

The Parable of the Banquet

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[0 : 00] Luke 14, Matthew, Mark, Luke. And obviously we're working through this series of Luke's books, continually getting things from it and enjoying it, enjoying studying God's Word.

! It's lovely to hear a scriptural, scriptural phone. Aye, after church today. That's wonderful. Okay, so we're at Luke 14. We're going, okay, this is Jesus at a Pharisee's house.

One Sabbath, when Jesus was being carefully watched, there in front of him was a man suffering.

As asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?

But they remained told of the man. He healed him and sent him away. Then he asked them, if one of you has a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?

And they had nothing to say. When the place is of honour at the table, he told him this parable.

When someone invites you to a wedding feast for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.

[1 : 22] If so, the host who invited both of you will have to take the least important place.

If you are invited, take the least place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, Friend, then you will be honoured in the presence of all your fellow guests.

For everyone who is exalted, and he who humbles himself, will be exalted. Then Jesus said to his fortune or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives or your rich neighbours.

If you do, so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blindest. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

Parable of the great banquet. When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, At the feast in the kingdom of God. Jesus replied, A certain man was preparing a great banquet.

[2 : 31] At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, Come, for everything is now ready. The man began to make excuses. The first said, I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it.

The first said, I have just bought five yoke of oxen, And I'm on my way to try them out. Please, please excuse me. I have just got married, so I can't come. The servant came back and reported this to his master's house, Became angry and ordered his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town, And bring in the lame.

Sir, the servant said, What you ordered has been done. Then the master told his servant, Go out to the roads and the country lanes, And make them come in.

So that I tell you, Not one of those men who were invited Will get a taste of my banquet. Thanks, Lord, for your word. Let's sing together again.

Jesus, all for Jesus. Let's sing together again. Jesus, all for Jesus.

[3 : 55] I am and have and ever hope to be. For it's only in your way.

Hello.

It's good to see everyone in church today. Really good to see you. Repeat the warm welcome that's already been given. And if this is your first time, We've been coming here for many years.

Just a really warm welcome to you. And take a moment to pray again. As we come to God's word this morning. Let's just pray together.

Another opportunity of reading and studying your word together this morning. And Lord, we need your help. How we need your help this morning.

[5 : 19] How I need your help. Expound your word this morning. And how we all need your help to understand it. Preacher and congregation. And so, Lord, we pray for the help that only you can give this morning.

Help us, Lord, as we just can say. And help us, Lord, to respond in faith. Pray for the help of the Holy Spirit. And we just trust, Lord, that there will be something here for us.

And so, Lord, as we continue now, We just have a hymn that we've been singing in our minds. Jesus. Jesus. All for all I am and have and ever hope to be. We pray all these things in Jesus' name. So, we'll be looking at Luke chapter 14 today. And we'll be looking at the parable of the great. And verses 15 through to 24. Luke 14 through to 24. The passage that Paul has just read to us. It's a great parable. Great invitation. And I just want to start by saying this.

[6 : 31] That this parable is for us today. Jesus, all those years ago. And it was written down. And we have it here recorded in scripture. And the invitation still stands.

It's still valid. And in fact, the invitation is for you this morning. You're invited to come. And you're invited to come to the great banquet. God's help. I'll try to explain as best I can this morning. But the main point is this. That you're invited to come. And I want to say this also. And I don't want to beat about the bush or mince my words. It's just to urge you to accept this invitation. Well, it still stands. One day it will be too late. The invitation. But now is the time to accept the invitation. And there are many things. And our families and friends are so important. Our employment. Our homes. All these things are important and necessary.

[7 : 30] Our work and the home that we have to live in. The world. And how we respond to God's invitation. And maybe you're here this morning. And you've already existed. Perhaps for many years.

Well, I hope that you'll also find something this morning. From God's word. And I hope you'll get a lot out of it this morning. By way of encouragement. And maybe of challenge as well. Look into these verses.

In a little more depth. Let's just take a moment to have a think about. Looking at the parable of the great banquet. But you might be in church this morning. And thinking. Anyway. I don't know what a parable is. Of course. Not all of scripture is parable. There are different genres of parable. There's just plain narrative. A plain account. Like the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Other sections of scripture are poetry. And we can turn to the book of the Psalms. But here we have what's known as a parable.

[8 : 29] One of the best definitions I've come across. Story with a heavenly meaning. Or in other words. It's a down to earth story. And this is so true of all the parables.

Of our Lord Jesus. And it's certainly true of this one. As we'll see. Not all the Bible is parable. But here we have a parable. And that's what we're looking at this morning. It was at a dinner. And he was speaking about a dinner. And he was speaking to his hearers. About a subject. He could certainly. And the context of the setting. Was a meal table. But we also note secondly. That all was not well. About this. If you just glance back a bit. To the beginning of chapter 14. Jesus was in the house. The guests were Pharisees. And there were lawyers. And there was some wrangling going on here. About who at the dinner. And you can just imagine the sort of thing that was going on here. One man would maybe say.

[9 : 25] Right does he have to sit there. I'm more important than him. Or someone else would say. He should be sitting the dog. In this gathering. And someone else would say.

No no. I'm in charge here. I'll be sitting in. So the whole thing was a sad state of affairs. And so Jesus deals with the problem directly. And he reminds them all. From the way of the world. The way of the world is me first. But Jesus reminds him. The kingdom. Everyone who exalts himself. Will be humbled. But he who humbles himself. Remember how Jesus humbled himself. And became obedient to death. Even so. And what humility that was. And as followers of Jesus.

This is to be our way as well. To be others first. I know how important that is in church life. And how sad it is when humility is our example. But it's far more than just our example.

[10 : 23] We remember that. On Calvary's cross. And we remember that what he did for us. Was not just an example. For us to follow. Take up our cross and follow him.

Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins. To take the punishment that we could never pay. He was crucified. Buried. And he rose again from the dead. On the third day. Ascended to the father's right hand. And one day. He will return in glory. And in judgment. He goes out to all. To come to him. And accept the invitation by faith.

In the Lord Jesus Christ. For God is only begotten son. That whosoever believeth in him. Should not perish. But have everlasting life.

This reminds the people at the meal. About the kind of people. Who are on God's guest list. Not our sins or relatives. But the poor and the crippled. And the lame and the blind.

[11:18] Those who have no way of returning the favor. How different is God's kingdom to the way of the world? The world says. Meek shall inherit the earth.

And what a difference that is. We're going to look at. But you can see what I'm getting at here. In the introduction. The parable is an earthly story.

With a heavenly and earthly banquet. Speaks of a heavenly banquet. And the entrance to it. Is by faith in God. The invitation. So let's take a minute now.

Just to identify. Who the main. People are in the parable. And who do they refer to. I wonder if you've worked that out yet. Who they are. Who is God.

And the gospel is the invitation. Sent out by the servant. Who is the servant. Actually there are a range of opinions here.

[12:14] About. Some say the servant refers to. The prophets in the Old Testament. Or maybe John the Apostles. Maybe the servant refers to us as believers.

Or to Jesus. In the Bible. Especially in the book of Isaiah. Jesus is spoken of as the great servant. Of the Lord. And 42. Maybe we could just turn there for a moment.

So Isaiah. And 42. Behold. My elect one. In whom. My soul. Delights. I put my spirit upon him.

Gentiles. He will not cry out. Nor raise his voice. Nor cause his voice to be heard. And he will not break. And smoldering. Flax. He will not quench.

He will bring forth justice. For truth. Nor be discouraged. Till he has established justice. In the earth. And the whole. Great. Words.

[13:12] Those are a great chapter of God's word. In Isaiah 42. Philippians chapter 2. Verses 5 to 11. It must take time to read. These great verses also. Chapter 2.

And 5 to 11. Let this mind be in you. Which also. Who being in the form of God. Did not consider it robbery. To be equaled with God.

But made. Taking the form of a bond servant. And coming in the likeness of men. And being found in a place. And became obedient to the point of death.

Even the death of the cross. Therefore God. And given him the name. Which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus. Every knee should. And of those on earth.

And of those under the earth. And that every tongue. Should confess. The glory. Of God the Father. So we can see here.

[14:09] The context. On the other hand. We as believers. In the Lord Jesus. Are called to go. We're called to preach. The gospel. We're ambassadors for Christ.

As 2 Corinthians 5. 20 reminds us. Ultimately the Lord Jesus. Is the great servant. Of the Lord. The one who is fully God. And fully man. The one who dwelt among us.

And who during his earthly ministry. Pursued his goal. Of calling people. Out of debate. But right down through Bible history. We can see.

That the Old Testament prophets. John the Baptist. In a special way. Called to speak God's word. And to invite people. To come to him. But what about us today. Or apostles.

As Elijah was a prophet. Or as the apostles. The 12 apostles. But those of us. Who are believers. In the Lord Jesus. Are sent ones.

[15:04] And that's what. Was a sent one. We are apostles. Not with a capital A. As the 12 apostles. Of the Lord. But we have a great commission. And we are called to go. We're to go.

Into all the world. We'll not miss. Some far off land. With the gospel. Maybe. Just one. Or maybe many of us here. Will. Maybe we're called to go.

Just as far. As the next door neighbor. Or the city center. Or to chat to someone. For dinner. And tell them about Jesus. We are servants. And we're called to go.

Out into an opportunity. Coming up for us. Just soon now. As we think about Jesus. As the opportunity. Of inviting folks along. We may be unworthy servants.

And you know. When you're in a pulpit. It's fair to say. You can feel your own unworthiness. I'm not a great evangelist. But each of us is just called to do.

[16:00] What we can do. And we're duty bound to do. That we can give to the Lord. To serve him. To preach the good news of the gospel. Tell them even to come in. Just as the parable says.

To accept the invitation. That's offered by the Lord himself. Servant who goes out. With the invitation to all. To the streets and lanes. To the highways and hedges.

And first group are those. Who accept the invitation. And come to the great banquet. And the second group are those. Who reject the invitation. And we'll see here. That they make excuses. They turn down the invitation.

They reject it. And they rubbish it. And ultimately of course. In the teaching of the parable. Remembering that there. Is a heavenly meaning. And the station will not be in heaven. They will not take part. In God's heavenly banquet. Just for those who accepted the invitation. And those who rejected it. Even so today. When they will accept it.

[16:58] And others will reject it. But we're reminded. That the invitation is a great invitation. And in fact. It's an invitation to accept Christ himself.

And how right now. Not to wait. To accept Jesus. While there's still time. And to enter into God's banquet. To have that hope. And assurance. Of a place at God's banquet. In heaven. One day. So with these things in mind. This is. A key verse. I think to our understanding. Of what follows. Jesus made a comment.

And the comment he made. Was in response to Jesus' teaching. About this sort of peace. And this man. Made a comment. At dinner table. He said in verse 15.

Blessed is God. We all make comments. At dinner tables. And when we're at home. With friends and family. All kinds of comments.

[17:54] And jokes will be made. Some polite. Some are a bit strange. I'm sure. And everything in between. Sometimes there's silence. At the table. No one speaks.

The whole man. In chapter 14. Verses. Verse 4 and 6. But a Pharisee. Who had. Who may also have been. An expert in the law. Made a serious comment.

To be fair. We can only guess. If his words. Were truly genuine. Or whether it was a hint. Of hypocrisy. In what he said. When the man said.

Blessed is he. Who shall eat bread. In the kingdom. Of God. Was he. Make it to heaven. When in fact. He had no right. To expect this. Was this just a sort of.

A packing. To impress. The other Pharisees. And lawyers. At a meal. Or was this man. Genuinely. Genuinely. Longing. To be. And to partake. Of the heavenly banquet. We don't know for sure.

[18:50] But what we do know. Is what Jesus. Responds. To the man's comment. Jesus said. In verses. 16 and 17. And invited many. And sent his servant.

At supper time. To say to those. Who were invited. Come. The banquet. Described here. Would have been. A formal dinner. A great feast. In fact. I don't know.

If you spotted this. But there's a double. Or. To be more exact. A two. First of all. In verse 16. We read. That many were invited. And then. In verse 17.

There's a command. And when you think of it. That makes perfect sense. In Jesus's day. There was no such thing. As fast food. Or a. Rate. A banquet.

When there was a banquet. Animals. Would need to be. Slaughter. And so. The preparation time. For this sort of. Formal banquet. Would have been considerable. Also. People.

[19:46] I don't know. But time. Was quite elastic. And they didn't have. The communications. Networks. That we have today. Invitation. Described here. Firstly. Many were invited.

Verse. Call went out. Come. For all things. Are now ready. The invitation. Was in two parts. Testament. And if you know. Your Bible. Well. You remember.

In the book of Esther. Queen Esther. Invited. And the day. Of the banquet. Was announced. That was the first part. Of the invitation. Chapter five.

And it wasn't until. The king's servants. Brought Haman. To the banquet. And so. This sort of. Two-part invitation. Was very common. Of the day. The master of the house.

Gave the invitation. And the servant. Went out. To bring the people. But the astounding thing. Was that despite. The kindness. Of the master. And his generosity. And gracious invitation. Some declined the offer.

[20:43] And not only so. That they. Did it. In quite an. Unger. They all alike. With one accord. As the passage says. Began to make excuses. And three excuses. And they are silly excuses.

And if you're taking notes. This is my first point. A sermon. Is a lot longer. Than I normally. Would give. But I felt. It was necessary. To just speak about. What a parable. But my points here.

Are very short. Point number one. Verses 18 to 20. Silly excuses. Excuses have a sort of request. Attached to them. A request. To be excused.

Whereas the third excuse. Just downright blunt. With no hint of politeness. At all. In it. All three are exceedingly lame. And when you think about it. No wonder the master of the house.

Was angry. As we read in verse 21. All have excuses. Excuses. We. We use. We use. We don't want to do certain things. In fact. And maybe.

[21 : 38] Like me. You can write a book. On all the excuses. You've used in the past. I won't share any of my. Looking at the excuses. Here in the parable. And the amazing thing. Is that.

Although the lifestyle. And culture. Was vastly different. From our day. The excuse. Is given. For not taking seriously. The call. To faith. And in our text here.

In Luke 14. Clearly those mentioned. Considered. Other things. More important. In coming to this. Here's excuse number one. I have bought.

A piece of ground. And I must. We wonder. Why the man. Didn't go and see the land. Before he bought it. Would you. Without first viewing it.

And that's possible. But it's not wise. And. Those of you. Homes under the hammer. On TV. Occasionally. You get people. Going to auction. And buying a house.

[22 : 34] It's possible. But not wise. In any case. The land is not going anywhere. It'll still be there. Then. Here's excuse number two. I have bought. Five yoke of oxen.

I'm going to test them. He said. He was actually. On the way. To test the oxen. And again. It beggars. The oxen. For their usefulness. First. Before he bought. The animals.

How foolish. Or maybe. Just ridiculous. And. Just said. The first thing. It came into his mind. In order to fob off. The invitation. And as he was walking.

I don't think. He would even have stopped. For a moment. Out of courtesy. And he was off. He kept on going. Excuse number three. I have married a wife. And therefore.

I cannot come. The most blunt. Blunt of the three. Is abrupt. And the man. Doesn't even. Say. Please. Can you have me. Excuse. Just. Flatly. Rejects the invitation.

[23 : 30] Outright. He said. That said. Might seem to be plausible. At least on the basis. Of the old testament. And again. If you know your bible.

Well. Deuteronomy 24. Verse 5. A man who had just. Got married. Was exempt. From military service. And also from other. Certain responsibilities. But even so.

The excuse. Is quite ridiculous. A service. And in any case. The man's wife. Would have been most welcome. To come. To the banquet as well. And the man. Delighted to welcome.

The newlyweds. To a meal. And the man. His dear wife. Would both. Have been invited. So there are three. Silly excuses. And following on.

From this point. Number two. There are two. And twenty three. The master of the house.

[24 : 23] Was angry. About the excuses. Given. By those who rejected. And so he sent. His servant out again. This time in great haste. You can always imagine.

This by his master. Into the city. After all. The banquet was ready. And there was no time. To lose. Time was shattered. And he said. Go quickly. But here's a surprising thing.

He said. To the well-to-do people. To people of high standing. In the community. The wealthy. The influential. And the maimed. And the lame. And the blind.

Now how interesting. We're invited. But we need to be careful here. As well. And not misunderstand. What the meaning in this parable. And so the poverty.

And blindness. Spoken of here. Doesn't refer to. Physically. Their spiritual condition. In other words. To those who were. Spiritually blind. Unable to.

[25 : 22] Straighten themselves up again. The servant went out. And the lanes of the city. And yet there was still room. And so the master. Sent him out again. This time to.

Compel them. To come in. The streets. And the lanes. Perhaps. Refer to cities. And towns. And hedges. Or rural. And countryside areas. And so we can see.

Clearly here. That the gospel invitation. Is to. The gospel. Is to be preached. Everywhere. To all nations. In fact. In the cities. The streets. The lanes.

And people. Are to be compelled. To come in. Not by use of force. Or by persecution. But out of genuine. Concern. And courtesy. And love.

Were to compel. Point number three. There are still spaces. The story isn't. Is it? Point number one. There were silly excuses.

[26 : 18] Point number two. There were surprises. And my final. Extremely brief. Point number three. There is still room. Verse 22. And still there is room.

Still there is room. There's a great. And there are still spaces. At the table. Is that not good news? To preach.

The Lord says. Come. For all things. Are now ready. More that could be said. About this parable. But now. It's the time. Just to draw things. To a close. Thoughts.

By way of application. Firstly. There's a warning. To be heeded. And there's an invitation. To be accomplished. There's a warning. To be heeded. A warning.

To the religious. Thing to say. But remember. When Jesus spoke. The words of this parable. He was speaking to. Some. Vendingly. Religious people. Perhaps young.

[27 : 19] And old as well. Religious. And. Outstandingly so. They were Pharisees. But we have the benefit. Hands. And we know.

That on the part. Of the Jews. There was a rejection. Of the gospel. Invited. And they rejected. The invitation. What happened next? They were cut off. For a season. Romans 11.

20. Out to the Gentiles. The first invitation. Has gone out. Through the prophets. Now in Jesus. The second invitation. The religious elite. Who rejected. The invitation.

Now the gospel. Has gone out. To the Gentiles. Deep theology. I know. In these things. And perhaps. We don't have time. Just to. To go into. A lot more.

Think about these things. What about us. Here and now. Today. It's not a bad thing. To be religious. Those of us. Who have had privilege. Of much familiarity. With churches.

[28 : 13] And with religion. And Bible. For many years. Ought to take. Even greater notice. To the warnings. Of the Bible. And make sure. Genuine. And well grounded. And not just familiarity.

Especially so. If we find ourselves. Drifting. Help us. The warnings are for us. And for our good. I think sometimes. When we see warnings. Not to do that. But.

It's a warning. If you hear a fire alarm. Going off. You. Pay attention. And also. In our Bibles. There are many warnings. Like in the epistle. To the Hebrews. The famous warnings.

There. If we find ourselves. Drifting. There's a warning. To the religious. In the parable. Us of all people. Could have sung the hymn. When the role is called up yonder.

I'll be there. But. We can. Take. The warning. And apply it to ourselves. And pray. Ask God. As a warning. To be heeded. To be aware.

[29 : 10] Of religiosity. Remember. Secondly. That there's an invitation. To be accepted. And wouldn't it be great. If someone here.

Maybe you don't feel. Good enough. To. Accept this invitation. Well. For you. It's addressed to you. Maybe the concerns. Of life. Have taken first place.

In your life. Your family. And a hundred other things. Have gotten in the way. Business of life. All these things. Maybe the Lord is saying to you.

Now is the time. To put first things first. Other things. May be important. But it's time. To get our priorities right. To come. Well. This parable. Is for you. And this invitation.

Is for you. Who did this? Those who are spiritually poor. And maimed. And blind. Those are the ones. Who are welcomed in. And that's the good news. There's a warning.

[30 : 06] To be heeded. There's an invitation. To be accepted. Thirdly. And finally. There's a mission. To be accomplished. Those people.

We need to go out. And tell them. The Great Commission. Still stands. And people. Still need to hear. Of the gospel. They're facing. A task. Unfinished. But the Great Commission.

Still stands. As missions. Baptizing them. In the name of the Father. And of the Son. And of the Holy Spirit. Commanded you. And behold. I'm with you always.

To the end. Of the age. And we'll sing. Our closing hymn. And let's just pray this prayer. Never ever do. Anytime I've ever spoken.

Or preached in a church before. I've never ever really. But I feel that the passage. Demands it. And to preach it faithfully. And compensate. God's word says.

[31 : 03] And I just want to. Give that opportunity. If you want to accept this. I'm not saying that just praying a certain prayer. Will make you a Christian. It certainly doesn't. But if the Lord himself.

Has been. And that's the most important thing. More important than any words. That I would speak to you. If you've known something. If the Lord. About this very thing. And inviting you to come to him.

To accept this. To thee. Don't delay any longer. It may never be another opportunity. You take it. So here's a little prayer. And pray along. You silently.

Or use similar words. And more sinful than I ever before believed. But then accepted.

Than I ever dared to hope. Thank you for paying. My punishment. For offering me forgiveness.

[32 : 01] For in vain. I turn from my sin. And receive you. As my saviour. Amen. Now if you've prayed that prayer.

And rejoice. Be rejoicing in heaven. Over. One person. Even one person. Who comes to the Lord. And accepts. Accept him into your life. And receive.

Eternal life. We're going to sing. The hymn now. And it just takes up. The theme of the great. Great commission. We're going to. All going to.

Just stand. And. Sing this hymn together. And then there'll be a closing prayer. And our sermon. We will put in a miracle. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[34 : 45] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.