

# Banquet

Luke 14:12-24

**Central Idea:** God's invitation to join His Kingdom is time sensitive!

## Introduction

Anybody ever get junk mail that has all kinds of writing on it to grab our attention on the envelope? This happens to me all the time. I get a lot of junk mail, and it's almost a gimmick to get me to open it when they have official-looking warnings like, "Time Sensitive Material" or "Hurry, offer ends soon!" Sure they grab my attention, but more often than not, I'm annoyed by them. And we've gotten so used to advertising that when the Bible speaks about the shortness of time before Jesus returns, we might do the same thing we do with a common advertisement!

As God's servants in this between time, we must focus on our mission to be obedient to God and call others to the banqueting table, to call others out of sin and into obedience to Christ, to spread the word of the short time until the end. We are running out of time,. And we must tell others before it is too late, and the doors for the banquet are closed.

## Text – Luke 14:12-24

<sup>12</sup> He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. <sup>13</sup> But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." <sup>15</sup> When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" <sup>16</sup> But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. <sup>17</sup> And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to 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 to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' <sup>19</sup> And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' <sup>20</sup> And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' <sup>21</sup> So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' <sup>22</sup> And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' <sup>23</sup> And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. <sup>24</sup> For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' "

- I. God's Kingdom is made for the down-and-out (vv. 12-14).
  - A. People usually invite those they owe to repay them.
    - i. Dinners or banquets were very special in the social fabric of Israel. These were gatherings of like-minded people, usually extended family. To have a meal with someone meant that you were essentially family.
    - ii. So to have a dinner, one would usually be in a place of honor at the meal, and the host would be honoring them for some reason, whether they were family, a city official, or whatever the case may be.
    - iii. The kinds of people that ended up at these banquets were in some social way remarkable to their hosts. The host would not just have anyone at a meal, and most certainly not those whom society looked down on.
    - iv. There was a certain culture in Israel that dinners and banquets were reserved for special people and special occasions. They were a premium event, not just for anyone.
    - v. Thus, they became a way of socially paying others back. If you were invited to someone else's banquet, it essentially was good etiquette to then have them to your house for a banquet in their honor. It was like social currency.
    - vi. Jesus realizes this, that what used to be an intimate time for families to get together and connect became a time used for political or social gain, and these meals were no longer about fellowship but about repaying others.
    - vii. **Application:** We find it so easy as human beings to take something that was designed for deep relationships and living life together and turn it into some way to do business or get ahead. What kinds of things in your life have lost their personal and fellowship goals because of their use in common attempts for fame, glory or status? We have lost the art of just being with other people and gained the art of cunning advancement in society.
  - B. We should invite those who cannot pay us back.
    - i. An invitation to someone else's dinner became an obligation to prepare your own banquet in their honor. It became so automatic that people who didn't even get to eat, like the poor, would never find themselves in a banquet.
    - ii. This system ignored everyone else. It's interesting to note that meals throughout the Bible are extremely important. Some of the most sacred events in Israel are festivals and feasts.
    - iii. Even in the church, it is no different. Jesus instituted the "Lord's Supper," a meal in which we all hold Him as the one in the honor seat as we host Him in our hearts. We celebrate His victory.

- iv. But in Acts 2 and elsewhere, the church saw the meal as a time to minister and fellowship with one another, a time of living life together and sharing things, having everything in common.
  - v. Jesus does not commend those who have dinner parties to get ahead politically or socially, because they'll get their payment when someone invites them.
  - vi. Jesus calls us to minister deeply to those on the fringe of society. We can get all too comfortable ministering to those who will simply return the favor. He calls us to those who need ministry but have nothing to give.
  - vii. We were once in that spot, when Jesus found us and gave us a banquet. We couldn't, and still can't, repay Him. Yet He demonstrates this principle of God's Kingdom, that it is for those who can't get it on their own.
  - viii. **Application:** We are called to reach out to others and to minister to their needs. It's not something that's supposed to be in our comfort zone, but something that pushes us to minister to those we wouldn't normally associate with. The challenge here is to get outside of our comfort zone and go to where the pain is, not where we will be repaid for helping others who will help us. What are you doing outside the four walls of this building every day to minister to those who aren't able to be here?
- II. Some will reject God's gracious offer of His Kingdom (vv. 15-20).
- A. We are the servants that are sent out to invite others.
    - i. Based on Jesus' teaching about ministering to those who are desperately in need rather than selfishly seeking our own social status, one person says that people who eat at God's table in His Kingdom are blessed.
    - ii. Jesus responds with a parable that will have a shocking ending for many who think that they are invited to eat there. But He starts out by setting up the details.
    - iii. He speaks of a man, probably well-to-do, who wants to hold a giant banquet and host his friends. This man most likely represents God the Father, who is making a great meal for us even now, called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
    - iv. He sends his servants out to those he wishes to invite and they go to tell these people that it is time for the banquet. These servants proclaim that the feast is ready for its guests.
    - v. We are like those servants right now, proclaiming the good news that God's Kingdom is open to those who need Him. The invitation to join God in His Kingdom is the most important thing that we can share as His people.

- vi. And yet so often we don't even let people know that God is wanting them to come. We might go to people we think would fit in better, or maybe we don't really want to talk to certain people.
- vii. **Application:** But the time is too short and God's doors are too open for us to not proclaim that the Kingdom of God is open to everyone. We must do as servants do and tell others about Jesus while there is still time, while people still can come to Him. There is a time in which people will not have access to God's Kingdom! Let's not waste the time!

B. People will give excuses to not come to the banquet.

- i. Next in this parable, Jesus introduces us to three people who all have "valid" excuses, at least in their own minds, to not come to this master's banquet.
- ii. The first explains that he just bought a field, He wishes to go and see it, examine it for how he will use the field. Now, this is not an altogether bad reason to skip a meal.
- iii. We are taught in the Bible to be good stewards of all that God entrusts to us, but there are also priorities. This man passes up the opportunity for a banquet so he can focus on his field.
- iv. In a sense, this man passes up the invitation to God's Kingdom to focus on his own possessions and his wealth. This is a temptation for many in our world today, who pass up the opportunity to spend time with Jesus for spending time with their possessions.
- v. The second man excuses himself by offering the excuse that he has just bought five yoke of oxen and wants to go and examine them. This is another excuse like the first.
- vi. Once again, stewardship is an important principle of God's Kingdom, but passing up an opportunity to fellowship with God and His saints for one's own possessions is problematic.
- vii. The question of priorities surfaces in these first two examples of excuses. This person already has a preset agenda of going there instead of to the banquet. He has predetermined not to go. The first person seems to be surprised by the timing of the invitation while the second had planned on excusing himself.
- viii. Finally, the third person offers a slightly different excuse. He has just gotten married and says he can't go. This seems to express a desire to go, and yet a limitation he cannot change.
- ix. Different than possessions are familial relationships and other relationships. Some people won't come to Christ because of a friend or family.

- x. **Illustration:** For instance, in Islam, we are familiar with honor killings where people can be murdered for coming to faith in Christ by family members loyal to Islam. The basic idea is to kill them before they are fully committed to what they consider an idol or false god.
  - xi. Jesus Himself taught us that we must not hold in such high esteem our relationships so that we would not follow Him with our whole being and resources.
  - xii. **Application:** What's holding you back from coming into all that God has for you? We can have good things and priorities and possessions. This does not mean that this practice is evil, but that we should not prioritize it above our relationship with God and His invitation to be with Him!
- III. There's always room for more in God's Kingdom (vv. 21-24).
- A. The time for inviting others is running out!
    - i. With the responses of the invited guests, the master formulates another plan quickly. First, he reacts with anger. He had put a lot of time and effort into the banquet, and had invited those He thought wanted to be there.
    - ii. But after finding out they were not interested, He was angry. God offers us so much in His grace, and the good news is more than a great deal for eternity. God has really given us an indescribable gift.
    - iii. Those who don't react to the gospel positively will at some point find that they are entitled to God's wrath. This moment that we are in right now is His grace, but those who refuse Him will experience His wrath, not because they refused Him, but because they want to do evil.
    - iv. Because these did not accept, the master opened the doors and invitation of the feast to everyone that would come. Before, there was a specific audience of people who knew him, but now, it is for anyone who is willing.
    - v. The three who rejected his invitation and that in common, that they were not willing to come. So he opens it up to people who would never be found sitting in a noble man's banquet, the poor, the lame, the blind.
    - vi. Historically, this parable is fulfilled in the Gentiles coming to Christ through faith in the preached Gospel. Israel is represented by those who had a right to come to the banquet, but did not want to, and the Gentiles are those in the streets, the highways and byways, a much larger group that is often looked down upon.
    - vii. But this parable is also about how those who don't deserve the gospel or to dwell in God's Kingdom will get their opportunity because others were unwilling to accept the offer.
    - viii. **Application:** God's doors are open to everyone. The New Testament teaches us that it doesn't matter what your background is. God wants to

make you one of His children! It doesn't mean that He likes your sinful past or accepts it, but that it doesn't disqualify you and me from entering into His banquet, His Kingdom! God doesn't have any partiality!

- B. Rejecting God's invitation opens the door for others.
- i. Those who rejected God's invitation made room for those who would have never had an opportunity. But at the same time, by rejecting God's invitation, they disqualified themselves from His Kingdom.
  - ii. The last verse sounds so harsh but it shows that God's wrath will be given to those who reject Him and walk in wickedness. God wants to fill His house, but He will fill it with those willing to serve Him.
  - iii. The time for those whom God will accept through grace into His Kingdom is drawing to a close. We who serve Christ must get the word out before it is too late.
  - iv. The invitation is not eternal. It is up to us who serve Christ to get the word out while there is still time. This does not mean that we can save people into God's Kingdom, but that we do all we can to point people toward Him with an invitation.
  - v. Let's not allow our own excuses to hinder us from serving Him completely and proclaiming the invitation into the Kingdom! We don't want to be the cause for someone to not hear the word.
  - vi. But we also, as these servants demonstrate, cannot force people to accept the invitation. We must only speak the word to them, and they are left with a decision on what to do with it. We are responsible for the message, not the saving work.
  - vii. **Application:** God wants all to come to Him. The Bible tells us this in Peter's writings. He doesn't wish that anyone will perish. Let us be as open and accepting of people from all types of backgrounds as God is. This doesn't mean that God doesn't want to do a work in their hearts to make them holy like Him, but that He won't keep them from coming in. Let us speak the word clearly so that they have every opportunity to come!

## Conclusion

We have seen God's heart today, that He wants all to enter. He wants us to do a great job of sharing His invitation into the Kingdom with everyone we meet, and He'll let anyone in. He does His work on their hearts as they feast at the table. There are some people who will reject God's offer, and it is not up to us to force the issue. But we can be consistent and understand opportunities to continue to share. Who needs to hear about the invitation in your world? Who must know before the time runs out? We need to act more like we are running out of time. All too often, we think we have time, but time is slipping away. Don't let another opportunity go!

### **Action Points**

- Some of the people we would never expect might be part of God's Kingdom. It is not up to us to judge whom God will let into His Kingdom, but only to proclaim His invitation!
- Some people will never accept God's invitation and that is not our fault. They will offer excuses. But we are here to serve God through telling them anyway.
- The time is short for this invitation and it is time sensitive. Let's do our very best to make the most of every opportunity to share the invitation with others!