

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #028

A Chronological Study

"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."
Psalm 78:2



"The Invited Guests" Luke 14:7-24

Three parables told in a row about "Dinner" and the "Invited Guests."

14:7-11 The Invited Guests choosing the places of honor.

14:12-15 The Inviter and the place of Humility in the Kingdom of God.

14:16-24 The Owner and the refusing invited guests.

An Introduction

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath Luke 14:1-6

1 It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching Him closely. 2 And there in front of Him was a man suffering from dropsy. 3 And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4 But they kept silent. And He took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away. 5 And He said to them, "Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?" 6 And they could make no reply to this.

THE INVITED GUESTS - THE CONTEXT Who, Where, when, what, and why?

Who?

Jesus was at the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees. Since this event is not long after Jesus' denunciation of them, we expect this is a "staged" event. There were several other lawyers and Pharisees present. They had with them a man who was ill with a heart disease that caused swelling, edema, that disallowed blood and fluids in the body, mostly the lower legs, from getting pumped back into the system. For many years this illness was called "Dropsy." They were hoping to gain evidence of Him healing this man on the Sabbath.

Where?

In our last Parable we were following Jesus on His journey from Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee to Jerusalem. It would seem that He was very close to Jerusalem as these important Jewish leaders were gathered at this home - probably in Southern Perea which runs east of the Jordan from Decapolis to mid-Judea.

When?

A Sabbath day, and Jesus is just a week or so away from Jerusalem and His triumphal entry.

What?

In the previous Chapter 13, Luke quotes Jesus as He gets questioned by one of the leaders in the crowd that was following Him, *"Lord, are there just a few who are being saved?"* Jesus replies, that *"In that place (the Kingdom) there will be gnashing of teeth when **you** see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselfes being thrown out, and they (the saved) will come from east and west and from north and south (Jews and Gentiles), and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first and some are first who will be last."*

It seems like the time-frame of the parable is just pre-tribulation. A time when non-believing Israel's leadership thinks they are approaching entry into the Millennial Kingdom, of course this is a parable (metaphor) to teach a lesson. The details are for the story, not the history books.

Jesus then tells three parables concerning "reclining at the table in the kingdom of God."

Why?

Because of who Jesus God is, it is expected of you to be **humble** as He is. He humbled Himself by becoming His Father's perfect servant. He humbled Himself by putting aside His "rights" as a co-equal person of the Godhead, came to earth as a baby human boy, born unto the disgrace of an unmarried virgin young woman and grew up in humble circumstances, was harassed, beaten severely, placed on the Cross, bled out, and died - at His Father's request.

In the end we will need to consider the lostness of God's Covenanted nation of Israel (and all those who refuse to believe) and how, if there is no acknowledgement and reception of Jesus as their savior, they will never enter the Kingdom of God, nor heaven, nor have "Eternal Life in Christ." Instead they will be destined to a place of eternal suffering - called hell.

Moody Press's "Harmony of the Gospels" suggests three major lessons taught in these three short parables.

1. The importance of humility instead of maneuvering to secure the places of honor (cc. 7-11).
2. The importance of impartiality in choosing whom to invite to such an occasion (vv. 12-14).
3. The importance of making the Kingdom of God, viewed here as a "big dinner event," one's highest priority and not forfeiting the right to enter into it. (vv. 15-24).

Jesus' host and fellow guests **were in need** of all three lessons. [\[1\]](#)

Parable #1 14:7-11 Invited Guests choosing the places of honor THE TEXT

7 And He began speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor at the table, saying to them, 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place.

10 But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher';

then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you.

11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

THE COMMENTARY

Just before Jesus tells this parable, Luke (14:1-6) tells us that He was in a home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on a Sabbath. "They were watching Jesus closely." They were waiting for Him to say or do something they were considering as unlawful - according to their "traditions," specifically... to heal on the Sabbath.

Before they can ask a question... Jesus asked them, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" But they kept silent - so He took hold of a very sick man, at the table with them which they had brought with them to test Jesus, and healed him right there in front of all of these top Pharisees.

Again, without waiting for them to object... Jesus said to them, "Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"

They made no reply. They knew they would have done what He asked of them. That would have made each of them guilty of breaking their own tradition laws - and a reminder here that they know who He really is from His miracle - and now He has their absolute attention. So, He then begins telling them these three parables.

This first one tells us that Jesus noticed that these important men were all looking around the dinner table and trying to figure out where they should sit according to how important each one thought he was. In Jesus' parable He likened this moment to a

wedding dinner feast where each person had been invited. To get right to the point we should identify with Jesus' most likely feast - The Wedding Feast of The Lamb. This prophetic feast is to occur during the late days of the Tribulation as dead and raptured believers gather together with Jesus as a group celebrating the first time the "Body of Christ" comes together in heaven as "The Bride of Christ."

Jesus now tells those at this Pharisee's house, "Don't sit in a place of honor (close to the one who invited you) as you don't know if the inviter has invited someone more important than you to sit there. So when this person arrives... you will be asked to move further away, to the last available seat, and you will be ashamed of it and disgraced - because you thought so much of yourself.

Jesus then tells them what they should do: Choose the least important place to sit at the table first, and if you are chosen as the important person to the Master of the house, you will be asked to move to the honored seat, and you will be honored and exalted by everyone there.

Jesus closes the parable by stating... about the Kingdom of God... "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

In this Jesus moment, He was surrounded by men who believed that they were very important - leaders of the religious political party who controlled most of the Jewish affairs. His message to them is that they considered themselves to be **so** important... and they would be found to be without importance or honor by The Master - The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The quick message to us would be that we all need to understand who He wants us to be: He wants us to be... like Him. Someone who is great and wonderful, who remains humble and serves all as He did as the willing servant of His Father. But, not doing this in order to be proven as a humble person, but because IN-HIM you have actually become a humble person.

Parable #2 Luke 14:12-15 The place of all in the Kingdom of God THE TEXT

12 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. 13 But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

15 When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

THE COMMENTARY

This second parable of Jesus begins differently and ends with a different twist.

Jesus speaks directly to the Master of the house (the one who invited Him) and tells him: "Next time you have a dinner event, don't invite those who are important, or even more important than you, or they will invite you in return for your invitation. I expect that this man's dinner event was the result of someone in the group who had earlier invited him to dinner.

As we consider this statement we need to consider the whole context. Jesus is speaking to a leader (if not the leader) of the Pharisees who is one who holds a wicked and evil position, but think they hold a righteous viewpoint. He is in league with many others who are the same. Jesus tells him that in order to be seen,

or become righteous, he should be inviting others to a reception... the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, since not one of these will be able to repay him.

Hidden deep in this parable is our position as human beings living on this little planet in the middle of nowhere. If you get invited by God, the Master of this house, you should recognize that you **are** one of the poor, crippled, lame, and blind. What God the Master of this house has done is INVITE YOU to His reception feast, and you have no way to repay (get even) with His offer.

He then says,

"And you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

If you are one of those who recognizes that you are one of the poor, crippled, lame, or blind (all metaphors of being lost), then (1.) you need to receive the invitation to come to God's feast, celebrating His gift of forgiveness and grace, and become righteous through His Son's wonderful gift of salvation and additionally, (2.) we need to recognize that each one of us needs to become humble and INVITE others to come to the Lord's reception feast.

There's one more sentence that is important to the next parable and it's often overlooked.

"15 When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

While we might look at this sentence at the end of this parable, we might come to the conclusion that this guest might be a believing Pharisee and be telling us what we already know. But, I believe that just wasn't true. I believe this sentence rightly

belongs to the next parable. This man is speaking from his position as a very important Pharisee leader who doesn't understand what Jesus has been saying and is speaking his, the leader's, thoughts: that all Jews of the old covenant are of course going to be eating bread in the kingdom of God. And to see this point of view... we move to the third parable in chapter fourteen.

We'll take this parable one thought at a time.

Parable #3 14:16-24 The refusing invited guests

THE TEXT

16 But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;

Once again we need to consider our context. Jesus is at a Pharisee's house at a dinner party full of other Pharisees and many lawyers. He's been invited so that they can question Jesus concerning His violations of their "Oral Law," now known as the Talmud. A collection of Rabbinical teachings and laws that they believe supersede the authority of the Scriptures. It is still their source of religious authority today.

The first parable in this series spoke to invited guests and their apparent importance to each other. The kingdom of God will be full of those who are humble of heart and actions.

The second parable spoke to the one doing the inviting. It is the Lord and His mode of invitation is absolute humility on His part. The haughty (those who think they are the gods) will not be invited to His salvation dinner event. His gift is so grand that those who come to it can never repay Him for His gift of grace.

This third parable is introducing us to our inviting host and we are to see Him as The Lord God Almighty. His invited guests...

those represented by the Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes and religious Lawyers of the Sanhedrin, who, in fact, all those who stand and say, "I will not believe, and I will answer to no one except myself." And therefore... "I need to be excused from your banquet!"

So we should see verse 16 as:

But Jesus said to the Pharisee who said, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God", "God was giving a big dinner, and He invited many, many Jews and others of self importance;

17 and at the dinner hour he sent his servant (Jesus His only Son) to say to those who had been invited (the many, many Jews and others of self importance), 'Come; for everything is ready now.'

18 But they all alike began to make excuses.

The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

19 Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

20 Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'

21 And the servant (Jesus) came back and reported this to his master (God the Father).

Then the head of the household (God the Father) became angry and said to his servant (Jesus), 'Go out

at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

22 And the servant (Jesus) said, 'Master (Father), what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'

23 And the master (God the Father) said to the servant (Jesus), 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I (God the Father) tell you, none of those men who were invited (Covenant unbelieving Israel and all those who refuse the Son Jesus) shall taste of my dinner.'"

This series of parables came near to the end of Jesus' journey to the Cross. He has become very pointed in His messages to the Jewish leadership. Jesus knows His end is near and His message is vital to all those who expect that they do not have to submit and give themselves to Jesus - as God Almighty commands all people everywhere and always to do. All those who are invited and refuse to come to His banquet table, "Shall never taste of My dinner."

These lessons are important to we who are saved. Understanding that no un-saved person, by the time of their death, will ever enter God's heaven. They will be destined to an eternity of suffering.

Humble yourself and reach out to your family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances, and people you just meet somewhere, both locally and world wide. Tell them of Jesus, and invite them to God's Wedding Feast.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

- 1. What's the point of the first parable?**
 - 2. What's the point of the first parable?**
 - 3. What's the point of the first parable?**
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FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

- 1. What's the point of the first parable? 14:7-11** To tell everyone that God's very nature is that of humility and that those He calls unto Himself should exhibit to their best abilities that same nature of humility.
- 2. What's the point of the second parable? 14:12-15** To ready his hearers and readers for the third parable, that everyone who believes that they, because of their position (specifically the Covenanted Jew or in fact, any unbeliever), will not "eat bread" (be present) in the Kingdom of God.
- 3. What's the point of the third parable? 14:16-24**
It's the metaphoric story of God's position, through Jesus - His perfect servant - of how any individual in unbelief, rejecting God's perfect requirement of belief, of and in, His Son, will ever taste of the benefits or enter the Kingdom of God or His heaven. This should be efficient and effective teaching that motivates His Children to become everyday evangelists, counselors, and ministers of the Gospel to all our family, friends, and local/world wide neighbors.

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"

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^[1] A Harmony of the Gospels, based on the New American Standard Bible, Moody Press, 1978, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, p. 153