

## Hospitality and the Kingdom of God

Luke 14

Every new member at IDC is commissioned as a missionary to the city of Raleigh. One of the ways we've tried to encourage you to reach your neighbors is by sharing meals with them.

- How do I get plugged in to the mission? Eat w/ people... It's not just about being nice, it's was the method of Jesus. Not an institutional church; but an incarnational church.

Big Idea:

**People who have experienced Jesus' gracious hospitality, should extend the same type of gracious hospitality.**

If you've experienced it, you should extend it. So I'll talk about my favorite topics: Jesus & good food..

**Question.** What are some of your favorite meals of all time? I don't just mean the food, but the occasion. The experience?

- I asked my kids; most of them mentioned their birthday parties, especially those involving a pinata .
- My wife: Passover meal, Halliava, Christmas Dinner, Reception Dinner, Celebrate Engagement

Most have to do with family, good food and drink, and many related to marriage. Most aren't drive Thrus, eating Tomato Soup alone in college dorm, airport... Friends, family, festivity

Deep within us, we all long for good food and drink with family and friends, in which there's conversation, joy and love. When someone passes, it's what we miss: the table.

**Rev 19.** That's why I love the picture at the end of **Revelation**, in which we are told about the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

- One of the pictures of heaven in the Bible, is that of a feast, of a party. We are the bride, and Jesus is the groom.
- Many believers have never really thought about this. Christians are like people on a space shuttle headed for

Mars and they say "what's Mars like?" "I have no idea but that's where we're going."

Meals Are Woven through the Bible

(1) Garden. (2) Passover. (3) God hosts in P Land: milk & honey. (4) Jesus ministry (15:2) & Last Supper. (5) Hospitality verses/House Churches in NT. (6) New Earth.

Jesus, while on earth, gives us a preview of life in the kingdom to come. (Movie Previews: I want to see that!)

His miracles were not so much the **violation** of the laws of nature as they were the **restoration** of nature: healing, calming sea, deliverance, reading five thousand.

**water to wine...** "first things are important things..." -Keller

Is. 25:6 – the Lord will make it!

- **Not hamburger helper. Not toquitos. Frozen pizza. Hot Pockets. Ramon Noodles. Jimmy D's Griddle Sticks. Oreos? Maybe.**
- **For some of the poorest of the poor it will be the only good meal they've ever had. Not about what you afford**

**Misconceptions.** how most people picture heaven. It isn't:

- An endless sing along
- Sitting in rows being taught
- Sitting on a cloud in a diaper, playing a harp
- ethereal realm of disembodied spirits

Picture your greatest meal, the greatest party, and then imagine it being infinitely greater. It will be infinitely greater because there will be Superior Company, Food, Tastebuds and Palates not injured by the Fall! The best meals and the best times are still ahead of you. Qualifier: This is not all we're going to do in heaven. Return to garden, enjoy the new earth, rule, reign, worship, feast.

### Meals in Luke

Jesus' Ministry, particularly in Luke. "In Luke's gospel, Jesus is either going to a meal, at a meal, or coming from a meal" (Robert Karris, *Eating Your Way through Luke's Gospel*). Chester asks the question, "How would you complete this sentence: The Son of Man came ....

He says the NT completes this sentence with three answers: (1) "to serve not be served, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (2) to seek and save the lost, and (3) has come *eating and drinking*. (Luke 7:34)

The first two describe "why" Jesus came, and the third explains "how" he came – his method. Jesus did it so much that they called him a "glutton and drunkard." (7:34). "But he said wisdom is justified in her children."(35)

In the ministry of Jesus, meals were occasions for **revolutionary love, radical grace, kingdom mission.**

**Luke 14.** In today's text, we see that the kingdom of heaven is like a feast or huge banquet/a party.

### **Luke 14 Context**

Jesus told this story while at the home of a Pharisee. I doubt he was ever invited back. He managed to offend everyone! This is indeed the last time in Luke that he dines with them.

As he is observing the situation, he takes the opportunity to He's teaching group of religious leaders what life in the kingdom looks like. It's not what they imagine.

- **1-6:** First he exposed the exposed the **legalist's heart** who was twisting the law to protect his selfish lifestyle.
  - Jesus has to deal the question of healing on the Sabbath, and he leaves them speechless.

- **7-10.** Then he exposes **the pride** of the guests, who wanted the **seats of honor**, and be **praised by people**.
  - o So he rebukes the guests.
- **11:** Then he provided the **axiom of the kingdom** "For everyone who exalts himself... "He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate." (**Cf, 1:52**). **Great reversal. The way up is down.**

**Point:** He shows the religious leaders that the way of the kingdom is a **way of humility** and **revolutionary love**.

**14:12-24:** One way we live out this radical humility and love is by practicing gracious, counter-cultural hospitality. It involves serving the outcasts: the poor, crippled, lame, blind. This is the way Jesus has welcomed us.

We see what kind of King we have, what kind of kingdom we are part of, what kind of people we should be.

### **#1: INVITE OUTSIDERS TO YOUR FEAST (14:12-14)**

How's that for rocking people's world? If you're going to have a barbecue, this is what you should remember?

1. **Jesus isn't opposed To Spending time w/ Your Family and Friends.**
  - Jesus accepted invitations of Lazarus and sisters
  - Early church was together
  - John 13 – people should see love -
  - fellowship/hospitality** distinction
2. **What He's Saying:**
  - a. Don't **limit your guest list** to only your friends and relatives or rich neighbors.
    - He's rebuking them. Where's the single mom? Orphans? Special needs? Abused?

- He's in favor of hospitality in general, and especially to the marginalized. He sees it as a more gracious, Christ-like, kingdom displaying act.
- b. Don't limit your guest list *to those who can repay you!*
- Much of our social life is this – returning the favor.
  - If you do this (or say foster or adopt) Not only might you not get a return on your investment, you may get trouble and grief.
  - **Rus says if you want a dream baby, don't adopt, get a cat.**  
.. You aren't doing it by what you can get, but as one, who wants to display a sign of the kingdom. Further, your reward is later.
- c. As we will see with the parable to follow, *we should show grace because of Jesus' grace toward us.*
- We we're not deserving of the table!
  - The proper response to grace is ... grace.
    - Sojourners, widows, orphans, poor
    - We were Poor, Crippled (powerless), Blind (Unable to see truth), Lame (unable to come to God)
      - o OT – Mephibosheth
      - o Moonlight B'Bque feast for losers, Levi, Zacheus
  - Grace is fueled by grace.

Until you understand this, Jesus' words are hard to grasp and apply. You need to see that you identify with them. Don't be self-righteous. Realize that you had nothing, and have been brought to the table.

**Application:**

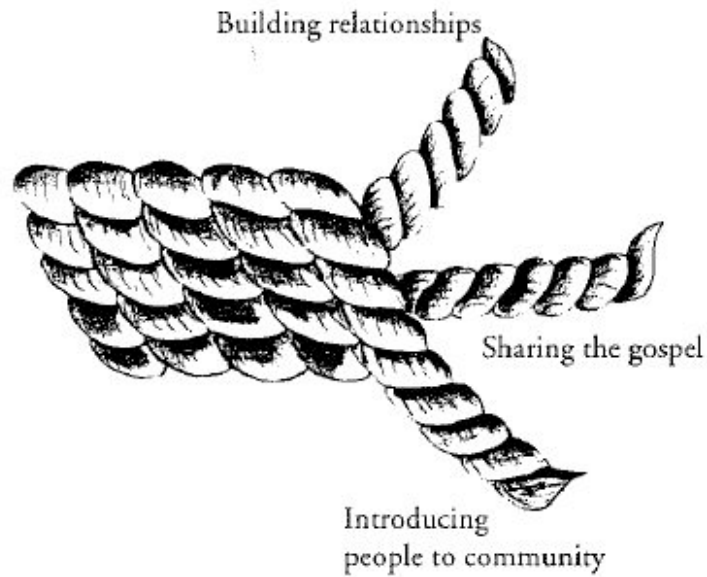
1. **Collapse the distance between you and the marginalized.**
  - I don't think we should limit this to meals.
  - There should be no class distinctions, unlike those in Corinth and the book of James.

2. **Remember that social life shows if you understand the kingdom.**
  - **(Peter). Meals are a sign of the messianic reign, Jew and Gentile together. Peter's conduct was "not in step with the gospel of grace."**
  - **"I tell you many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Luke 13:29)**
  - **People want to believe they are superior to others, but Jesus turns everything upside down (KY, New Orleans, MS, Detroit).**
  
3. **Don't live by the law of "Pay back."** Reciprocation as a goal is about self; but the kingdom isn't about self. It's about humble service. Live by the law of no return.
  - **Anyone can practice reciprocation. (See **Luke 6:32-36**)**
  - **Grace is "one way love." "What is grace? Grace is love that seeks you out when you have nothing to give in return." (Paul Zahl)**
  
4. **Live for another reward.**
  - **Remember, rich man and lazarus (16:25) – "in your lifetime you received your good things"**
  
5. **Don't always think of mission as extraordinary.** Jesus talked about having dinner with people here. He didn't start a program, a school, or have a crusade. He ate meals.

Effective outreach involves "Ordinary people doing ordinary things with gospel intentionality." (Timmis)

- Can jam
- College football
- Community group

Steve Timmis - *3 Strands of Evangelism* illustration in *Total Church*. He uses to stress how everyone can do something. One



doesn't necessarily have to come before the others...  
How you doing on this? Have you practiced kingdom hospitality? Built relationships? Invited others into community? Shared the gospel?

How you doing on this with regard to the poor and the marginalized in particular? **John Newton** (who knew the grace of God) was a serious advocate of showing hospitality to those in need, telling his people to show preference to the poor. He said, "One would think that this were not part of God's word because it is so neglected by God's people."

Have you ever loved someone who cannot repay you? It isn't a complete waste of time. It's actually the best investment of your time! Jesus turns the values the world on their head.

**#2: COME TO JESUS' FEAST (15-24)**

Awkward silence. Jesus now gives a parable & says that everyone is invited the Messianic banquet. Sadly, not everyone is coming. We find here great hope, a great warning and a great challenge.... Led balloon

**A. A Pious Statement (15)**

- That guy. More awkwardness.
- Not everyone is going. Religious guy is like the "raise my hand" "cried at youth camp"
- Not just a one time decision, but a **lifelong pursuit - like a marriage. Relationship w God is like a marriage.**
- This guy is a warning to all who have ever acted pious and self-righteous.
  - Don't presume on the kindness of God.
  - Remember, *just because people talk about heaven, doesn't mean they're going there!*
- Jesus tells the parable at their own party and tells them they're not coming to his party. *He says you guys who are talking about seats of honor, won't have a seat at the kingdom feast.*

**B. The Great Invitation (16-20)**

**16: A Man of Great Means.** Jesus as the Host

**17: Second Invitation.** The first invitation came a few weeks earlier (RSVP -get numbers), and then the second when it was time to come. To refuse the second was a massive insult.

This is a picture of the Jewish leaders, who believed in the law and prophets, and the Kingdom but rejected the second invitation, Jesus, the King himself.



A striking application of this parable is this: **Those who others may think are more likely to be at the table (religious), will not be at the table.**

**18-20: 3 Lame Excuses**

**(Horticultural, Agricultural, Matrimonial, in case you want to make a rap)**

**You can't just say "I don't want to come to your party." We use civil excuses...**

**18: #1: I bought a field** (no one would have done this without looking at it, especially in the Middle East). Long negotiations - land in family for years

**19: #2: I bought five yoke of oxen.** Again, a flimsy excuse. Who buys them without looking at them?

- Who buys a backhoe, bull-dozer like this?

**20: #3: I got married.** On the Surface, this appears better, but not really. He was excused from a few things, but not going to a banquet. What's more, **why not have a date night! Free food and drink and dance!** Women hate that!

- **Luke 14:27-ff**

**6 common arguments** from Keller (I regularly work these into my sermons so you'll bring friends, and to train you):

- Other Religions
- Evil & Suffering
- Ethical Straightjacket
- Record of Christians
- Problem of Anger (cross)
- Bible is Socially Oppressive

**Many times they don't have arguments, they have foolish reasons. That's a result of sin (Titus 3). Sin makes you stupid.**

**What Lame Excuses have you given or have heard?**

- not a good season

- prerecorded shows
- working on hobbies... Tinkering w a car, husband, girlfriend
- NASCAR is on Sunday
- I have kids
- kids are grown
- sowing wild oats
- career is important
- I'm reading a novel
- I need to work on my tan
- I'm working on my GPA. Fine but don't forget Jesus.

Feel this! An invitation has gone out to you to participate in resurrection feast. Is a lame excuse keeping you from the party?

Notice they didn't say that they will never come, or that they shouldn't come... It's that they want come NOW. That reveals a heart problem.

And we're reminded that now is the time.

**Luke 14:25-ff**, count the cost...

#### **21: Wider Invitation: Outcasts**

- They weren't welcome in cities or places of worship, but now they're filling that great banquet.
- Luke 7:22-23

#### **22-23: Wider Invitation: Gentiles**

- This is a reference, most believe to the **Gentiles. The Great Commission will soon be given.**
- **We are like this servant**, going everyone, inviting everyone to the banquet. "The harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few" (Luke 10:2)

- **Still there is room!**

## **24: A Warning**

- **The party is going on with our without you!**
- **Would you respond to an invitation to**
  - **Paris – Shopping**
  - **MLB Playoffs?**
  - **Fly Fishing in Washington?**
  - **None compare.**

### **APPLICATION**

#### **1. Are You Coming to the King's Party?**

- **Jesus is passing out invitations.**
- **Isaiah 55**

#### **Are you making lame excuses? Proud of your rejection?**

Near the end of *The Last Battle*, which is the last of C.S. Lewis's seven Chronicles of Narnia, the great lion king Aslan spreads a **sumptuous feast before a group of grumpy old dwarfs. But the dwarfs do not believe in Aslan, and therefore they are suspicious of anything he tries to do for them – so suspicious that they neither see nor taste his royal food.** Here is how Lewis describes the scene:

Aslan raised his head and shook his mane. Instantly a glorious feast appeared on the Dwarfs' knees; pies and pigeons and trifles and ices, and each Dwarf had a goblet of good wine in his right hand. But it wasn't much use. They began eating and drinking greedily enough, but it was clear that they couldn't taste it properly. They thought they were eating and drinking only the sort of things you might find in a Stable. One said he was trying to eat hay and another said he had got a bit of an old turnip and a third said he'd found a raw cabbage leaf. And they raised golden goblets of rich red wine to their lips and said "Ugh! Fancy drinking dirty water out of a trough that a donkey's been at! Never thought we'd come to this."

**When the dwarfs had finished their miserable meal, they congratulated themselves for refusing the great banquet.**

Sounds a lot like Luke 14. Jesus invites everyone to the feast, but many reject it. This feast is only for those who receive it by faith.

**The best meal and the best experience in history, and you're invited!**

**"Come, everything is now ready"**

Jesus came to earth, showed hospitality, lived a sinless life, died a substitute death, and rose from the dead. HE told his disciples that he is preparing a place for us! Turn from sin and trust in him.

**Are you anticipating it?**

**Who will attend?** All nations

**What's the dress code?** White Linen.

- We are all wearing white. We have been made pure by Christ. Like a wedding day. Outward manifestation of inward reality.
- Interestingly, P-Diddy throws these famous summer white parties, known as the greatest parties in history, in which people wear nothing but white.
- He got the idea from the greatest party ever, and I pray he will be in white, the kind that comes from being cleansed by Jesus, and being dressed in his righteousness.
- Every little girl longs for this.

**What's the entertainment?** Joy, gladness, singing –

- in the company of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Luther, Spurgeon, and others... no tears
- Most of all Jesus – in all his glory.... Worship

Now, we get to practice!

## 2. **Are You Practicing Kingdom Hospitality?**

- The fact that Jesus welcomes us should cause us to welcome others.
- When was the last time you did something for someone who couldn't repay you?
- Be generous not like a cheap single guy. Feast.

### What attitude should we possess? Without grumbling

- o Not "Goggusomos"
- o Not "Here's a biscuit, shut up and open your Bible."

### What Occasions Might you Do this?

- Personal Occasions: Birthday parties, housewarming, graduations
- Sporting Occasions: Playoffs
- Seasonal Occasions: Thanksgiving, Christmas, 4<sup>th</sup> of July
- movie night, board game night,

Lives are changed by simply asking "**Wanna come over to a barbecue on Thursday?**"

Don't be a "weird Christian." "Now I want to talk to you about the four horsemen of the Apocalypse. Here is a Testa-mint, now listen." No! Be genuine. Talk about grace. Tell your story. Ask questions about them. Look for common interests. Serve them.

### What are the Common Excuses?

- **Too Scary.**
  - Don't fear people
  - Don't try to impress people. Entertaining is different than hospitality. Often it is about being seen and praised, not about serving.
- **Too Costly.**
  - Make soup
  - Piper – paper plates

- **Too Busy**
  - **You have to eat right?**
  
  - **Business shows idolatry**
    - **It may be a sign that you want to control of everything**
    - **It may be a sign that you fear others to the point that you can't say no to things**
    - **It may be a sign that you are trying to fill your heart with something other than Jesus**
    - **It may be a sign that you are trying to prove something instead of resting in your identity in Jesus.**

**Invite people to the ultimate party.**

- **2 Corinthians 5:20**

**“If you share a meal three or four times a week and you have a passion for Jesus, then you will be building up the Christian community and reaching out in mission.” (Chester).**

**May God help us show grace in ways that reflect the grace that we have received in Jesus.**