

# The Parable of the Great Banquet

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[ 0 : 00 ] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! My bang's just right!

And then it's hard as a rock all throughout the day. But it is. I am thankful to be here. We talk about and pray for this church consistently.

Even this morning, the pastors of Cornerstone were praying for you. And praying for me as I have the privilege to preach God's word to you. And we will be in Luke 14, so if you've turned there, you can look on with me in a minute.

But I did want to, I think appropriately, just commend Walt to you. Walt led me to Christ in October 15th of 2006.

[ 1 : 15 ] And my life was forever changed on that day. And Walt's fingerprints are all over my life. The way that I think, the way that I think pastorally, the way that I think about my family, my calling.

Walt has influenced me. And I would say the greatest thing that I can say, and I thank God for this, is that I love Jesus more now than when I did in 2006.

And part of that is that I was disciplined in a local church. And Walt was part of that. And what Walt did is transferred to me what he had received in being part of a local church.

And so I am excited for Trinity Grace and just to see the effect of this church and this city, the friendly city. So what a privilege it is to be with you.

We're here this morning to hear from God. And I believe God is present with us. I believe that God is with us this morning. And so now as I have the privilege to read the Bible, what we're about to hear is God's very word.

[ 2 : 26 ] So we're going to begin in verse 15. So please look on with me now as I read God's word. When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

But he, Jesus, 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 have bought a field and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to examine them. Please have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come. So the servant came and reported these things to his master.

Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, Go out quickly to the streets and the lanes of the city and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.

[ 3 : 38 ] 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. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word, the word of our God stands forever.

And so this morning in our text, Jesus has been invited to dine with the Pharisees on the Sabbath. And Luke makes very clear, verse one of chapter 14, that this is not a kind invitation from the Pharisees.

If you look, he says that as Jesus came, they were watching him carefully. They were watching him carefully.

But here is what I love about the relationship of Jesus and the Pharisees. The Pharisees are trying so hard to figure out who Jesus is. They've never heard someone teach like him.

[ 4 : 45 ] They've never seen someone do the things that he can do. And time and time again, they have tried to test him. They've asked him questions. And time and time again, what they have found is that Jesus has this amazing way of putting them in their place.

And the questions that they ask are then turned on them. And so the Pharisees by this time have kind of figured things out. And so as you read through, and I'm going to give us the context, but as you see, Jesus is no passive participant in this dinner.

Not only are the Pharisees watching Jesus, but Jesus is watching the Pharisees. Jesus is taking note of the Pharisees.

We see this in verse 7. He says, Now he told a parable to those who were invited. When he, Jesus, noticed how they chose the places of honor.

So Jesus is watching. Jesus is taking inventory. And Jesus is not afraid to share his opinion with the Pharisees. And so what you have is that Jesus has been brought in.

[ 5 : 54 ] And now up to verse 15, Jesus has corrected the guests. And then in verses 12 through 14, he corrects the host. So he's taking everybody out.

He's like, Welcome to the party, Jesus. Well, I got something to say to you. I got something to say to you. I got something to say about your guest list. So just imagine they're sitting at the table.

Tensions are high.

The first course is not even out. And people aren't very hungry anymore. The tension, you could just feel it. And so what we see in verse 15 is a dear brother, a friend of this host says, Blessed is he who eats bread in the kingdom.

And this is, he's trying to lighten the mood. This guy, he's trying to say, All right, Jesus, we're done. Let's take this somewhere else. Let's lighten the mood a little bit. And so what would happen is, as he would say this, everyone that was there, that were friends with him would say, Yes, amen.

Yes, that is true. We will be there to eat bread. And what he was referring to specifically was a promise, was a prophecy given by Isaiah. In Isaiah 25, he said, and this is what it says, 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.

[ 7 : 15 ] And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.

And the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth. So this is the promised Messiah. This is the one to whom that the people of Israel were looking for. This is, the Pharisees are looking to the future.

They're saying that blessed is he who will eat bread in the kingdom. Who will. So they're looking at this promise. And so now everyone has agreed with this man. And now all eyes now turn to Jesus. And Jesus has just sat there. He has not added his voice. He has not responded to this toast. And what Jesus responds with is not agreement, but with a story.

He responds with a story. And what he is specifically responding to is the kingdom of God.

Remember the parables teach us, and Jesus brings forth, what is the secret of the kingdom of God?

[ 8 : 23 ] What is the flavor of the kingdom of God? What are the ingredients that make up the kingdom of God? And so now in this moment, what Jesus wants to do is he's going to instruct.

He's not only instructing the Pharisees, he's instructing us this morning. Amen. And so we have to look at this parable. And may God give us ears to hear. May he give us eyes to see.

May he give us taste buds to taste and see that the Lord is good. If I could summarize, if I could have one statement that what I think this parable is calling us to, it's come and radically reorient your life toward Christ and his mission.

Come and radically reorient your life toward Christ and his mission. So we'll unpack this in three points. Point one, you're invited.

You're invited. Verse 15 through 17. Evites. They're great. I received one this week. If you don't know what that is, it's an email invitation.

[ 9 : 25 ] So it came into my inbox as I was preparing and pulled it up, and there was an envelope on it that said, you're invited. I went ahead, clicked on it, and I thought, oh, this is nice.

Getting invited to a dinner. And so I looked who was inviting me, when it was. But then what I looked for, and I'm sure all of us do this, is I begin to see, is there a guest list? Who's going to be at this party? Who's going to be there attending? Who am I going to have to eat with? Who am I going to have to spend two or three hours with? And at times, who's on the guest list can determine if I'm going to go to this dinner or not.

It can determine if I really want to take this precious Friday night and go. It's amazing what a simple invitation to eat a meal can do in our hearts.

Isn't it? Isn't it? It's just amazing how we can take a kind invitation, and it just does stuff in our hearts. This was the case in Jesus' day too.

[ 10 : 34 ] This isn't a 21st century American thing. Invites were going out. So look at verse 16 with me. It says, that a man once gave a great banquet and invited many.

Invited many. And so the invitation has gone out. The great banquet for a dinner, for a banquet. And notice, many are invited. Many.

This is no small banquet. This is a big affair. And so during times like this, you want to make sure that people know that this is going on. And if they respond and say, yes, we're coming, then you know what to prepare for.

Then you know how many to prepare for. You know how many fatted calves you've got to kill. You've got to know how much produce that needs to be brought in. You've got to set the table. An invitation has gone out.

Now when Jesus is telling this, the Pharisees know exactly what Jesus is trying to communicate here. So when Jesus is talking about this, what they realize is that Jesus is not just talking about a simple invitation.

[ 11 : 42 ] What he's talking about is this prophecy. Is that there has been an invitation that has gone out to the people of God, that there is a banquet coming. It is the one that they have referred to.

They know that an invitation has gone out to the people of Israel, that there is a dinner awaiting them, that they will eat the bread of the kingdom of God. And so as Jesus is instructing these Pharisees, they are tracking with what he is saying.

There is an invitation that has gone out. There is a banquet being prepared. The Messiah is coming and they knew these promises and the Pharisees understood quite clearly the point Jesus was making.

In verse 17, he sent his servant to tell all of those who were invited to come for all things are ready. Now this would have shook the Pharisees.

Remember, they're thinking that the kingdom is going to come. They're looking to the future. Well, Jesus just, he kicked up the timetable because the servant said, many are invited.

[ 12 : 45 ] Well, now, the master of the banquet has sent that servant back out and said, hey, tell him it's time to come. The dinner's ready. The banquet is ready. Come.

Now what he is saying is that the kingdom of God has arrived. What he's telling the Pharisees is, hey guys, we're not looking to the future anymore. We're looking to the present.

It's ready. There's no more waiting. There's no more wondering. There's no more questioning. Brothers and sisters, this is the gospel. What Jesus is saying here is that the promised one, the one that we read about in Isaiah 25, where death will be swallowed up and that there's going to be this living bread to eat, that it is time to feast.

It is time to eat. So as Walt begins the meeting this morning and he's inviting us to come, he's inviting us, are you hungry this morning? Then Christ, the master of the banquet, is saying, come. Come and feast. It's ready. It's ready. The feast is ready to eat. That's what he's telling to the Pharisees. Hey boys, what are you looking to the future for? It's ready. It's time to eat.

[ 13 : 58 ] So are you here and you're thirsty this morning? Jesus says, come to me, all who thirst, and you will be satisfied. Are you tired just from striving and earning God's favor? Do you come in this morning and you're more aware of your failures?

Jesus says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. The invitation is to come without money. You don't have to bring anything.

You just have to come. And there's no cost. I love the song, come you sinners, poor and needy. We come as poor and needy men and women to rest in Jesus.

His invitation is simply to come. Living bread, the bread that the Pharisees are looking to the future to is standing right in front of them.

Right in front of them. He's sitting with them, eating with them. Why wouldn't you come? Why wouldn't you respond? And that leads us to our next point.

[14:57] Second point, putting second things first. Putting second things first. We see this in verse 18 through 20.

Now, I think, what I want to point out first is that each of these excuses that are given are civil. They're not hostile. They're not mean. They're not ugly. They're not yelling. They're polite. The people who were invited to these kind of parties had to learn how to do this well. So when you go to a dinner party of a Pharisee, the reality is is that I'm going to scratch your back and I'm going to expect for you to scratch my back.

So once you go to a party, there's going to be a lot of parties going on. And you have to learn to say no to invitations. You have to learn to kind of strategically be able to say, like, oh, I can't make it because of this.

I have this going on. But essentially, what you're saying is no, I don't want to come. What you're essentially saying is I have other things to do. So imagine the servant comes, invites the first man.

[16:06] So look at the first man. The servant says, hey, come on, come on. All is ready. Let's go. The dinner's ready. You said you could come. The initial invitation came out. You RSVP'd and said you were going to be able to make it.

So now it's ready. So come. Everything's ready. And in response, he says, oh, sorry. I'm unable to make it. I bought a field and now I need to go inspect it.

So the servant's like, oh, okay. He goes back to the master and the master, and he tells the master, hey, the guy, this guy, we'll call him Silas. Silas can't make it.

Why can't he make it? I thought he RSVP'd. Oh, well, he bought a field and he needs to go inspect it. Wait, he already bought the field? Then why does he need to go inspect it?

Does he just like to go look at his field? I mean, what's the problem here? Is he going to stand there and look for like 30 seconds? Okay. What's keeping him? Why is this field so important?

[17:11] It's disorienting. It doesn't make sense. So the servant continues, goes to another person's house. Say, the banquet's ready. Come on. Come, the banquet's ready.

Oh, I'm sorry. I just bought five oxen and I need to examine them. Same thing. He already bought the oxen. He already purchased them and he's rich. To have five oxen during this time means that you got money.

If you got a problem with your oxen, you can probably go buy another oxen if you need to. But yet, he gives an excuse. I got to go inspect the oxen.

And then this last excuse is actually, okay, I understand it a little bit more. You know? He goes and the guy says, well, I've been married. I just got married. And I need to go be with my wife.

Okay. So, you're already married. It already happened. You knew that the dinner was coming and yet, you can't come because you're, what's going on here?

[18:17] What's the hold up? You can bring her with you. It's not like you're getting married the day of the banquet. You see how these excuses, you just see right through them. You see right through them.

And what Jesus is wanting to say is that there's, there's, there's, there's value statements being communicated behind these excuses.

There's value statements being made. They're not just making excuses. They're communicating to the host not just that they can't make it, but they don't want to come.

It's not just that they can't make it. It's that they don't want to come. They have other things. They have other things that are more valuable to them.

They have other things that matter more to them. That is what is being communicated. motivated. The Bible calls this idolatry.

[19:22] Whenever we elevate something above God, whenever we elevate even good things above God, it's wrong, sinful, because God is the greatest thing that, that has ever existed.

And he, and he, and we owe him our entire devotion, allegiance to him. And here's what happens when anything, when we value anything more than God, here's what's going to happen.

We're going to ignore God. We are going to ignore him. If anything is more valuable to us than God, we will ignore God. We will ignore him.

Even, think about it, Jesus, the son of God, standing right in front of us. We're the Pharisees. He's telling these men that the kingdom of God is at hand. Come and feast. You don't have to help with the feast.

It's ready. Everything's ready. All you got to do is come. You just got to come and eat. It's going to be delicious. fine food.

[ 20 : 22 ] As Isaiah 25 said, good drink. There's going to be all these things present. Come. The finest will be there. Yet the Pharisees can't see, can they?

It's amazing how you can look at Jesus. You can know so much about Jesus, but you don't see him. You don't hear him. You don't understand.

You just can't see it. But yet Jesus is saying, come. We can get so preoccupied with ourselves. The Pharisees got preoccupied with their place of power, with their reputation.

They're these leaders and they like it. They can't see. What Jesus is calling them to is to humility, is to bowing the knee, is to following him, is to saying that, hey guys, maybe you don't have everything figured out and you need to follow me and what I have said and what the kingdom, you don't get to decide who's on the guest list.

I do. I'm the master of the house. I get to decide who comes, not you. And the text is meant to lead us to ask ourselves these questions.

[ 21 : 36 ] Whenever you read the Bible and you come across a story where people are looking foolish, where they're not looking impressive, it's easy for us to put ourselves in better light.

Oh, I wouldn't do that. I would never do that. Or we think about someone else. Oh man, yep, makes me think of such and such. But a good principle, whenever you come across something where someone is just being foolish, being just, just missing the point, the Bible's a mirror.

So it's meant to say, where am I in this? How am I like the Pharisees? What do I do? What do I put? How do I put second things over and above God? These are the questions we are meant to ask ourselves.

And when we do that, what happens is that we're able to reorient our life. We're able to see that, oh yes, I'm putting even good things before God and Jesus.

Why is it that I'm always, I'm just so tired? Why is it that there's so much striving? Well, it's because I don't truly believe that Jesus is enough. I believe that I know Jesus and I know who he is, but I want more.

[ 22 : 49 ] He's not enough. Jesus and add to it. People's approval. A good week. A good marriage. Maybe it's just you want marriage. All these things.

They're not bad things. But when we turn them into God things, that's bad. That's wrong. And God will not give us over to delight in them.

Our hearts, they are just full of unrest because our hearts were made to find our rest in God. And our hearts are restless until they find their rest in God.

So the question is, is what is your field? What is your oxen? What is your marriage? And here is the reality of things.

Here's what we have to realize, and this will lead us into our third point. The banquet must and will go on. That's our third point. The banquet must and will go on.

[ 23 : 51 ] So I remember my wife and I, we seriously regretted missing this wedding. It was one of those that we were like, it's going to be nice. Ashamedly so.

It's going to be like, they're going to have a spread. It's going to be fun. It's going to be like a date night. So it's just kind of like, here we go.

I'm going to take you here. And as Walt said, romance takes work. So it's nice though when you got a freebie, you know, it's like, hey, we got this nice wedding. Trying to make it. It's like, thank you.

But the wedding comes.

We RSVP'd so quick. It was like, no second thought. It's like, we're going. It's called good leadership. We're going. No. But the day of the wedding came and both Lauren and I totally forgot. I just completely forgot. I saw all the groomsmen. I was like, what are all those guys doing here? I was like, they're having no wedding today. And guess what? They totally rescheduled the wedding for us.

[ 24 : 52 ] They heard we weren't coming and they said, you know what? We're going to move this to the next weekend. No. The wedding still went on. It still went on.

And we heard story after story of how it was an incredible wedding. And we heard story after story at the spread it delivered. It did not disappoint. And we were filled with regret. And we were preoccupied. And we had forgotten. We had this invitation. We committed. We heard about it. It came. It still happened. Same thing here, guys. Same thing here. There's a banquet. There's a supper. And it's happening with us or without us. And so that's what Jesus wants these Pharisees to see. He wants them to see, hey guys, you think that you're really important to this whole banquet thing? You're really important to this whole kingdom thing? But it's going to happen with or without you. It's going to happen with or without you. Verse 21, the master of the house, he was angry. [ 25 : 57 ] Rightly angry. I mean, imagine everything that's gone into this. Everything. He's worked so hard. He's so excited. The RSVP says, come in. It brings this master joy to fill his house. Don't miss that. God is eager to dwell with us. He wants us to dwell in his house. He wants to feed us. God is generous. He is good. He withholds no good thing from his people. Sometimes people think that God is above and he's just kind of looking on like, okay, hey everybody, yep, there you go. No, he is coming toward us in love. He sent his own son to prepare this feast and the son of God is standing before these Pharisees saying, come. Come and feast. But they can't see it. And so notice, notice, after the, in the next breath, the master says, okay, well, I want you to go back out into the city and I want you to invite others. And I want you to invite the poor. I want you to invite the crippled. I want you to invite the blind and the lame. And notice, this is the same group of people that Jesus challenged the host of the Pharisees to invite next time in verse 13. [ 27 : 12 ] You know what's unique about these people, the poor, the crippled, and the blind? It's really rather simple. When they're invited, they'll come. They'll come. They don't have a field to go look at. They don't have oxen that they're distracted with. They're broken. They've been left out of society. They're just in the streets sitting, lonely, hungry. What I love about this story is that once the servant goes, it doesn't take that long. In the next verse, he says, okay, master, the house, everyone's come. I mean, it's like that. You're not having to pull arms. You're not having to make excuses. These people, they see their need. They see their need for God. They're hungry. And what they see is that when they hear this message of there's a feast, there's a feast of yummy food. There's a feast that's going to fill your belly. It's completely free. All you have to do is come. They're thinking correctly, why wouldn't we come? Why wouldn't we? Why wouldn't we? [ 28 : 14 ] The house is full. Brothers and sisters, we are more like the Pharisees though, aren't we? We can be tempted. These men are self-sufficient. They're capable. They kind of have life figured out. They don't see their need as much as these other people who have been invited. I'm guessing if you line them up, a lot of them would look just like us. Maybe they're religious people. They showed up at the right times at the house of worship. They read the Bible when they were supposed to. They recited Scripture. Scripture. They might look a lot like us. But in the parable, they found something other to do than come to the banquet. They found something other to do. And what I love is that the servant comes back and he says to the master, hey, we still got room. Right? [ 29 : 16 ] And so the master's like, all right, go back out. Go back out and bring more people in because I want to fill this thing up. And so what this is pointing to is that at the first instance, the servant went inside the city going for the people of Israel, the Jewish nation. Well, now what he's saying is when you go to the highways and the hedges and compel them to bring them in, what he's saying is go to the Gentiles. Go to those who aren't part of this people. Go to the people who aren't part of national Israel. Just go to them because they will come. And notice he says, compel them to come. And what he means by that is they're going to be nervous. They're going to be like, wait, what? You want me to come eat with you? You want me to come feast at your house? I'm a Gentile. I'm not supposed to be anywhere near you. Well, come. Here's why. Here's why. There's a feast that's been made and my master, the master of the house, has sent me and here's what we're going to have. And we got room and we want you to come.

And what I love about how this ends is that the master says that my house may be filled. So what that means is that the house isn't full yet.

[ 30 : 24 ] There is more to be added to this house. There's more who can come. The house isn't full yet. The invitation still stands. So if you're here this morning, the invitation is to you to come and feast.

The invitation is to you. It's to hear the invitation to confess your sin to God, to repent. And it's not just saying I'm going to leave all this behind.

It's saying I'm going to dinner. I'm going to a dinner that Jesus has prepared. I'm going to a dinner that Jesus is going to serve. And it's his best.

And it's not just, this is a dinner that will never end. This is a dinner that doesn't have a shelf life.

This is a dinner where the food won't run out. This is a dinner that will go on for eternal life.

But don't miss, the Master says in verse 24, For I tell you, none of those men who are invited shall taste my banquet.

[ 31 : 29 ] So if we say no, then we will not taste the banquet. If we say no, if we say, if we see Jesus and hear Jesus, then we say no. And we will not be able to taste this banquet.

That's why we're here this morning. That's why Walt wanted to plant a church is because we want you at the banquet. That's why I believe God has sent this church here is for you all this morning to hear this message.

And you may have never heard this message before. It's a message of grace. It's a message of what God has done for you in Jesus Christ. And familiarity is not enough. You can know everything there is about Jesus and still deny the invitation.

What Jesus wants is not your familiarity. What you want is your life. He wants to be your treasure.

You know why he wants to be your treasure? Because he's the best thing you could ever have.

He's the only thing that we need.

It's because he loves you. So would you come? Would you confess your sin? Would you repent and turn? And would you trust in Jesus? And for those who are part of this church, what I would encourage you with is invite people. Be like that servant who obeyed his master.

[ 32 : 36 ] He just, the master said, hey, go. And what he, he, he, he didn't say, well, I've got a busy schedule and I've got a lot going on and it's going to cost me.

And well, I'm, you know, I don't know these people. And, you know, these are things that we deal with. These are real temptations. But what I love about the servant is that he goes. And what he, and what the joy is, is that he gets to see people coming.

He gets to see people coming to the dinner. He gets to see people who, who were once saying no to the master, but now they've said yes. Their life, they were, they were headed straight to an eternity in hell, separated from God.

But now they're coming to the banquet. Now they're going to come and feast. And now they get to feast together. It's not a hard invitation, is it?

We believe in the banquet. And what I would encourage you is to use your homes. Jesus, when the Son of Man came, he came eating with people. He would go to their house and he would invite people to eat with him.

[ 33 : 41 ] I think we need to do both. We not only need to invite people into our home, but we need to go and meet people where they are in their home. We need to get to know them and we need to share life with them. We need to break bread with them.

It's amazing what God can do through a meal. One of the least utilized Christian resources, I believe, is our homes. Homes have become a base camp where we just kind of drop in, we eat, we sleep, we get clean, and then we're out.

I say, let's linger. Let's make our homes places of refuge. You don't have to do it perfectly. You don't have to have a six-course meal and have it all, have a spread and spend thousands of dollars.

No. You can just simply invite someone over for a cup of coffee and ask about their life and truly care about them. You can invite your neighbor who you haven't met yet to come over or you can simply go and say, hi, do you need anything?

There's just this impulse where we're reaching out to other people who are around us. And I love, I would encourage you, there's a book, Rosaria Butterfield wrote, Gospel Comes with a House Key. I would warn you not to try to emulate her.

[ 34 : 46 ] She is extremely gifted and I would, I would, it's discouraging to think about how can I do this with her? her, like her. But it's compelling. And what I love about her is she's saying, you don't have to be like me, but how are you doing this?

Bible calls us to show hospitality. God never, she says this, God never gets the address wrong. God never gets the address wrong.

So just consider that as you think about that. Consider that. Consider that. So as you think about heaven, what do you think it's going to be like? As you think about the kingdom of God, what do you think it's going to be like?

It truly is like nothing we could ever think of. Praise God that we're not in charge of the guest list. Amen? Praise God. Amen. Have you ever considered who's going to be in heaven?

Have you ever pondered by the people you will see, the stories you hear, testimony after testimony after testimony? According to Jesus' parable, who's going to be there are the blind and the lame and the crippled.

[ 36 : 04 ] It's going to be those who are in need. Those who know that they need to be saved, who need to be rescued, who need to be held under a father's care.

I just pray that we would fight against the presumption that we're going to be there.

I think this morning God would say, search me and know me. That's a great question or a great request. Lord, search me and know me. Do I treasure you? Are you my treasure? Why am I going to go to this banquet?

It's because I love Jesus. It's because he's my everything. It's because I'm living my life for him. It's because every decision and thing I think about is for him and I want to be there.

And I count it such a privilege that I know him because I know I don't deserve to be there. This is what John Newton said. He says, If I ever reach heaven, I expect to find three wonders. First, to meet some I had not thought to see there.

[ 37 : 05 ] Second, to miss some I had thought to meet there. And third, the greatest wonder of all, to find myself there. It's the greatest wonder for me.

Why am I here this morning? Why do I get to be here this morning? Why did I respond to that invitation? Well, one, it's because someone gave me an invitation.

And it's two, that I heard the gospel. So what we have to offer you this morning, what this church more than anything has to offer you, more than a potluck, more than a good community, it's Jesus Christ, Him and Him crucified.

And all the blessings, all the gifts that come with Him. That's what they have to offer you. That's what God has to offer you. That's His best. It's the best news that you'll ever hear.

Would you come? Would you come and radically, would you change your life, radically reorient your life toward Christ and His mission? All are invited. All are welcomed.

[ 38 : 07 ] Let's pray. Well, Heavenly Father, I thank You for Your Word. I thank You that You invite us.

Lord, we don't deserve Your invitation, Lord. I thank You that it is an invitation simply to come. That it's not to pull up our bootstraps and try to make it, but You just say, come.

I've taken care of everything. And so, Lord, I pray that we would be, everyone in this room would look to Christ, would know Christ, would trust in Christ. I pray that even as we sing, that they would sing in faith and celebrate that there is a banquet, that there is a dinner, that there is a kingdom that is coming, that they can be a part of and know You and taste and see that You and You alone are good.

Oh, Lord, I pray for this church. I pray that You would continue, Lord, to do Your work, that Your will would be done in this place, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen.

You've been listening to a message at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [trinitygraceathens.com](http://trinitygraceathens.com).