

## **Week 4**

### **The Parable of the Wedding Feast, Luke 14:12-24**

#### **A Parable, Video, Scripture & Lesson**

##### **Opening Exercise:**

- Let us consider what it's like to accept the Kingdom of God! In this parable, the Wedding Feast/Banquet is on display... describe the biggest celebration you've ever been to – when was it? Who/What was being celebrated?

- Now, let us consider the biggest feast (or party) EVER thrown – how would you describe it? Who would you invite? Who would specifically be honored? How many people would be there?

##### **The Parable:** Luke 14:12-24

<sup>12</sup> Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. <sup>13</sup> But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

##### **The Parable of the Great Banquet**

<sup>15</sup> When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. <sup>17</sup> At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

<sup>18</sup> "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

<sup>19</sup> "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

<sup>20</sup> "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

<sup>21</sup> "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

<sup>22</sup> "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

<sup>23</sup> "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. <sup>24</sup> I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

## **VIDEO: The Parable of the Wedding Feast (16 Minutes)**

<https://app.rightnowmedia.org/en/player/video/454492?session=454499>

- Who are the characters / What are the main aspects contained in this story?
  - o Master: host of the party (God)
  - o Feast: God's Kingdom/Heaven
  - o Invited Guests: too busy to attend (attachments and excuses)
  - o Uninvited Guests: impoverished citizens of the kingdom ("the least of these"); the "poor & crippled"; the servants
  - o Any others?
  
- **Main Idea:** accepting the invitation into the Kingdom of God (metaphor = wedding feast). Why might you throw a feast...? Don't you want everyone to celebrate with you?
  
- **Head Change:** That the Kingdom of God is grander and greater than any excuse or attachment we might over-cling to on this side of heaven.
  
- **Heart Change:** To accept God's salvation invitation.
  
- **Life Change:** To see that God transforms all cultural norms and customs: no one needed to be left out. God initially follows the typical invitation route: *I have a child who is getting married and all of you should come celebrate!* But as they see their value as being beyond the need of such a celebration... God invites everyone who would have been on the margins – the outcasts. Invite the ones who have nothing to lose – the ones with no attachments or excuses – and see if they'll come.

### **Think about this parable's characters:**

- When have you been like the ones who had too much going on and rejected God's invitation?
- When have you been like the servants and jumped at the chance to attend to God's joy?

### **Read Matthew 16:24, NIV**

- Jesus teaches that we should always be willing to "drop everything and take up the cross."
  - o No possession, even relationship – no priority, excuse, etc. is worth denying God

- Reflect on your life right now:
  - What do you need to give up in order to attend the banquet and “claim our seat” at the feast?
  
- **DISCUSS:**
  - In Jesus’ time, this was like a State Dinner at the White House: there would be very few invitations that could outrank such an invitation’s priority.
  - A special courier would bring the invitation. The host would provide not only a meal and cake, but even so far as to provide clothes and transportation.
    - No excuse would be adequate; there is no “I’m too busy.”
    - No, “Let me check my calendar,” or “I have something else.”
      - THESE are just a few examples of Jesus’ use of exaggeration.
        - Do YOU see any other examples of hyperbole/exaggeration? \_\_\_\_

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  - Notice that they kill the messenger. How weird!
    - The King responds in high rage: notice that he kills the murderers and burns down their city.
      - God has personally invited us into an intimate “communion” with Him.
      - The Son, Jesus, has come to marry the world.
      - YOU are included in this divine invitation...
        - Are you REALLY going to reject the offer?
    - Jesus is killed in all reality.
      - This story asks, “Don’t you GET what you’re being invited into?”
      - It’s not a *literal* killing, but it *is* a profound anger God holds... hear this as a different term – God passionately desires for the community to accept the invitation.
    - God invites all of Israel to the Son’s Wedding Banquet... but they refused
      - God then invites the entire world – and they respond.
      - Jesus is telling his audience: BE WORTHY of such an invitation!
        - If the King comes all the way to you and **you refuse** God’s invitation to be transformed, is that really acceptable?
        - Of course not: not then, not now!

**Who are the ones Jesus was inviting to hear about the Kingdom?**

- Who was being included?
- Who was being excluded?
- Who was God aiming to reach?

**Unique Qualities of this Parable:**

- Of the 37 Parables contained in the Bible, what lesson does this passage uniquely convey?
  - This is revealing what God thinks and God’s views on us as humanity...
  - This parable also reveals quite a bit about the nature of God’s way of thinking.

- Those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who are humbled will be exalted.
  - This is a story about those who think of themselves all too highly.
  - This is a self-centered person's worst nightmare!
- Jesus is bold in this parable:
  - Jesus didn't mind mingling with the "outcasts" of the day: sinners, etc.
    - Jesus entirely undercuts the hierarchy of power, wealth, control and norms of this day
  - 2 invitations would have been sent: 1. A "Save the Date" card and 2. "It's ready."
    - Before the elite could even get to when it was time to show up, they said, "We won't be available that day." They said, "With this much time to prepare and set aside the Kingdom work of God... we'll be too busy."
    - To the entire social structure of his day, Jesus says, "Well, God is still going to celebrate... invite everyone – anyone – who will come to God."
      - Will you show up?
      - Will you just seek to be freed of the invitation – the responsibilities of being faithful?
    - God gives us all evidence that He wants a FULL Table. God doesn't just want "knowledge" to be had. God doesn't just want a "read about God, here and there" kind of relationship. God wants you at the party and to accept the invitation.
- What would your prayer be for all those who get an invitation? Who do you know who would reject this invitation? What can you do to encourage them to not just attend... but to attend and dig deep into the unconditional love of God?
- What names could you list?
  - It's free – it's available, but it came at great cost!
    - God clothes all of the guests with garments finer than we've ever seen.
    - The Messenger was sacrificed, the love God is extending – is has come with huge sacrifice. And God wants each of us there.
    - Who should be at that banquet and what is YOUR role in making sure they're encouraged to be there? What tangible action steps will you take to bring more and more people to the Wedding Feast between Christ and his Church... between God and all those who would but believe?