

**Invitations to Feast**  
*Luke 14:16-24, Matt. 22:1-14*  
(Adapted From Paul Earnhart's *Glimpses of Eternity*)

**I. Read Luke 14:16-24**

- A. Luke chapter 14 takes place in the winter time before His death: The Lord was most likely working in the area of Judea or Perea, and happened to be attending a large feast on the Sabbath:
1. This was hosted in the home of an unknown leader of the Pharisees, who like all of the others, had as his main interest keeping close tabs on Jesus.
  2. Jesus in turn healed a man who was suffering from a painful and serious disease; Rising up to their challenges of his authority-- The Pharisees, scribes and Lawyers were unmoved, and were unable to answer His challenge:
- B. What was unknown to those religious leaders was as they were watching Him, He was also observing them. He was looking at those who were present: It was not the poor or those who were in need, but those who had all of their needs met;
1. Yet that was not enough: As they were their they were fighting and scrambling to position themselves in the best seats: Any values they might have had were distorted by their greed and self promotion.
  2. Jesus warned that this sort of selfishness would lead to a humiliating end, where as a humble spirit would eventually bring them honor: He urged them to move out of their comfort zones and reach out to those were not only needed it, but would be unable to return the favor:
- C. It is at this point that some well intentioned, but clueless individual enthusiastically proclaims 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!'
1. We don't know if the man was speaking of physical or spiritual bread, or if regardless of what sort he was still being selfish: Maybe he was just trying to lighten the mood and split the tension that was mounting: Whatever the case, Jesus was not very impressed. *And it is in all of this context that Jesus tells the parable that we began with:*

## **II. The Certain man** that the parable speaks of is God:

A. The parable reminds us that the feast of Love and Joy that God wants to share with us has been in the planning for a long time:

1. It is what Jesus would call the “kingdom prepared from the foundation of the World in Matt. 25:34
2. And now that the fullness of time has come, God had come to live among His people and was inviting them to celebrate and rejoice:
3. It is the feast of all feasts: If you never attended another supper, this is the one that you make sure you don’t miss!

B. And yet those who are invited at first are completely indifferent:

1. The parable speaks about how little, in spite of what they might say, the scribes and Pharisees valued the kingdom of God
2. It also explains why Jesus was most often found among the poor and outcasts: The kingdom of God is one that is full of grace:
3. Those who fill their lives full with the things of this world have no room or longing for the bread of God

## **III. The responses given are incredible:**

A. The first says: I have bought land that I must go and see

1. The second says that he has some new cattle that must be tested:
2. While the third claims excuse on the grounds of being a newlywed:

B. The responses given by this man’s neighbors and friends is both unnatural and improbable:

1. In most circumstances, friends do not spurn at the very last minute a great dinner that was prepared at great expense by a wealthy man solely for the pleasure of his friends:
2. Every thing would be cleared from the calendar well ahead of time, and nothing but a natural disaster would keep them away:
  - a) This is exactly how those at the feast Jesus was attending behaved: The guests cherished the honor being shown to them by attending the feast of this chief Pharisee and sought more distinction:

- b) It is without a doubt that they had come on time, and were thoroughly prepared:
  - 3. None of the guests at the feast on that Sabbath would have excused themselves: It was a purposefully exaggerated situation that would expose those present:
- C. What was happening in that parable corresponded exactly to the situation of God's people:
  - 1. Just like those men in the parable, they had been told for a long time, by God's prophets, that God's kingdom was coming: And like these in the parable they were being reminded of its immediate approach by John and Jesus:
  - 2. And yet for all of their words about how much they delighted in the Kingdom, when Christ's reign came near, they were completely unwilling to receive it:
  - 3. In fact, they could sit down with the King and not even know it:
    - a) Before talking more about their excuses, I want us to read another very similar parable told on another occasion:

#### **IV. Read Matthew 22:1-14**

- A. This parable is so similar to the one we just read, that some have thought they are the same story recorded with different details: And while they are similar in theme, their emphasis is different:
  - 1. Both parables show the Kingdom as a joyous feast:
  - 2. Both parables show Israel's contempt for God's goodness and the favored position their nation had been given:
  - 3. Both speak of God's grace toward the unworthy and the sort of people that were most likely to receive the Kingdom with joy
- B. But the parable of the garment adds to all of the discourtesy shown in the first parable, by speaking of contempt, violence, and murder. It also contains stern warnings about harsh retribution:
- C. In this parable, the feast is elevated from a rich man's social occasion, to a once in a lifetime event: the wedding feast of a Prince:
  - 1. This chance gives and even greater emphasis to the rejection of the feast, and increases the weight of the consequences:

2. The king could not tolerate this sort of contempt being shown:
  - a) It would have been one thing if his servants were being sent to collect heavy and burdensome taxes, but they were there to issue a gracious invitation!
  - b) IN the first parable they are simply missing the feast: yet in this second parable, they miss the feast and lose their lives:
    - (i) As the Hebrew writer puts it: *How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?!*

D. What really sets this parable apart though is not the behavior of those who skipped the feast: it is the behavior of the one who did attend: The man without a wedding garment:

1. Some have wondered why the king would be so angry over this! Some have thought that the host must have provided them, leaving all without excuse:
2. Whatever the reason, he had no justification:
  - a) This makes clear that the casual treatment of God's kingdom, either by those who reject it or receive it, will not be tolerated: Contempt is contempt and indifference is indifference:
    - (i) This parable says very loudly, that no man should presume on the grace of God
3. We still know that entering into the presence of Royalty is not done carelessly: We must approach with proper dress and conduct:
  - a) This is true many times over for those in the presence of God: We must be clothed in a submissive spirit and in reverence if we want to eat bread in the Kingdom of God:
  - b) We may not be able to present ourselves to him in the sinlessness that He truly deserves; but all of us can bring him a single minded, obedient devotion:
  - c) God in His mercy has clothed us in Righteousness not of our own, but we must achieve the proper attitude of heart ourselves
    - (i) *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; Col 3:12*
  - d) This sort of spirit grows out of a realization that we are always in the presence of a Great King and need to be dressed for the occasion:

- E. The subject of divine wrath is given emphasis in both of these parables:
1. In the first the host is angered by their contemptible rejection of his kindness, and states that none of those invited would taste the super
  2. In the second, He is so furious that he destroys those who rejected his goodness:
  3. Perhaps the punishment of the man without the robe seems tame, but those are the same words Jesus uses to describe the judgment of the Wicked:

**V. It has been said** that their excuses were *inexcusable*:

- A. The reasons offered at the last minute by these long invited guests are given politely, but are filled with indifference:
1. They are uncaring about the effort and expense of the one giving the feast, and they are insulting as well: It was unacceptable in all circles, and something that someone would never do:
  2. By design, the response of the guests in this parable is contrasted with great jubilation that those at the feast Jesus currently sat must have met their invitations:
    - a) Can you imagine them! Invited to the house of a chief Pharisee: Rubbing shoulders with the rich and powerful: Good food: Honor: Opportunity! Forget the land, oxen, and wife: A stampede: But that feast was their taste: Prestige and Pleasure:
- B. Out of the two possible approaches to their excuses, neither is flattering:
1. They could have been made up, and completely un true: who would have done these things?
  2. The other is just as bad: They thought that what they needed to be at was far more important:
    - a) None of them were evil, but none of them were urgent: But they showed what was more important to those invited:
    - b) We understand why the friend was angry: Why he invites the poor and blind: His friends had no time for the extensive preparations: They were selfish and thoughtless:

- c) But the investment of the host will not go to waste: He fills his house with those who would hear the invitation as something too Good to be true:
- d) He wanted His house full!:
- e) We are being given that invitation: