

## Parables of Luke – part 4

**Lk. 14:1, 13-24** – Jesus told all kinds of stories but there is no indication that He ever told a joke. Nevertheless, the story we are about to read would have initially been taken as a joke of sorts.

--(read it) – This story would have initially been received as a laughably impossible scenario.

--No such scene could have ever happened in this culture.

--The social system of first century Israel was much like it had been the previous 2K years—rural, agrarian, clans and families living on traditional sites and doing traditional work that had been passed down to them.

--No theaters, no frequent journeys, worked all day, and you socialized with those at your table.

--To have a great feast prepared for you by a prominent person would be one of the few highlights of your entire life.

--The pinnacle of social life was before them, to refuse would be absurd.

--Compounding the absurdity exponentially would be filling the table with the riffraff and the outcasts of that society, as Jesus said the rich man did.

### **1. The build-up of the parable VV.1, 13-15**

--Jesus is invited to a luncheon that was planned partly to trick Him into healing on the Sabbath—He shuts them down by pointing out things they would have done on the Sabbath either for love or money.

--He goes on to give a lecture about humility and the care for the least, and that God would reward that humility in the resurrection of the righteous.

Typical Jewish high society meal was served at a square table with 12 places; the middle spots on opposing sides were the most coveted seats; descending from there toward the right of the head seat would be lesser seats of prominence. The seat of least prominence or the last seat was the one furthest from the right hand and furthest from the left hand (i.e. furthest in both directions from the head seat).

--When the dinner bell was rung, it was musical chairs to see who got the prominent seats—Jesus' advice was to go for the least seat since it was sure to be open, and if a single person was out of place they would be moved to your place and you would be moved up.

--This leads to the statement in V. 15 about that scenario in the kingdom of God where there is going to be a great feast – **Isa. 25:6; Rev. 19:9**

The Jews endured endless rituals of legalism that went all the way down to the most minute aspects of hand washing and eating.

--Why would they put up with such burdens and tight restrictions?? Because they believed they were saving themselves by doing such things—achieving the resurrection of the righteous.

--The more rules they kept, the more they deprived themselves, the more assured they were of that resurrection, so they kept adding more and more.

--This is more or less how all religions work; why do people put up with all the rituals and rules and do's and don'ts and restrictions?? Because they have the hope of eternal life—a false hope, but it's a hope.

--What's wrong with that system—mainly, assuming that God agrees with it! If what we think gets us heaven does not agree with what God says gets us to heaven, can we agree that we aren't going?

--This man is assuming he's among those going to that banquet, so he makes what amounts to a toast in **V. 15**—effectively: "I'll drink to that!"

- Jesus immediately corrects that thinking with this story: just because you think you're going doesn't mean you are!
- All the restrictions and rules and good deeds cannot make up for a single law of God that you have broken, which has rendered you unrighteous eternally.
- Anyone living under a similar misguided assumption needs to know the truth.
- Jesus shatters their false hope with a parable.

## **2. The invitation**

- They would have easily identified with every aspect of this story to a certain point.
  - The invitations to these came in two courses: course number one would have been a verbal invitation given months in advance of the actual event tell them what, where but not specifically when the event would take place.
  - They would be given the month or even the week but never the day or the time.
  - This was a world without clocks, life moved a different pace – in a world where there was no refrigeration and where you had vegetables when they became ripe, there was no way to give an exact day for when this would occur.
  - They had to kill, clean, prepare and cook the meat as well as the vegetables and there were no warmers or anything like that to keep the food at an optimum temperature.
  - The second invitation would bring you the great news that the banquet was ready.
  - Today, without a day and a time, its unlikely that we'd be there, but for them, having nothing to do and nowhere to go, and needing to eat three times a day or more—they were ready for it.
  - Again, this would be the highlight of a lifetime or at least the year, you wouldn't miss it for anything.
  - V. 17** – You would have been waiting with baited breath and would have taken off quickly to get in the better seats.
  - Again, this would have been very lavish in nature and not a typical meal after Sabbath services as in the one that Jesus was current in.
  - Pharisees loved the banquets, it gave them opportunity to show off, it was their big thrill in life
- Matt. 23:6.**

## **3. The Excuses – V. 18**

- After the “come and get it”, the most bizarre thing happens: the pre-invited and pre-accepting guest refuse to come.
- Typically, they would have lived in great expectation of this event: “will be this week? Will it be today? Tomorrow? “
- “They all alike began to make excuses” here is where those listening would have said, “surely, this is joke!”
- Not going was unthinkable given the social fabric of that day and it also would have been a huge breach in their ethics.
- To say you would go and then essentially refuse to come was considered fighting words in those days, it would equivocate to hatred and a declaration of war!
- To refuse was to declare that you wanted no friendship with this person.
- Hundreds would have been invited, but Jesus gives us three sample excuses:
  1. Bought a piece of land – why do they need to go see it today?
    - What would they see that they couldn't see tomorrow?
    - This is absurd.**
  2. Bought 5 yoke of oxen – Again, what would you miss if you tried them tomorrow?
    - 10 oxen was an expensive purchase, such a person would never do their own plowing.

3. Married – also absurd – marriage was a long courtship process and you wouldn't have overlapped that banquet with this one.

--Why not just bring her?

--She just slammed down her sandal and said "[we aren't going!](#)"?

--Anybody that henpecked would have never admitted to it publicly as this guy does.

(more to come...)