

Parables of Luke – part 5

Lk. 14:1-24

- No such scene could have ever taken place in this culture.
- No theaters, no frequent journeys; you 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

- Typical Jewish high society meal was served at a square table with, typically, 12 places;
- To the left of host was the honored guests and to the right was trusted friends and/or family in order of importance.

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.

- 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.

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.

- “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.

4. The Inclusions – V. 21

- Angry would have been and understatement – all this expense, all this work, all this preparation, all this time and expectation—response is indifference and disdain.
- He’s invited the likely and they refused, so now he’s going to invite the unlikely.
- Those who lived across the tracks, who lived on the other side of town, the socially not so well to do, not running in the circles of this wealthy man.
- These are the poor, the impoverished, the **unlikelies**.

Jesus mostly was surrounded by **unlikelies**: tax collectors, fishermen, political activists, prostitutes, sick, the afflicted.

--The story turns from one preposterous idea to another one: that this man would invite people like this.

--The Jews prided themselves in being separate from people like this.

--“**Bring in**” – They wouldn’t have naturally agreed to attend even if they had been invited because the social norms would have made them think they had no business being there.

--Part of the reason why they invited the upper class was a reciprocation policy “**I scratch your back and you scratch mine.**”

--The poor would refuse because they had no way of paying this man back, which was expected in this culture.

--All the poor are brought in and there is still seats! A really big banquet!

--**V. 23** – the humble Jewish populace was pictured in the poor but the next group are not Jewish.

--This group are the ones not allowed into the city, they are the outsiders.

--They would have to be compelled; its not just against social norms, its against the law to go into a city or into such a banquet as Gentiles “**are you trying to get me arrested?!!**”

--We’ve gone from the likelies to the unlikelies to the **no-ways**.

--This is the Great commission: “Make disciples of all Nations, baptizing them...” “You will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the earth.”

5. The Exclusions

--**V. 24** – If anyone made such excuses and refused to attend they would never get a second chance.

Everything shifts from third person to first and second person as Jesus makes application for that generation.

--The Jews were the special invited guests, the invitation had been out a long time, they were God’s chosen people, chosen to attend His celebration.

--Jesus’ earthly ministry was the effective second invitation – “Come everything is ready, My Servant has arrived, the Son of God Himself.”

--“**Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand**” “**Today, these things have been fulfilled in your hearing.**” –The King is here and is offered to them.

--Excuses = two were over possessions (The religious Jews were quite wealthy and “in bed” with the Roman hierarchy), one over a relationship (the Jews were big on appearances, how could they humble themselves and call themselves sinner? What would the **exclusion**. **Jn. 3:36**

--Who will be in banquet? The ones who know they are unworthy, undeserving, unlikely, the No-Ways.

--The tax collector who pounds his chest and says, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Not the Pharisee who says, "God, I thank you that I'm not like other men..."

Who's going to be at the table?? Remnant of Jews, Gentiles and all who are willing to except God's description of them: "Sinners in need of a Savior"

Who's not going to be there?? Not the religious who refuse Christ ("Lord, Lord did we not in Your name work miracles and cast our demons..."), not the prideful who think they know a better way.

Take this parable as a warning: Unless you accept God's invitation to come through Christ, you won't be their either!