

Sent to Invite

Luke 14:12-24

A few weeks ago we talked about some easy ways to be missional, and we briefly mentioned eating with people, and practicing hospitality.

- We are going to think deeply about this topic today, from Luke 14.
- I have preached on this text before at IDC, so this may be a refresher for some of you, but most of you weren't here the last time I talked about this text – which was in Nov 2014. [PRAY]

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 piñata.
- My wife: Haleiwa, Christmas Dinner, Reception Dinner, Celebrate Engagement

Most aren't Taco Bell at midnight, eating Tomato Soup alone in college dorm, airport chicken wrap!... It's friends, family, & festivity; nights that we don't want to end.

When someone dies, this is one of the places we feel their absence: the table.

Why? It's because we are made for the table.

Isaiah's Vision of the Future: The great Messianic feast (Isaiah 25:6-8)

The Lord will make it!

- Not hamburger helper; toquitos; Frozen pizza; Hot Pockets; Ramon Noodles; Jimmy D's Griddle Sticks; Oreos? Maybe.

And think ahead to Rev 19 & the marriage supper of the lamb. *We are the bride, and Jesus is the groom.*

Misconceptions of Heaven:

1. An endless sing along
2. Sitting in rows being taught
3. Sitting on a cloud in a diaper, playing a harp
4. ethereal realm of disembodied spirits

Picture: Superior Company, Food, Taste buds and Palates not injured by the Fall!

Meals Are Woven throughout the Storyline

(1) Garden. (2) Passover. (3) God hosts in Promised Land: milk & honey
(4) Jesus ministry (5) Hospitality verses Churches in NT. (6) Rev. 19:9.

Meals are woven throughout 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, (*A Meal w Jesus*) “How would you complete this sentence: The Son of Man came

- (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*. (Lk 7:34)

The first two describe “why” Jesus came, third explains “how” he came.

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

Luke 14. He teaches on it.

Luke 14 Context

14:1. Jesus told this story while at the home of a Pharisee.

- I doubt he was ever invited back. He managed to offend everyone!

7-10. Then he exposes the pride of the guests, who wanted the seats of honor, and be praised by people.

11: He provided the principle of the kingdom (Cf, 1:52; 18:14)

Now, in verses **12-14**, he rebukes the hosts. Then he follows with a parable.

I think there are two main applications, with many things we could say about each.

#1: Invite Outsiders to Your Feasts (14:12-14)

[READ] How's that for rocking people's world?

What He's Not Saying

Jesus is Not 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 -
- It helps me: **fellowship/hospitality** (love of strangers)

What He's Saying:

- Don't **limit your guest list** to your friends/relatives/rich neighbors.
- And he's also saying **give preference to the poor and vulnerable.**
- **Where's the single mom? Orphans? Special needs? Abused? Kid down the street?**
- Don't limit your guest list **to those who can repay you!**
- **Jesus is confronting the idea of reciprocity.**
- **foster or adopt, welcome snotty nose kid**
- **We should show grace because of Jesus' grace toward us.**
- **We do not deserve His table!**
- The proper response to grace is ... grace.
- We were **Poor, Crippled** (powerless), **Blind** (Unable to see truth), **Lame** (unable to come to God)
- You need to see that **you identify** with the poor and vulnerable.

Application:

1. Collapse the distance between you and the poor/unpopular marginalized.

- I don't think we should limit this to meals.
- Express love to the poor/outcast in real, Christ-like ways.

2. Remember that social life shows if you understand the kingdom.

- It's not just your **moral life** that changes when you enter the kingdom; or just **financial life**; your **social life** changes also.
- **(Peter)**. Jew and Gentile together. Peter's conduct was "not in step with the gospel of grace."

3. Live by Grace not "Pay back."

- **Paul Zahl: Grace is "one way love."**
- "What is grace? **"Grace is love that seeks you out when you have nothing to give in return."** (Zahl)

4. Live for another reward.

- **Rich man and Lazarus is a study of contrast of lifestyle/rewards (16:25)**
- "in your lifetime you received your good things"
**Generosity to the poor and vulnerable
will not go unrewarded by God.**

5. Realize that mission is not always "extraordinary."

- Jesus **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)

“But what if I have tiny living quarters?” “My apt is like a hobbit house in the shire.”

- Don't limit the principle to your home. There are other ways to show hospitality.
- Can jam, Squash, Racquet ball, bowling
- Soccer match /barbecue
- Dog sitting for your neighbor
- Going to the grocery store for your neighbor
- Community group, Work project, Movies
- Stephen brown - baseball, invite

But if you have the ability, do both, in home and out of home.

- Church planting - Skylar 90% people present on a Sunday have first been in his home, or out to eat... And there's another high number that haven't shown up on Sunday that he's also hosted.
- I don't know how you do church planting without it.
- After all, it's a pastoral qualification! (1 Tim 3)

Mission Field success? Entering a home and having conversation, right? Why not do that here, particularly among people new to the area, college students, refugees?

How you doing at this? Have you practiced kingdom hospitality? Built relationships? Invited others into your home for an event?

How you doing on this with regard to the poor and the marginalized in particular?

John Newton 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?

What attitude should we possess? 1 Peter 4: “Without grumbling.”

- Not “Here's a biscuit, and a Bible, now shut up, let's pray.”

What Occasions Might you Do this?

- Personal Occasions: Birthday parties, housewarming, graduations
- Sporting Occasions: Playoffs, bowl games - Fred Luter
- Seasonal Occasions: Thanksgiving, Christmas, new years
- Movie night, board game night,
- Book club
- Missional Mondays

- Lives are changed by simply asking, “Wanna come over to a barbecue on Thursday?”

Be genuine. Be interested. Ask questions. **Don't freak them out!** “Now I want to talk to you about the 4 Horseman of the Apocalypse.” Save that.

Rosaria Butterfield's story... A Pastor befriended her, and listened to her questions. She read the Bible through four times, and was won to Christ....

Common Excuses

- **Too Scary.**
- Don't fear people
- Don't try to impress people.
- **Too Costly.** It doesn't have to be.
- **“My home is my refuge.” That's Idolatry!** Distinguish Stewardship vs. Ownership.
- **Too busy. You have to eat, right?** “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).
- **Too hard.** – Hospitality is war

#2: Invite Outsiders to the King's Feast (14:15-24)
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Statement (15)

Led balloon... That guy. More awkwardness.

- Just because you talk about heaven, doesn't mean you're going there.
- "raise my hand" "cried at youth camp" “threw a stick in the fire,” or sang “Jesus take the wheel” or, “Blessed is everyone who eats bread in the kingdom of God”
- **Not just a one-time decision, but a lifelong pursuit - like a marriage.** Relationship w God is like a marriage.

B. Invitations Go Out (16-20) – Lamé Excuses Come Back

16: A Man of Great Means. What King invites us to the party?

- Puff Daddy, Puff Daddy, P Diddy, "greatest parties in history," in which people wear nothing but white.
- If you aren't invited to P-Daddy's party, it's okay.
- Ain't no party like the Jesus party...

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. Some see this as referring to the Jews, who received the law and prophets, be rejected the Messiah.

18-20: Excuses Come In

18: #1: "I bought a field."

- Did he not already see it? Who buys a field without seeing it? In the Middle East?

19: #2: I bought five yoke of oxen.

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

"Go try them out" (HCSB) seems like a preoccupation with something new" – like a new ipod, new toy, some hobby, or a business opportunity.

There's a similar parable in [Matt 22:1-10](#).

"But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business." (Matt 22:5)

In both instances its, materialism, idolatry.

20: #3: I got married.

On the Surface, this appears better, but not really. He was excused from a few things like war (Deut 20:7), 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 –

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.

Notice they didn't say that "they will never come, or that they shouldn't come..."

It's that they won't come **NOW**. That reveals a heart problem.

21: New Invitation: Outcasts of Israelite Society

- The host sends the faithful servant back out – he sends him to the back alleys, and the city streets.
- We are like this faithful servant.... Faithful evangelists...
- He invites the outcasts poor, the crippled, the lame, and blind.

22-23: Third Set of Invitations – “hedged” that is, the gentile mission most likely, but then “hedged” referred to the place where beggars/outcasts were. So perhaps a double reference.

- This is like a pre-Great Commission text.
- “Compel them” – Duce will preach on 2 Cor 5 next week which has this idea.
- Plead with them; persuade them.

There is still room (22)

24: A Warning: the Originally Invited Group Will be Absent

The party is going on with our without you!

Application (3 Questions)

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

- Isaiah 55
- **Are you making lame excuses?**
- The best meal and the best experience in history, and you're invited!
- Would you respond to an invitation to
 - Paris – Shopping
 - MLB Playoffs?
 - Fly Fishing in Washington?
 - None compare.

"Come, everything is now ready"

- Jesus came to earth, showed hospitality, eating with sinners, lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary death, and rose from the dead.
- He said he is preparing a place for us!
- Turn from sin and trust in him.

2. Are you anticipating it?

All nations-

- **Luke 13:29:** “And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.”

- Joy, gladness, with the saints.... **Most of all Jesus – in all his glory....**
Worship
- **Luther – Two days on my calendar, “This day and THAT Day.”**

3. Are you faithfully inviting others to it?

After many trials and difficult seasons, Paton reported the unspeakable joy he experienced later when he served the first The Lord's Supper to a group of new believers at Aniwa (where eventually many came to know Christ). He said:

For years we had toiled and prayed and taught for this. At the moment when I put the bread and wine into those dark hands, once stained with the blood of cannibalism but now stretched out to receive and partake the emblems and seals of the Redeemer's love, I had a foretaste of the joy of glory that well-nigh broke my heart to pieces. I shall never taste a deeper bliss till I gaze on the glorified face of Jesus himself (Paton, *John G. Paton*, Ch. LXXIII).

What a privilege to invite others to the King' table.

- **It's sometimes surprising who will respond to his gracious invitation.**
- **After all, we must ask, “What in the world am I doing here?”**
- **We're here by grace.**
- **Let's go invite others to join.**