

Come, for Everything is Ready

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[0 : 00] We can turn back to our reading in the Gospel of Luke, chapter 14. Luke, chapter 14. Reading at verse 16 and 17.

Luke, chapter 14, chapter 14. But he said to him, A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time of the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, Come, for everything is now ready.

Come, for everything is now ready. Where do you find meaning in life? It's a big question and there's many different ways that we could go with it.

There's many different directions we could go with that question. But as you look at this passage today that we've read in Luke 14, Behind everything that Jesus is saying is that question.

And it's being answered, it's being shown, Not in the deep ways where we can go all kinds of different directions, But Jesus is really putting before the people then and before ourselves today as we gather here.

[1 : 18] Finding meaning in life can be found in two different ways. The way that we look at things ourselves and what we do, Or the way that we look at the Bible.

So what's the first thing that comes to your mind when that question is asked? Where do you find meaning in life? What immediately comes to you? I'm sure many, we've all gone in different directions with that thought.

It may be, well, family. Family is so precious and so important. Rightly so. Family is important. And that's where we find meaning in many ways.

It might be work. Work is important as well. But it's that where we find our meaning. It's that where we find what is important in life.

It may be that we think of experiences, Things that we want to do, Places we want to go. We start thinking, Maybe I'll find meaning in life as I broaden my horizon, As I look at the world through very different eyes, And see what's happening.

[2 : 25] Not just around my own small place here, But in the wider world in which we live. Maybe we'll find meaning there. But what about faith?

Where does faith come in to your thinking of, Well, what does life mean? What is my meaning in life? Where do I find my meaning today? Where does faith fit in?

Other things are important. Family and work and the experiences that we have in life, They've all got their old place of importance. But the Bible gives us a sense of putting things in the right order.

Faith is priority, or should be priority. As Jesus says in another part of the Bible, Seek first the kingdom of God, And then everything else will be added unto you.

Everything else will fall into place after that. And that's really what Jesus is saying here in this meeting with the Pharisees, As they're called. They were the leaders of the day.

[3 : 32] The people who felt that they were so important, And had all the answers to the meaning of life. And yet they were missing the very fact that Jesus, The giver of life, Was here with them.

And Jesus here is at a meal with these people, And he's using the theme of a meal to help them understand What priorities we should have in life.

About what is important, And what our priorities should be. So as we gather today, As we really have a sense of a new start in church, When we have that sense of a new beginning, A new term starting, Everything that's going on, What is our focus on?

Where is our priority? Family, work, experience, or faith? Well, Jesus here is talking about being given an invitation.

And we're going to look at, really, verse 15, Down to verse 24. That's going to be our main focus. Because here he's talking about an invitation that has gone out.

[4 : 46] And invitations are great things. It's always nice to receive an invitation. Many of you will have received, I'm sure over the years, Invitations to different things. An invitation to a party.

An invitation to a wedding. An invitation to a special event. And it reminds us that people are remembering us. A wedding invitation often has that word, Would request the pleasure of your company.

And you're thinking, They've thought of me. They've thought I'm important enough to invite To this special occasion, That I might enjoy this day with them. And it's great to get invitations.

It's lovely things. It shows us that we're being remembered in that way. But today we're looking at an invitation to something even greater. And from someone far greater than any of us are.

We're thinking of an invitation, Not to a wedding or a party. We're thinking of an invitation to come to a person. A come to see Jesus and who he is.

[5 : 52] And come and see how important he is. Not just for our life here and now, But for our eternity. For all that lies ahead of us.

The things that we maybe haven't even thought about yet. As we go on in life. What lies ahead of us. We can all see our days going ahead of us. But do we think? But what then?

What about eternity? Well, Jesus here is reminding us Of an invitation To come to him. Coming back after the summer holidays.

It does feel like a new start in many ways. Sunday school has started. Explorers for the children has started. We've got lots of different things To look forward to in these coming months.

We think even of next weekend. The Christians in sport. And a time to invite people along. To hear about the wonder of the gospel In a different way.

[6 : 48] And then to come and hear the preaching of the word On the Sunday. So we've got so much to look forward to. And all of these things When we think of a church Or the activities of the church Are opportunities to invite people along.

But do we? You would invite people to a wedding Or a party. To a special meal. Even just inviting people for a coffee Or something like that. But would we and do we invite people To church.

To the church services. To the church activities. You would invite people To special events Because you want them to be there. You want them to enjoy it.

But would you invite them To church? Well the more we love A people The more that would be our priority In terms of saying come. Come and hear About this man Jesus.

Come and hear From the Bible What God is saying to us About what our priorities Should be. The more we love And care for people The more we invite them To come and hear About Jesus.

[8 : 03] And maybe today You are here Because someone has taken The time to invite you. And that's wonderful. At least We put out invitations These invitation cards Went out to many people And maybe you are here Because someone took time To give you One of these invitations.

But I bet The majority of us are here Because of someone Who invited us. Not maybe in this week Or last week But down over many years.

A friend A family member Someone who just came And said Look why don't you come To church? Why don't you come with me? Come along and hear From the minister Who is going to be preaching.

Come along and hear From the word of God. We are Most people come To church Because someone Has asked them.

Someone has felt That they are important Enough to ask To come along to church. And people Have responded And come to hear The good news Of the gospel.

[9 : 07] And so as we look At this passage today We are seeing This invitation That continues To go out. Goes out Wic by wic If you like Because we hear The gospel Speaking to us Again and again.

And we see How people responded To this invitation. So we are just going to Look at it Under three headings today. We are going to think First of all Of the invitation That is given.

We are then going to look At the excuses That are made. And then thirdly We look at the outcome That we see. So the first thing We look at is The invitation That is given.

Jesus as he tells These parables And there is more than one In this section We have got the parable Of the wedding feast In verse 7 to 11 The parable of the great banquet Then follows after it.

He is having a meal As I said earlier With these Pharisees These important people As they saw themselves. They had invited him To come along To this meal.

[10:14] You think that is great That is lovely. But what we learn As we read In the beginning Of this chapter Is that their motivation Was really to catch Jesus out.

To find fault With him. And that is No reason to invite Anybody to anything Just inviting them To catch them out Or to find fault But that was their Motivation But Jesus really Turns it back on them And the invitation That he has had To come to them He kind of puts Back to them And not in a way That he is trying To catch them out But to show that He has done Everything for them And that is really What verse 17 Is all about He is showing That this great banquet Has been prepared For all who will come Even the Pharisees Who have it in for him And he is saying Come for everything Is now ready So the invitation Is going out And Jesus Through that invitation Is showing that His concern Goes far and wide To all people And to understand How this invitation Works We must see Just how it was

Back in Jesus' day In verse 16 When it says A man once Gave a great banquet And invited many It goes on then To say And at the time Of the banquet So there was A gap It's a bit like Someone saying Save the date And then the invitation Comes Later on That's the same Kind of situation Here Someone was going To give a banquet They would make An announcement And they would Tell people I'm giving a banquet And you're invited But it may be Weeks or even Months In advance But then at the time When the banquet Was ready A servant Is sent out And says to the people Come For everything Is now Ready So those who Have been invited Maybe weeks Or months before Are now expected To come and attend When the day Of the feast Arrived Everything is prepared The servant Gives the invitation What is Jesus

Saying to us Here About this invitation He's saying This is an invitation That has been going On for a long time It's probably You could look back Into the Old Testament Where the prophets Are saying Jesus Is going to come A saviour Is going to come He is going To give you A banquet He is going To give you A feast To feast on And as Jesus Arrives As he comes Into this world He's saying Now Everything Is ready Everything Is prepared Everything Is done For you So come When you think Of Jesus Meeting other people Like the woman Of Samaria Who he met At a well She was saying To him We know The Messiah Is coming We know About this invitation That is coming Through the Old Testament But Jesus says I who you speak Of I'm here This is me And that's what We're seeing again Here These things That you know

About This invitation To the banquet That has gone out He is here now The banquet Is ready Come And so There is this Wonderful invitation To us all And it still Goes out To this day Jesus is saying Come And when you look At the invitation There's three things About this invitation It's a simple invitation You just look At the words That he uses He says First Come Such a simple word And yet It says So much It's one of the Greatest words In the scriptures Come And you see Jesus Use it often And the prophets Use it often They say Come Come And that's what An invitation is It's all about Coming An invitation Is to go Somewhere And enjoy Something And Jesus Is saying Come Come

[14:29] And enjoy Me Anyone Who will come Will be saved That's what the Gospel is all About There is an Invitation To come To Jesus And so The invitation Is simple Come The invitation Reminds us That everything Is secure Everything Is done For us Come He says For everything Is now ready You don't have To worry about Bringing something Yourself You don't have To worry about Doing something Yourself Everything Is now Ready How do you Spell the word Salvation Start spelling It in your Head Don't you S A L And so on You start Spelling that Word Well A preacher By the name Of Dwight L Moody Once put That question How do you Spell The word Salvation And he was Talking about It in the way That people

Will spell it In different Ways You say But how Well he said There are those People And you spell Your salvation This way D O Do That your Salvation Is based On what You do That you Will get Things ready But Dwight Moody Then turned it Around and said I spell My salvation D O N E Done It is Done It is Finished Everything Is now Ready So the Invitation Is to Come And it's Not about Changing Yourself Or doing Anything Yourself It's Coming to The security Of this Invitation That is Jesus Because he Says Everything Is now Ready But then The invitation Is serious It's a Serious Invitation

Because he Says come For everything Is now Ready It's not About putting It off It's not About putting It away It's about Coming Now Because everything Is ready And again The word Of God The bible Is full Of that Seriousness Of this Invitation How often You find It is about Now There is An urgency In Isaiah 55 Verse 6 Seek the Lord While he May be Found Call upon Him While he Is

near It is Now In 2nd Corinthians Chapter 6 Verse 2 For he Says In a Favourable Time I Listen To You And In a Day Of Salvation I Have Helped You Behold Now Is the Favourable Time Now Is the Day Of Salvation There is An urgency In this Invitation It is Simple He says Come It is Secure Because Everything Is ready And it Is urgent Because He says Now Come Now What a Wonderful Invitation That is Given To us What a Wonderful Invitation The people Got here But what Did they Do with It Well We See Secondly The Excuses Come He says For Everything Is now Ready And then You Go Into These Verses That Follow Verse 18 But They All Alike Began To Make Excuses Have You Ever Made An Excuse Not To Go Somewhere And Really It's Just A Lie Someone Invited You To Go Out And I Can't Tonight I'm Busy I'm Washing My Hair I Can't Tonight Because I've Got To Walk The Dog There's Always An Excuse If you Don't Want To Go Somewhere You Can Find An Excuse And You Can Get Away With It In Certain Situations But Not When It Comes To The Gospel Not When It Comes To Hearing This Invitation Come Because Everything Is Now Ready No Matter How Hard We Try To Make An Excuse!

[18:46] No Matter How! In Our Own Eyes Write Down Your Excuse Not To Come To The Gospel What Is It What Is Your Excuse Well We See Here Three Excuses That People Gave And The First One Is This When We Think About The Meaning Of Life And Where Our Priorities Land The First In Verse 18 Is This The First Said To I Have Bought A Field And I Must Go Out And See It Please Excuse Me It's Really Talking Here About Material Possessions This Man Had Purchased Property He Hasn't Even Seen It But Now He Wants To Go And See It This Is More Important This Is His Priority The Invitation To This Great Banquet That Can Wait And How Many Of Us Live Like That Or Have Lived Like That Where Our Priority Is The

Material Things Of This World Material Possessions I'm Building A House I've Got to Go And Buy This Car There's Always An Excuse There's Always Something That Comes Between Us Doing What We Want And Coming To Church And The Priority Is Falling In That Direction Of Ourselves That's Our Priority And The Word of God Is A Word Used For These Kinds Of People And It Is Fool You Are A Fool You Think Of The Man Who Was Building Bigger Barnes He Didn't Have Enough So He Was Building More And More Barnes To Hold His Crops!

And The Word And The Word Says You Fool This Night Your Soul Shall Be Demanded Of You It's Foolish To Put Anything Between Ourselves And God And So Where Are You Today In That Sense You See The Second Excuse Here As Well Another Said I Have Bought Five Yoke Of Oxen And I Am Going To Examine Them Please Excuse Me Again You See Here This Kind Of The Way Work Comes Between Ourselves And God I Have Got To Get My Career In The Right Path I Got To Get All Of These Things!

Sorted Out Maybe Then I Come To God We Pursue The Wrong Things Is That Your Excuse Today Far Too Busy To Come To Church I Am Far Too Busy To Commit My Life To The Gospel When Things Ease Off When The Going Is Cleared In My Diary When All Of These Things Are Done Then I Come Again The Warning Is That We Don't Know What Is Ahead Of Us We May Be Lost Eternally And Maybe Too Late And Then You See The Third Excuse Verse 20 I Have Married A Wife And Therefore I Cannot Come You Think Well That Sounds A Reasonable Enough Excuse Just Happily Married I Want To Devote My Time To My Wife Family Is Priority But Again You See In All Of These Things They Are Not Wrong In And Of Themselves But They Are Wrong When They Become The Priority In Our Life When They Keep Us From Coming Near To God Are You Making Excuses Today Are You Putting The Wrong Things First Are Your Priorities In The Wrong Order It's A Bit Like Saying I'm Not Going To Go Into That Swimming Pool Until I Learn To Swim You Can't You Can't Do It You Got To Go In You Got To Go Into The Pool To Learn To Swim I Remember I Remember Being In College Here Many Years Ago Now We Were Learning All About How To Weld And We Had All The Theory We Were Writing All About It And We Learned So Many Different Things And Yet I Couldn't Weld Because I Never Touched A Welder And You Think [23:09] To Yourself You Can Know All About! It But Until You Actually! And Do It It's Useless! And In Many Ways That's The Way Our Faith Is As Well We Can Know All About The Bible We Can Learn All About It But Jesus Is Saying Are You Coming Are You Coming To Follow Me Are You Coming To Put Your Trust In Me And You Say Oh There's So Much!

To Give Up All These Excuses But What Is There To Give Up That's More Important Than Following Jesus Or You Might Say Oh But I'm Too Great A Sinner Well He Can Save Anyone And That's What We're Reminded Of Here You'll Say Oh I'll Come Later I'll Come Again But Not Today You Have No Idea What's Ahead None Of Us Do So It's Not A Time For Excuses Because The

Risk Come He Says For Everything Is Now Ready But Then They Made Their Excuses But Finally I Just Want To See Very Briefly The Outcome The Outcome That We Have Here Imagine You You Organized A Big Meal A Wedding With Hundreds Of Guests And No One Came How Would You Feel Sad

Angry Dismayed Be All Kinds Of Emotion After All The Trouble You've Gone To After All The Expense You've Gone To And No One Comes Well That's The Response The People Give Here To This Invitation To The Banquet Nobody Comes They All Make Their Excuses But Jesus Speaks Then Of Well We're Not Going To Waste This Banquet Go Out He Says To The Servant In Verse 21 The Servant Reported Back Then The Master Of The House Became Angry And Said To The Servant Go Out Quickly To The Streets And Lanes Of The City And Bring In The Poor And Crippled And Blind And Lame Now Jesus Is Here Saying To The Pharisees You Think You're Important And You're Saying No Well The Danger Is This Is Going To Pass You By And The Invitation Instead Is Going To All The Ones That You Look Down On The Ones That You Don't See As Important The Blind The Lame The Crippled The Poor They Are The Ones Who Will Come And There A Warning There For Us That If We See Ourselves As Beyond The Gospel Or Too Important For The Gospel That That Invitation Passes By It Goes To Others What Is God Desire Here What Is He Saying He Is Saying That He Wants His House To Be Filled As You See In Verse 23 The Master Said To The Servant Again Is Going Even Further Now Go Out To The Highways And Hedges To Those Who Have Been Almost Abandoned You Could Say Compel These People To Come In That My House May Be Filled The Invitation Goes On And That's The Way It Is To Be But How Are You Responding To The Invitation Today Come For Everything Is Now Ready Don't Make Excuses Because The Danger Is The Invitation Is Gone It's Too Late You've Missed Out And What Jesus Tells Us In That Sense Is We Are Lost For Eternity That's The Danger Of Letting This Invitation Pass By Of Trying To Find Meaning For Life And All The Things That We Want First And Foremost Jesus Is Saying No Get Your House And Your Priorities In Order Come For Everything Is Now Ready It Is All Done Will

[27 : 40] You Accept That Invitation Today Will You Come And See That He Has Done All Not Just For Important People Or Those Who Think They're Important He Speaks At The Start About Humbling Ourselves That We Might Be Lifted Up That's What We Are All To Do We Are All Important To Jesus Because The Invitation Is To All He Says Come Now For Everything Is Ready So Why Don't You Come Not Just Today But Come Day After Day Follow Jesus Make Him Priority As He's Made You His Priority The Cost Of This Banquet Was Great He Gave His Own Life He Paid The Price That's What It Means When

It Says Everything Is Ready Salvation Is Not Spelt D O Do It's Spelt D O N E Done It Is Done So Come Let Us Pray Lord Our Gracious God We Do Thank You For The Gospel Invitation That You Give To Us We Thank You Lord That It Reminds Us That It Is A Simple Invitation Just To Come Yet It Is A Powerful Invitation An Invitation With A Great Cost That Everything Is Ready Because You Have Done All For Us But It Reminds Us To That It Is An Urgent Invitation!

So Lord Help Us To Hear And To Respond And To Receive This Invitation To Rejoice That You Speak To Us And Call Us To Yourself So May We Hear And We Ask It In Jesus Name Amen We're Going To Conclude By Singing To God's Praise In Psalm 131 The Sing Psalms Version Page 173 Psalm 131 Page 173 We sing The whole Of This Psalm Psalm That Reminds Us About Humbling Ourselves Before God And That When We Do So We Find That Comfort In Being Near To Him My Heart Is Not Proud O Lord Nor Haught Is My I Do Not Occupy Myself With Things Too Great Or High My Spirit I Have Calmed My Heart

Is Pacified My Soul Is Like A Little Child Close To Its Mother's Side There's That Sense Of Just Finding That Peace Let's Sing This Whole Psalm To God's Praise My My Heart My Heart Not Proud O Lord Nor Haud Is My Eye I Do Not Occupy Myself With Things Too Great Or High My Spirit I Have Calmed My Heart Is Pacified My

Soul Is Like A Little Child Close To Its Mother Side Just Like A Little Child My Soul Is Calmed In Me O Israel Open God God The Lord Now And Eternally After the benediction I'll go to the main door we'll close with the benediction now may grace mercy and peace from God father son and holy spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore amen miracle