

Parable of the Great Supper

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 August 2008

Preacher: Rev Colin Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Can you turn to Luke's Gospel, friends? Luke, the Gospel according to Luke, and chapter 14. Chapter 14. And we're going to read and look at tonight what we find in verses 12 down to verse 24, which is headed the parable of the great banquet. Luke, chapter 14, verses 12 down to verse 24, the parable of the great banquet. He said also to the man who had invited him, when you give a dinner or a banquet, don't invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you.

You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. When one of those who reclined at table with them heard these things, he said, blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

But he said to him, a man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet, he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, come, for everything is now ready.

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, I bought a field and I must go out and see it. Please excuse me. Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen and I'm going to examine them.

Please excuse me. And another said, I married a wife and therefore I cannot come. So the servant came and reported these things to the master. Then the master of the house became angry and he said to his servant, go out quickly to the streets and the lanes of the city and bring in the poor and the crippled and the blind and the lame. And the servant said, sir, what you commanded has been done and still there is room. And the master said to the servant, go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.

[2 : 1 7] This parable of the great banquet is brought before us because of a comment that a gentleman, a man at this Pharisee's house made when he heard Jesus talking about inviting people to a dinner and so on from verse 12.

Uh, Jesus says in verse 14, uh, you can invite all these people who cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. And when he said that talking about the resurrection of the just, we read in verse 15, when one of those who reclined the table with him, heard these things, he said, blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

So there was comments that Jesus made a comment about the resurrection of the just. And as a result of that, this man makes this comment, blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

This whole parable, this whole story is about that very thing, the kingdom of God. And I want to say just a couple of, uh, things by way of introduction tonight before really going into the, uh, the story or into the parable.

For the Jews, the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, it's the same kind of idea. In their mind, it was viewed as a future kingdom, uh, which was like a great feast.

[3 : 43] And at that great feast, there would be Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets coming together to sit down and to eat at this feast.

In fact, if you look just across the page in, uh, Luke chapter 13, we have it there in verse, uh, 28. Jesus is talking in the context of the narrow door.

In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. When you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast out. People will come from the east and the west and from the north and the south, and they will recline at the table.

You see the language of banquet? Recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last. So for the Jew, the mind of the Jew, saw the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven, uh, as something that was in the future.

A future feast, a future banquet, where all the Jews were going to go, and where all the prophets were going to go and sit down and eat together. The first thing I want to say tonight is this, friends.

[4 : 52] The kingdom is present as well as prospective. The Jews saw the kingdom as future prospective. But Jesus tells us again and again that the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God is something, yes, in the future, but it is also something in the here and now.

It is present as well as the future. It is present as well as prospective. When Jesus came into this world, he told people, as he began to preach the gospel, to repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

He taught his disciples to pray to God in heaven as their father, that the kingdom, that God's kingdom will come, that his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And a lot of these parables that we read in Matthew 13, some of them, of course, refer to the future, but some of them also refer to the present, to the kingdom of God as something that is happening now, in our midst.

And tonight we need to grasp that. The kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God, in other words, the word the Bible uses for salvation, is not yet, but it is also here and now.

It is in the future, but it is also here in our midst. We can be in the kingdom of heaven today. We can be in the kingdom of heaven tonight.

[6 : 18] We can be in the kingdom of God right now. And if we are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, then we are in that kingdom. So what does that mean?

That brings me on to my second introductory point. The kingdom of God, friends, dear friends tonight, is a feast, and it is not a funeral.

The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, being saved, having salvation, is a feast. It is not a funeral. And again, when we look at the broad sweep of scripture, again and again, we of course see, the Bible talks to us, and reveals to us, how sin has corrupted us, and we are to mourn over our sin.

But the loudest note that I see, or the loudest note that I hear, as the New Testament rings out in my ears, is this note of joy. Joy, joy, what is the fruit of the Spirit?

Is mourning in the fruit of the Spirit? There is a place for mourning, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and so on.

[7 : 32] Christ came to usher in joy in that kingdom, because His coming, and His bringing us into the kingdom, is a joyful thing. Friend, tonight, what is your view of what being a Christian is about?

What is your view of what being in the kingdom is about? If you are outside the kingdom, and you are looking in, what do you see? Do you see a people, who go about mourning all day long?

Do you see a people, who go about with nothing to be happy about? Or do you see a people, with joy unbounded? Joy unconfined?

Yes, sorrow and sadness for sin, and for the pressures and difficulties, and trials of this life. But supremely, the kingdom of heaven, is a thing of joy.

It is a thing of happiness, joy in the Holy Spirit. So the kingdom of God, when we are talking tonight about the kingdom, think of it in terms of, present as well as perspective, of being a feast, and not a funeral.

[8 : 42] And that is exactly the context, it is a banquet we are talking about here. It is a happy occasion, that Jesus uses, to paint a picture, of the kingdom, of God.

There are four things, I want to bring before you, or I see, in this parable, tonight, about this kingdom, coming to salvation, in Jesus Christ. Coming into the kingdom.

If you are not a Christian tonight, you are outside the kingdom. You are in darkness. You are in a sad place. You are in a dangerous place. You are on dangerous ground. Come into the kingdom, where there is light, and joy, and feasting, and happiness, and blessing, every spiritual blessing, in Jesus Christ.

The first thing we see, in this parable tonight, is this, is provision. In verse 17, the owner, the owner, has sent, out his servants, at the time for the banquet, he sent his servant, to say to those invited, come, for everything, is now ready.

Come, for everything is ready. The food was prepared, the table was set, the wine was filled, the entertainment, was in place, everything was ready. Everything necessary, for the banquet, was ready.

[9 : 57] The host provided it all. All the guests, had to do was come. They didn't have to bring a gift, they didn't have to bring anything, just themselves. Come, everything is now ready, he said.

And so it is, with salvation. So it is, with God's kingdom. So it is, for God's salvation. Everything, is now, ready.

All that is necessary, for our salvation, is ready. We don't have to do anything. We don't have to bring anything. It has been done.

Jesus Christ, is the feast. Jesus Christ, is the banquet. Jesus Christ, is the bread of life, is the water of life. He is everything, that we need in salvation.

Come, God says, everything is now ready. Come. Why are you waiting? Everything is ready. When we come to this feast, when we come to Christ, he provides for us, forgiveness of sins.

[11 : 00] He provides for us, our right standing before God. He brings us, into the family of God. He adopts us. He wipes away our sin, and separates us, from the world.

He will, he promises to, glorify us in heaven, and to bless us, with every spiritual blessing. All of that, is ready. We don't need to work for it, or pay for it, or add to it, or take away from it.

It is ready. Jesus, is, the feast, and it is ready. He is ready. When he hung on the cross, he said, these, amazing words.

He said, it is, finished. Do you remember these words? It is finished. It has been completed. I have done it all. In other words, what Christ was saying, on the cross was, it is all ready.

I, have provided, what every sinner needs, to be right, in the sight of God. Do you believe that tonight? That is the gospel, succinctly, and put in a nutshell, but that is it.

[12 : 09] Provision, has, been made. All we do is come. Come to Christ, for a feast, of forgiveness, and eternal life.

But the second thing, we see in this, passage is, rejection. There is provision, and then there is rejection, from verses 18, down. They all, in verse 18, alike, began to make, excuses, one, after the other.

But you know, the real galling thing, in this parable. I don't know, if you have noticed this, but the really annoying thing, in this story is, they had said, they would come already. They had already said, before that they would come.

Because, we have in verse 16, a man once, gave a great banquet, and invited many. At the time, for the banquet, he sent his servant, to say to those, who have been invited, come, for everything is ready.

So you see, in those days, the invitation, would go out, first and foremost, beforehand, and then, when everything was ready, the servant would go out, and say, come on now, the banquet is ready, the feast is ready.

[13 : 15] These people had said, they would come. These people had given their word, that they would come, and they would feast, and they would enjoy, the banquet, that this man, had put on, for them.

And I want to, speak specifically, tonight, to those of you, who have, sometime in the past, heard the invitation, of the gospel, heard the message, of the gospel, been confronted, with a message, of salvation, and you have said, yes I will come.

I will come, one day. I will come, maybe next communion. I will come, well maybe, next Lord's day. You've said, having heard the invitation, you've said, having been told, by the preacher, of the gospel, that everything is ready, I will come.

One day, you've said to yourself, I will become a Christian. One day, maybe, you've even said to God, I will one day, God, become a Christian, I'll have Jesus, in my life. But here you are tonight, and you're still not saved.

You're still not a Christian. You're still outside, of the kingdom. Well I would guess, hazard a guess, that the reason, for that is, to be found, somewhere in the excuses, that these, three people, gave, in this parable.

[14 : 35] And these were really, feeble excuses. They were spoken, or given so graciously, and so kindly, but at the end of the day, there was no, depth to them, or, real persuasiveness, to them.

They made their excuses, and I wonder tonight, if you said you would, come to Christ, and to the kingdom, and you haven't, what, has been, your, excuse.

What was their excuse? The first one, was to do with buying. In verse 18, they began to make excuses. The first said to him, I have just bought a field. I must go and see it.

Please, excuse, me. who would go and buy land, without first looking at it. Who would go and buy, some land, without first going, and look at it.

Who would go, in a modern context, perhaps, and buy property, today, without first getting a survey, on the property, and without even going to look at it. Nobody would do that.

[15 : 42] This, friends, was, a feeble excuse. Buying. This person was into buying. That was his excuse, for not coming into the kingdom. Buying, in and of itself, is not bad.

Of course it's not. But when, it becomes more important, than your salvation. When it becomes more important, than Christ, then buying, becomes a bad thing.

I wonder tonight, if your excuse, for not coming to the kingdom, though you said, at some time you would, has been, I'm so busy buying. I'm so busy, buying and selling. Buying and selling.

Buying property, and selling property. Buying land, and selling land. Buying cars, and selling cars. Buying clothes, and selling clothes. Buying stocks, and shares, and selling stocks, and shares.

Is that your excuse tonight? These things, which in and of themselves, are not bad, have become a God, in your life. And that's what's most important, to you. Buying and selling.

[16 : 39] Business. How are you going to get on, in the world? That is what's become, more important. More important, to you than Christ. More important, to you, than the kingdom. I tell you something tonight.

Buying, and business, no matter what it does, for you in this world, will never, give you a feast, of forgiveness, and eternal life. Never.

Never at all. And the second excuse, I think, revolves around, working. In verse 19, another said, I have bought, five yoke of oxen, and I'm going to examine them.

First, giving it a test drive. Sitting in it, at least. I'm going for a wee drive, giving it. Nobody would do that. This is ridiculous. What this man, was looking for, was legitimate.

He needed the oxen, to make a living. There's nothing wrong, with that at all. He needed these oxen, to plough the land, to make money, to make a living. And the work, is very important.

[17 : 42] Of course, work is important. If we can work, we should work. Paul says, if a man will not work, he will not eat. But when work, becomes more important, than salvation.

When our oxen, when our work, becomes more important, than the Lord, then that is a bad thing. And that calls us, to reprioritize work, in our lives. I wonder how many tonight, said, I will, become a Christian.

I will, come into God's kingdom. I will come, and give my heart, to Christ. Oh, but you say now, but I'm so busy, with work. I'm so busy, with my work.

Monday, and Tuesday, and Wednesday, and Thursday, and Friday, and then Sunday, and Saturday, and when Sunday comes, I just don't have any more time. I'm tired. I just want to stay at home. I want to spend time, with my family.

I want to take it easy. How many people, here tonight, are using work, as an excuse, for not coming, into the kingdom of God? Don't you know, that you will work yourself, into the grave, and never into heaven?

[18 : 43] Don't you know, tonight, that if you make work, your God, if you're so busy, with your work, that you have, no time for God, and no time for church, no time to read your Bible, no time to seek, the kingdom of God, you will work yourselves, into an early grave.

You will become the oxen. You think, you are driving the oxen, but you are becoming, the oxen. You are being worked, to the bone, and you will work yourself, into an early grave, and then so forth.

You have worked so hard, you gave yourself, so much to your work, and then what? You get a long service medal, 25 years, 40 years, 50 years, you get a carriage clock, or a watch, you get something in the gazette, about how great you were, at working, but so what?

Will that buy you? Or will that give you, a feast of forgiveness, and eternal life? Will it? Not at all. Some people, buying is that excuse, working is their excuse, marrying is the third excuse, here tonight.

In verse 20, another said, I have married a wife, and therefore, I cannot come. In other words, I made a commitment, to someone, so I cannot come.

[20 : 09] Making a commitment, to other people, is so very important. Making a commitment, to friends, or to family, or to loved ones, is of course, very important.

But when, it comes, between you, and Christ, when it comes, between you and the Lord, you need to seriously, think about what you're doing. Commitment, is a noble thing.

Commitment, is a noble attribute, that we see, so lacking in our day, and in our generation. And it is to be exalted, and it is to be encouraged. But if it comes, between you and the kingdom, you need to do something, about that.

And you might say tonight, but if I, come into the kingdom, I will lose my friends, whom I committed to. If I come into the kingdom, I lose, maybe even my wife, or my husband, they might just leave me.

Or I lose family members, friendships with people. Well you know what friends, I can't say, that that will not happen. Some people, have to make great sacrifices, as we heard this morning, when it entails, coming into the kingdom of God.

[21 : 22] But there's two things. The one is this, Jesus said, no one, who leaves, home, or brothers, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or fields, for me in the gospel, will fail to receive, a hundred times as much, in this present age, and in the age to come, eternal life.

In other words, what is Jesus saying? No one who loses, something in this world, will ever fail to gain it, through coming, into the kingdom of God. God is a debtor to no one, God will repay, a hundred fold, all that you give up, all that you lose.

But you need to put him first. You need to put Christ first, you need to put the kingdom first. Oh it's not easy, of course it's not, I'm not saying it's easy. But there's this, no commitment, to any person.

I don't care who they are. No commitment, to any person in this world, will ever, give you a feast, of forgiveness, and eternal life.

Never. You need to put Christ, first. What has been your excuse friend, since you said so long ago, that you would one day, be a Christian, that you would one day, come into the kingdom of God, no matter how young you are, or how old you are, tonight.

[22 : 47] At the heart, with all due respect, to you, especially those of you, who are older, at the heart, of all your excuses, is a, downright rejection, of a gracious, invitation.

No matter how nicely, you put it, no matter how calmly, you say it, no matter how politely, you put it, what you're doing, is saying no, to almighty, God, and his offer, of salvation, in Christ.

there is, a provision, here, tonight. There is, a rejection, here, tonight. There is, a reaction, here, tonight.

What is the reaction, of the man, who put on, the great banquet? The serm, in verse 21, came, and reported, all these things, to his master, and the master, of the house, became, angry.

The master, of the house, became angry. And we believe, in the gospel, that God is angry, when he is rejected. There are people, today, even in the wider church, who don't like, to talk about, the anger of God.

[23 : 57] Who don't, who think, that the anger of God, is symbolic, or figurative. But, we believe, that the anger of God, is real, as real, as any of his other, attributes.

His love, and his mercy, and his kindness, and his grace, and so on. The man, is angry, in the parable. Remember, it's a story, of God's provision, of salvation.

It tells us, that God, is angry, when we reject him. Why? Why is God angry? Because, a rejection of, his offer, is a rejection of his person, and a rejection of his provision.

That's why. It's a rejection of his person, in the first place. Who are we rejecting? Who are you rejecting? None other than, Almighty God. Not a great God.

Not a, a powerful God, but Almighty God. The eternal, Almighty God. That's who you're rejecting. You're rejecting the person, of the one, who is your creator.

[25 : 00] The one, who holds your life, in his hands. The one, who holds the life, of the whole universe, in his hands. The one, who upholds everything, by the power of his word. You are turning to him, to Almighty God, and you are saying, no.

No. You have no right, to say no to God. None of us have a right, to say no to God. He is God. He is the Lord. He has control, over every area, of our lives.

And he is offering, salvation to you. And you're saying no. He is angry, because we reject, or you reject, his person.

If you were to receive, from the Queen, an invitation, to go, down to, Holyrood Palace, or to, Buckingham Palace, to have conferred on you, an OBE, or an MBE, or a KBE, or whatever other, BE's you can get, these days.

If you were to be invited, and you said, no, you're okay, thanks. I tell you something, she would be none too, she would be none too happy. She would be very unhappy, because you are, you are, rejecting her, you are, you are turning your back, on a gracious offer.

[26 : 15] In fact, when the Queen, invites somebody somewhere, it is, really a command, because she is a sovereign. So it's, Mashiach an invitation, but it really is, you better come.

How much more, how much greater, is, an invitation, or a command, from Almighty God? How much more serious, is it that we say, no, to him?

We have no right, to say no, to God. By doing so, we reject, and spurn, his person. But we also, reject his, provision.

See here, in the parable, how much had been prepared. So much effort, had gone in, so much work, had been done, so much food, had been prepared. How much more, in the gospel?

See how much God, has done. He has spared, not even his own son. God did not send, an angel, or an archangel, or any other, celestial being, a seraphim, or cherubim.

[27 : 21] He didn't send, anybody like that. He sent, his own son. In fact, God, in the person of his son, came himself, into the world, and became, one of us.

Obedied the law, perfectly, and died on the cross, so cruelly, so that we might be saved. That's a provision, that he has made. God gave up, so much as it were, for our salvation. It cost him a lot.

It cost, the Trinity, to in some way, be changed. If I can put it that way. Because in eternity, we are the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Holy Spirit, all together, in this relationship, of love.

This, what the theologians call, a perichoretic, relationship, relating, and interrelating. They didn't need us. God doesn't need, any humanity, to have a joyful, loving relationship, together.

But, we came into the scene, we came onto the scene, sin came into the world. And God had to say, how can we deal, with this sin? They can't do it.

[28 : 29] I'll have to do it myself. And so, God condescended, in becoming a human being, in the person of Christ. And he condescended, in becoming a servant.

And the servant, condescended even more, by going all the way down, and down into death. And condescended, even further friends, not just by going into death, or into the grave, but by, into, an experience, of hell, itself.

That's what Christ experienced, on the cross. What is hell, but forsakenness, by God. My God, my God, why, have you forsaken me? He did that, for you, and for me, that we might, have salvation, and a feast, a feast of forgiveness, and eternal life.

That's how much it cost him. That's the provision, that he made. And you, are you turning around, and saying, no thanks to that? No wonder, he is angry.

Have you ever been angry, with someone, when you know, what is right for them? When you know, that they're going, in the wrong way, and you're going, in the wrong direction, and they're ruining their lives, with alcohol, or drugs, or, or, just a lifestyle, and you know, that it's wrong, and you know, they're going to end up, and I personally, know this so, so well, you know, it's going to end up, in the grave, and you can't do anything, about it, and you feel, a sense of anger, you feel a sense of, anger in your soul, you want to stop them, and shake them.

[30 : 03] But how much more, should God feel? How much more, does God have the right, to feel angry? That we, are rejecting, heaven, and choosing, to go to hell.

God is not willing, that any of you, here tonight, perish, but that all, come to repentance, and to faith, in Jesus Christ. But he's angry, if you continue, in your rejection, because he knows, that what awaits, is a lost, eternity.

The final thing, here tonight, friends, is this, it's compulsion, compulsion, the last couple of verses, in this, parable, I just, think they're, beautiful, they're wonderful, they're so thrilling.

The servant came, and reported these things, to the master, and we've read, the master became angry, and what did he say though? What did he say? Ah, forget them. Just forget them.

We'll just have this, feast ourselves. No, he doesn't say that. He said, listen, go out quickly, go out into the streets, and the lanes of the city, bring in the poor, and the crippled, and the blind, and the lame.

[31 : 15] And the servant said, sir, what you have commanded, has already been done, and there is still room. And the master said to the servant, right, go out further afield, to the highways, and the hedgeways, and compel them to come in, that my house, may be full.

What was God's reaction? He was angry, but what was also his reaction? Compulsion. Get out there, he said to his servant. Get out there, and go and compel them to come in. That's a very forceful verb.

It is to force, to use almost, kind of persuasively, coercively, to persuade somebody, to do something. God wants his house to be filled.

God wants his heaven to be filled. And therefore he says to his servants, no, don't just leave them. Go to anyone, and everyone, and urge them to come in.

You see, that's why we have the gospel here tonight. We were talking about, this afternoon, when the gospel came to Britain. And we reckon it was around the year 531, when Columba came over. Why do we have the gospel?

[32 : 20] At one level, it's because the Jews, that could be who this is speaking of, in the first instance, who rejected the offer. The Jews rejected their Messiah. So God says, go out into that world.

Go out and urge the people, the Gentiles, that's you and me, to come in. God desires his heaven to be filled. He wants his heaven to be filled, with sinners, who will come to the feast, and be made fit for glory.

Sometimes I think, that we have a view of God, that he scrimps on grace. That he's mean with grace, because we know, so too well, some of us know it far too well, the doctrine of election.

Some of us who aren't Christians, know about the doctrine of election, and it's none of your business actually. But we think of God, as the one who is the electing God, and therefore there are only going to be a few, who are going to be saved.

So God is sort of, grudgingly saving some. Well this parable, totally brings the balance, into the right equilibrium, if you like. God is saying, I am longing for my house to be filled.

[33 : 26] I am longing for my heaven to be filled. I want it to be filled. So get out there, and urge people, to come to my feast. And tonight you might think, this preacher needs to settle down.

He's sweating profusely. He's jumping about. But I'll tell you why. Because God tells me, you urge people to come into the kingdom. So I am urging you tonight, this is a serious matter.

You need to come in. You need to make that decision now. You need to commit your life to Christ now. Don't wait until tomorrow. Don't wait until the next day. It might never come. God's desire is that this heaven will be filled.

He urges you all, every one of you tonight, through the preaching of the word, to come. Come to the feast. Come just as you are, without one plea. trusting in Christ, and receiving the blessing, of that feast, which is a feast, of forgiveness, forgiveness, and eternal life.

Today, if you hear his voice, tonight, if you hear his voice, I urge you, I plead with you, I honestly beg you, do not harden your heart.

[34 : 45] Do not harden your heart. because your heart may remain hard, and you will never, get into the kingdom. If you hear him tonight, if you hear his voice, if you know it is right, if you know the gospel is for you, then you come, and you, come into the kingdom, of God, through faith, in Jesus Christ, the only saviour, and Lord.

Amen. Let's pray. Our gracious God in heaven, we give thanks for, being able to be here tonight, which is in itself a blessing, for being able to hear, and we trust, understand the message, of the gospel.

We do pray that, with this great privilege, you would give us the, responsibility, and awareness of our responsibility, by grace, to come, and to, come into the kingdom of God, to lay hold of Jesus Christ, for ourselves, to commit our lives to him.

O Lord, have mercy upon us all, here tonight, and grant us to believe, to believe, in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be saved. In Jesus name.

Amen.