Is ready. I have made. All the preparation. For exactly. The type of person. You are. So that you will. Come and enjoy.

This feast. With me. And despite. The fact. That millions. And millions. And millions. Of people. Have come in. To take their place. At this gospel table.

Down. Through the centuries. Tonight. He is saying. To you. If you are not yet. At this feast. He is saying. Look here. An empty space. Here is a table. That has been set.

Here is a chair. At this table. That has got all. Of these good things. Honored. And it is waiting. For you. To take it up. There is still room.

While the gospel. Is preached. There will still be room. There are all sorts of people. Here already. Young people. Very old people. Middle aged people.

[ 32 : 58 ] Rich people. Poor people. The poor. The blind. The lame. The crippled. The well off. The advantaged. They are all sitting.

At this table. It is for all. Categories. Of people. People. And yet. There is still room. And that means.

There is room for you. If you haven't already come. And so. The invitation then. Goes out further. There is still room. So 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. He was saying.

Go out to the countryside. And. This may well. Represent. In the teaching of the passage. A reference. To the Gentiles. Which were.

[ 33 : 56 ] Outside of. The Jewish people. At the time. And. Of course. That was such a difficult thing. For even people like Peter. To understand. This Jewish. Leader. This apostle. That the Gentile world.

That the people were non-Jews. Would have a share. In the kingdom of God. He had to be taught. That by God. As you'll see. In Acts chapter 10. In the incident. With Cornelius.

We just can't appreciate. How difficult it was. For people. Then. In the Jewish. Brought up. In the Jewish. Religion. To actually think of.

Non-Jews. Coming to be part. Of the kingdom of God. But whether that's. Really the case or not. And I think it's. Proper to go that way. If you keep to the image. The history of. Of.

The parable itself. And the context. In which Jesus. Was. Was. Was. Speaking it. Go to the highways. And hedges. To the places.

[ 34 : 52 ] Where people. Just are derelict. Where lives. Are broken. Where people. Are outcast. Where they don't have homes. Where nobody looks.

After them. Where they're addicted. To alcohol. And to drugs. Where they self abuse. Where they're involved. In all kinds of. Messy things. In terms of their.

Immoral lifestyles. Go out to them. He's saying. And bring them in. Compel people. To come in.

That my house. May be filled. You see. When we ask. The question. To whom. Should we go. With the gospel. This passage.

Makes it obvious. And clear to us. And powerfully. Says to us. To everybody. To everybody. That you can. To everybody. That you have contact with.

[ 35 : 48 ] Whatever that category. Whatever their situation. Whether they're actually. Nice and cozy. In their homes. By the fireside. Or somehow. Lying on a street. In Edinburgh. Or in Stornoway.

Or wherever it is. Go out and compel them. To come in. That my house. May be full. We may ignore them. We may walk past them.

We may say about them. They don't belong. In the kingdom of God. But God. Is an invitation. For them. And God. Is a place for them. At the table. At the banquet. In his kingdom. He can wash them up.

He can actually. Bring their lives about. As we'll see. Shortly. In chapter 15. With. The prodigal. Weward son. So tonight.

That's. What our remit is. That we don't make any exceptions. For who we bring the gospel to. You see he's saying. Compel them to come in.

[ 36 : 48 ] Why is he saying that? Well. It doesn't mean that we force people. To come in. You can leave. Forcing people. To other religions. Like Islam. Which don't really.

Have. Any concern. About. Forcing people to do things. That they don't want to do. Christ religion. Is not like that. And we're not.

In the business of. Forcing people. Into a way of thinking. Or into a way of life. Even if we could do it anyway. Compelled. Compelled really means.

To. Convince them. You just imagine. The picture that you've got there. People. Who were in the hedgerows. And in the highways. People who were living.

Derelict lives. And here's somebody going. From a very important. Person. Who's making a great banquet. Where dignitaries. Have actually been invited. But they've refused.

[ 37 : 43 ] And here's the servant. Of that person. Coming to these people. Lying in the hedgerows. And on the streets. And saying. Look. I'm inviting you. To this banquet. Do you know where this person's house is?

Up on the hill there. This great mansion. Come on. Come and enjoy this banquet. It's for you. Honestly. It's for you. You can imagine. Look back. You can't be serious.

How difficult to persuade them. Yes. But this is really for them. And that's our work in evangelism too.

You don't just invite people. To church. Or invite people to come to things. Where the church is involved. Whether there are other activities. Or whatever. Young or old.

It's a business of trying to convince people. You tell them why Jesus is important to yourself. You tell them why the Lord stays special to you. You tell them what the church is about.

[ 38 : 43 ] You tell them why the Lord is the person you love most of all. You tell them what he's done for you. You tell them all of these things. And in every other way you can. In relation to the things of Christ's salvation.

You try and try and try to convince them. If they refuse the invitation. Let it not be because you've not tried to convince them. Go out to them you say.

And convince them to come in. Compel them to come in. That my house may be filled. Who are you going to try and convince tomorrow?

Who are you going to meet tomorrow? Where is your life going to be set tomorrow? In the providence of God. If God spared you to see tomorrow. Tomorrow is a day for trying to convince people.

Tomorrow is a day for trying to tell them what Jesus means to you. Tomorrow is a day when you will try and convince people. To come and take up these pews. So that there will be more pews occupied than there are empty.

[ 39 : 49 ] As it is tonight. Wouldn't it be great. If the echoes from this gallery. Were not echoes of my voice in an empty gallery.

But echoes from people who are saying. Amen to the Lord Jesus Christ. As it once used to be. As it can be again by the blessing of God.

By God's grace. By God's spirit moving in these communities. But God is saying to you. And he is saying to me. Yes I can do all of that. But I need you to go and tell these people.

And I need you to go and compel these people. And speak to these people. And do everything you can do. Even if you think you are not cut out for it. Do everything you can. And compel them to come in.

That my house. May be full. There is yet room. And as long as we live.

[ 40 : 51 ] And are able to serve the Lord. The fact that there is yet room. Should move us deeply. Inwardly and practically. To go out in search.

Of candidates. And invitees. For this banquet in the kingdom of God. Don't leave anyone out. Don't think that there is anyone out there.

Unsuitable. To come to know the Lord. The Lord. Is for sinners. The son of man has come. To seek. And to save. That which was lost. As long as they are lost. That is all you need to know. To know that you must compel them.

As far as you can. To come in that God's house. May be full. Let's pray. God has come. Thank you.

[ 42 : 20 ] in your name and seek to convince others to come. Give us grace, we pray, in our day, that we might serve you aright, that we might see many yet coming to take their place in the kingdom of God. O Lord, send forth your light and your truth to that end. Be with us now, we pray.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.