

Luke

Chapter 14 - An Unprecedented Invitation
Re-evaluating the Guest List (vs. 12-14)

Luke 14:12-14: And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Well, this whole chapter is surrounded by and placed in the setting of a dinner, a meal, in which Christ has been invited. He addresses, in verse 12, "And He also went on

to say to the one who had invited Him..." So, we know that He had been invited to the meal.

If you look at the beginning of Chapter 14,

(Luke 14:1) "It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread..."

So, we know that there's this dinner meal, that it's a Sabbath dinner meal that is clearly a grand and glorious thing at this particular juncture with the Pharisees.

What we see throughout the Book of Luke is that we live in a hostile world. We live in a place that's uninviting. Even if they invite you, it's uninviting. And so, you come to a chapter such as Luke 7, in which Jesus is invited to a Pharisee's house and this woman comes off of the street and the Pharisee starts criticizing her and Jesus as well, because if He knew what kind of person this was, He certainly wouldn't allow her to wipe His feet with her tears. As Jesus begins to convey, "Look, I came into your house. You didn't wash My feet at all. You didn't help Me. You didn't act like you really wanted Me here. But this woman has not stopped displaying a love for Me." He

ultimately states, "The one that's been forgiven much loves much." And here, He gives that wonderful picture. Even with Mary and Martha, Martha is not really the host that she could have been. She begins to get a little bit envious or upset at her sister for not helping her serve and there's a little disturbance even between the two of them. But throughout with the Pharisees in particular, you better watch out if you're invited to their house. They have ulterior motives. They have a reason for inviting you. In fact, there's a Proverbs, if you look with me in Proverbs 23, that kind of warns us of people such as this. In a way, I'm kind of warning you ahead of time, so you don't maybe take every invitation that's out there.

But Proverbs 23 reads this way,

(Proverbs 23:1) "When you sit down to dine with a ruler,
Consider carefully what is before you,

(Proverbs 23:2) And put a knife to your throat If you are a
man of great appetite.

(Proverbs 23:3) Do not desire his delicacies, For it is
deceptive food."

He's going to use this to get to you in some way.

He then states in verse 4,

(Proverbs 23:4) "Do not weary yourself to gain wealth..."

Really, kind of in the context of this, "Maybe this guy is going to give me something. Maybe he's going to help me."

"... Cease from your consideration of it.

(Proverbs 23:5) When you set your eyes on it, it is gone.

For wealth certainly makes itself wings Like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.

(Proverbs 23:6) Do not eat the bread of a selfish man, Or desire his delicacies;

(Proverbs 23:7) For as he thinks within himself, so he is. He says to you, "Eat and drink!" But his heart is not with you.

(Proverbs 23:8) You will vomit up the morsel you have eaten, And waste your compliments."

Scripture is warning us that we live in a hostile world, a world that is self-involved and selfish in their pursuits.

If you look with me in Proverbs 15, since you're already there, you just happen to be there. I don't know what made you turn to Proverbs. But anyway, Proverbs 15, if you look with me in verse 16, it actually does contrast in verse 16 of Chapter 15.

(Proverbs 15:16) “Better is a little with the fear of the LORD Than great treasure and turmoil with it.”

(Pro 15:17) Better is a dish of vegetables where love is Than a fattened ox served with hatred.”

Proverbs 17 will basically state the same thing in verse 1,

(Proverbs 17:1) “Better is a dry morsel and quietness with it Than a house full of feasting with strife.”

Oftentimes, the place that we go is argumentative and hostile. Unfortunately, I think, a lot of times, Thanksgiving meals are this way. They can become very adversarial. And so, we're reminded that just because it's a meal doesn't mean it's going to be pleasant. Although, in the Old Testament, God gives this interesting picture of in the holy place these 12 loaves of bread that are set, and it really demonstrates His desire to have fellowship with us

before we go into the mercy seat. And we come before God and we take bread with Him; His desire is to display mercy to us. We go into the world's houses and their desire is somehow to criticize or to find something wrong with us; as Jesus first goes into this house and they're looking to see if He's going to heal on the Sabbath so that they might accuse Him. It's a hostile world that we live in. And man is not thinking in terms of caring or loving or lovingkindness or compassion or mercy. He thinks in terms of "What am I going to get out of this deal?"

If you look with me in the Book of James, James will give this interesting picture in which he warns us not to think this way. And unfortunately, a lot of times, even in church groups, or when you meet with people in the church, there might be somebody in the church that would think, "Well, there's an opportunity to somehow use this person," unfortunately. We would hope that not to be true.

But James 2 reads this way,

(James 2:1) "My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism."

That is to say, showing preference or bias in some way for the purpose of maybe getting something, maybe because the person's rich or because they're of high position; perhaps they are powerful or influential, whatever, we might place them in a higher place simply because of that, not because of their intrinsic merit or their character. That's not what attracts us. It's what they can do for us. So, he says, "Don't do this with an attitude of personal favoritism."

(James 2:2) "For if a man comes into your assembly with a gold ring and dressed in fine clothes, and there also comes in a poor man in dirty clothes."

James is really stressing this. He's not only making reference to the fact that the guy is poor, but he's poor and dirty. More specifically, he's poor and vile. We'll put it another way. He stinks. I mean, they're going, "Oh, wait, let's put that guy over here."

(James 2:3) “And you pay special attention to the one who is wearing the fine clothes, and say, “You sit here in a good place,” and you say to the poor man...”

It's interesting, he doesn't start off with the word "sit".

"... “You stand over there, or sit down by my footstool,”

(James 2:4) have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil motives?”

You judged according to the appearances. You become judges with evil designs, with deliberate intent of somehow using and manipulating.

(James 2:5) “Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?”

I'm glad that this particular verse ends the way that it does because it's not saying that every poor person is seeking the Lord, but what it's saying is that a hardship and poverty and difficulty will bring a person to seek the Lord.

But if you look at the end of the verse, it reads this way,

"... to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?"

As the Old Testament says, you don't show favoritism to somebody just because they're poor. But if in fact they're poor and they're poor in heart, then you begin to listen to them and care for them, to those who love Him. And of course, that's what draws us to Christ, is that He is one that does not despise the broken in spirit, the one that is contrite of heart.

(James 2:6) "But you have dishonored the poor man..."

And then he reminds us of this,

"... Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally drag you into court?"

"Why are you liking the very people that are taking advantage of you?"

Paul will speak to this if you look with me in 2 Corinthians. And of course, he's scratching his head with the Corinthians. He goes, "Look, I came sacrificially. I came giving you things. You didn't have to pay for any of my conferences. And nevertheless, here you are."

(2 Corinthians 11:20) "For you tolerate it if anyone enslaves you, anyone devours you, anyone takes advantage of you, anyone exalts himself, anyone hits you in the face.

(2 Corinthians 11:21) To my shame..."

"Maybe I need to do that. Maybe I've been too weak for you. Maybe this is the problem."

"... I must say that we have been weak by comparison..."

He then goes on and it begins to describe all of the suffering that he's endured so that they might have the message. So, it really is the antithesis of what the world is like. They want you to suffer to have them in and our gospel says, "I'll suffer to bring you in." And it's a very different perspective.

So, when we come to this passage and Jesus is at the meal He begins to remind certain ones of things that are important. And as He's already talked to those that are in the group, those that have been invited, He's addressed them already. And He says, "Look, don't look for the special seats. What you need to do is you need to go to

the humble place. Let others call you up." As we oftentimes quote the verse in Proverbs, "Let another man's lips praise you, not your own." So, He warns them. Now, He turns at this juncture to those that are the ones that had done the inviting in whose house they are in, and He goes, "You might want to reevaluate your guest list." Now, what Jesus is doing is He's conveying obviously the heart of God. How does God think? How does He see things? How does He see people? Proverbs says many a man proclaims his loyalty. Many a man states that he is benevolent, oftentimes would declare that he's altruistic. Why? Because he maybe gives some money to some organization and he says he's gracious to others. Jesus will sort of test that theory and He'll say, "So, how many people have you invited in your house?" Well, that just puts it on a whole different level. I mean, it's really easy to be gracious to people that aren't going to come around you. But we're talking about actually bringing them into your house.

One of the things that I've appreciated about many of you in the church is that you've opened your house to people

that were in need, to people that were at a place to where they had no hope, but they were seeking God. And so, you opened your home. And oftentimes, it was at great expense. I remember when we were out at MacArthur's church, one of his pastors had opened his home to some people going through some drug issues. And he was out one day and came back home and most of his furniture and possessions were gone. And somebody said to him, "I bet you regret doing that." He says, "Not a minute." I mean, we've had drug addicts take things. I told Connie, "Where are the vegetables?" She goes, "I don't know." And we found out that the guy that we had in our house, a big ol' guy, Gerald, had taken all of our cans of vegetables and was selling them on the street. I go, "I didn't even know you could sell vegetable cans." But probably because they're sealed. And so, you realize that there is a risk to it. We're not saying there's not a risk. What we're saying is, and we've always made this statement, "If somebody wants to do the right thing, we'll do everything we can to help them." And when you hear somebody say they want to do the right thing, you act upon that. You have to. I'm sure that all that came to

Jesus didn't necessarily continue in following Him, but He was gracious to them.

So, He turns to this particular passage and He places in the world of reality because we have a tendency to talk about stuff like this, but then not be real in it.

And so, if you pick up with me in verse 12, it reads this way,

(Luke 14:12) "And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner..."

Just in those two phrases, Jesus is literally covering everything. I mean, He's covering the two meals. One makes reference to the early meal; the other is the later meal. So, He's covering whether it's early or middle, whether it's casual, or formal, both words make reference to that, or whether it's any time in the meal, whether it's the kind of time, the time of the meal, the way that it's set, the things that you eat, it doesn't matter. So, the bottom line is, He's covering everything. Because we have a tendency to say, "Well, He's just talking about just special meals." No, He's talking about any meal.

"And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment."

Well, that about covers it, doesn't it? You're reading this and you're going, "Okay, so I'm not going to have anybody over at my house anymore. So much for Thanksgiving meal." Which may be a help, I don't know. Actually, what He's stating within the text is not dealing with an exclusivity. In other words, He's not excluding people out, the people that you love. He's not saying never to invite them. It's much like the passage in John 6:27, where Jesus says, "Do not work for food that perishes." Now, He's not saying, "Don't go out and get something to eat," and "Don't go pay for a meal." Even Philip will say, "We've got to go buy a meal." But the point of the matter is that when you invite people, don't invite them to get something from them. You invite them to give. And the best way to give the way that you should is to invite

people that can't give back to you. And so, you invite with that in mind.

So, he goes on and says, as He ends in verse 12, "You don't want to invite those who can return payment to you in some way." And if you think about it, the list that He gives here, whether it's your friends or your brothers or your relatives, your rich neighbors, I mean, when you're talking about friends, why do you have a friend? Why do you invite your friends over? The bottom line is, you invite your friends over because they make you feel good. I mean, they have a personality perhaps, or a character trait that just seems to click with yours. Your personalities click and you just have a good time with them and you enjoy their company. There's a gratification, I guess is what I'm saying. There's a gratification. So, you invite them and say, "How about coming over and having a meal with me?" You are receiving something from that and that is a sense of gratification in that. You invite your brothers, of course, family, maybe it's an obligation that caused you to do that, or maybe it's just a sense of blood relation, a sense of nepotism, but you invite your family for a

particular reason. And then you invite, if you look at the passage, relatives, which seems to convey those from the same country. We'll put it another way. Well, this is going to hurt. Get ready, okay? Politics. Those who think the same way you do politically because they're from the same area, they're from the same nation, from the same nationality, or more specifically, they're from the same way of thinking. And so, because of that, you have the same ideology, and you feel more comfortable with these kinds of people. I mean, you can sit and agree with everything and then you can rail the other side and feel really good about that. But Scripture says, "Don't just invite them." Oh yeah, and it ends with rich neighbors. So, I mean, a lot of explanation doesn't have to go with that. You just feel like you can benefit in some way with the people. And that's fundamentally James 2, "Don't tell the rich guy, you can sit in this seat because he has money, or he has power; he has some way to repay you."

But it says in verse 13,

(Luke 14:13) "But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled..."

This is the disabled. So, he's not repeating crippled.

"...the lame..."

He's actually dealing with somebody that's disabled and perhaps has a missing limb, the arm or something, so that he can't do any work. So, what it's fundamentally talking about is that you have a disabled person or a person that is crippled or a person that is blind and you show some act of kindness to them, and how are they going to show back the kindness when they can't even get a job? He said, "These are the kind that you want to reach out to."

"If you do this," he says in verse 14, "you'll be blessed."

Now, we know that Scripture makes reference to the fact that God wants to give us a blessing, and quite frankly, there is a blessing simply in doing the right thing. That is to say that you will find yourself being happier as you begin to give to other people, regardless of what they do to you in the meantime. If you're doing this unto the Lord, you'll find that God will give you a joy in that. And Matthew 5 repeats that over and over again.

And one of the reasons why I just love the disciples is, as the Bible will tell us, that they were so transparent and so

real with their feelings and emotions. And you have this interesting passage in Mark 10, if you look with me. Jesus will begin to talk about the warning of rich people and how hard it is for them to come into the kingdom of God.

(Mark 10:23) "And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!"

(Mark 10:24) The disciples were amazed at His words..."

I mean, the rich can't be saved, then who can be saved, right?

"... But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!

(Mark 10:25) It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

(Mark 10:26) They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?"

(Mark 10:27) Looking at them, Jesus said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God."

(Mark 10:28) Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You."

(Mark 10:29) Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake,

(Mark 10:30) but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers..."

Well, I tell you, I've adopted a huge family, and the Lord's been gracious to me.

"... and children and farms, along with persecutions..."

He didn't have to add that, did He? He's actually telling you it's not going to be easy, but you will have blessings in doing it. It's going to be a difficult walk, but the Lord's called us to that.

"... and in the age to come, eternal life."

Now, this is where Jesus is going to focus. He's actually not going to focus on the present benefits that clearly one has by virtue of doing the right thing. Or as Proverbs will

say, you'll be happier if you're not with those sour grapes, but you're just eating carrots with people that are nice. You'll actually be happier. So, there is a happiness that comes from this. However, Jesus will not focus on that.

In fact, and this is what I want to point out to you, if you look with me in Luke 14:14, when Jesus says, "and you will be blessed," He is not talking about now. It's very interesting. That's the future tense. So, though it's true that there will be blessings today, there will be blessings for doing what is right, and clearly, the world has things upside down. It's a very hostile place. And if you come together with those with the right heart to do a service unto the Lord, it's far more pleasant to be with those that are humble.

I mean, the way that it's put in Proverbs 18:23 is,

"The poor man utters supplications, But the rich man answers roughly."

"Taḥănûn" is the word that he uses for "supplications". And what he's making reference to is that he's literally begging for mercy. The poor man begs for mercy when the rich man utters harshly and he speaks harshly.

He goes on and says,

(Proverbs 19:1) "Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity..."

(Proverbs 19:22) "What is desirable in a man is his kindness, And it is better to be a poor man than a liar."

We don't oftentimes think in terms of character and things such as this, but God is very much into the heart. And though we look and oftentimes cater to the external, God is very much against that.

Let me read a passage to you, found in Proverbs 21:13.

"He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor Will also cry himself and not be answered."

I think God takes it seriously when we don't reach out to those that are in need.

Proverbs 22:22 reads this way,

"Do not rob the poor because he is poor, Or crush the afflicted at the gate;

(Proverbs 22:23) For the LORD will plead their case And take the life of those who rob them."

God's serious about this.

And all the way through, I mean, at the beginning of His ministry in John 2, it's one of the few places that you see Jesus getting angry. And it's when the poor are taken advantage of. And so, in John 2, He starts off His ministry going into the temple and clearing it out as the Pharisees and the money changers are literally robbing the poor by overcharging for these doves that they can only afford. They can't afford the lambs, but they can afford the doves, and they're overcharging, sometimes 10 times the value. Jesus is not going to put up with it. The whole purpose of His house was to be a place in which you would actually pray for these people, not take advantage of these people. Jesus will deal with the Pharisees in Matthew 23, and He'll say, "You know, you robbed the widows!" This is why James will say, "Pure and undefiled religion is to visit the widows and the orphans in times of their distress." And this is where we should be. This is the heart of God. This is the way He thinks. This is the way He loves. So, in John 2, He begins His ministry.

In Luke 19, Luke will actually show us as Jesus is heading towards the cross and He goes into Jerusalem, He'll clean out the temple again. So, He'll clean it out at the beginning of His ministry; He'll clean it out at the end of His ministry. It's very clear where He stands on this particular issue. God is for those that are hurting, those that are poor.

There is a Proverbs, and if I could just have you perhaps write down this verse, it is a good reminder to us.

(Proverbs 19:17) “One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the LORD, And He will repay him for his good deed.”

It's hard to imagine, well, right off the bat, that God would owe me anything. Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe, right? The wording of this is very interesting, though, because it starts off with "One who is gracious..." I remember we were talking about supplications with the man that was poor, and it was "*taḥănûn*". Well, this is a part of that word, "*ḥānan*,". And the word "*taḥănûn*" makes reference to graciousness, and "*ḥānan*" virtually

means to have pity on. So, the text is, "One who shows pity upon him," but it's an adjective. So, here's the point. The word is describing the person. That is to say that the person is ever and always thinking in terms of mercy. They are very compassionate people. God says, "I see those people. They have My heart."

(Proverbs 19:17) "One who is gracious to a poor man lends..."

Now, that's a strange word. The Hebrew makes reference to the fact that it causes God, strangely enough, to feel obligated. Now, what it makes reference to is this, that it beckons Him to be involved. So, the point is that He sees you doing something... I remember when the kids were growing up and they would do something right. Maybe they would share something with some neighbor and I'd pull some money out of my pocket, and I'd go, "Here, here's some more money. You can help some more, and you can get some more for yourself." It just beckoned me to be a part of what they were doing. Because this is who God is. God is gracious. He's merciful. This is the way He thinks. He sees you start doing it. He goes, "I've got to get

in on this. This is my kid. He's doing the right thing. I want to be a part of this." You want to encourage that kind of behavior. And so, it gives that picture of a sense of involvement.

And it actually says within the text,

"... He will repay him for his good deed."

Now, I've got to tell you what the word "repay" is. It's not necessarily a wage, even though Jesus is going to be talking about that in the text, but it is the word "*šālam*"; which makes reference to, once again, a kind of completion or a kind of finishing work or a kind of fulfillment. When somebody says "*šālam*" to you from the Hebrew word, what they're really talking about is not simply the fact that he wants you to have peace, but he wants you to be filled and fulfilled. And so, God is basically saying, "I'm going to make sure that you're full, that you're filled, that your joy may be made full. Jesus will say, "You start loving other people, you do what I tell you to do, love others the way that I love them, and I'm going to tell you something, I'm going to fill you up with joy." You see that same aspect in 2 Corinthians where He

goes, "I'm going to give you everything so it'll be all sufficient for every good deed and I'm just going to fill you up with this." And I have found, I mean, you truly can't outgive God. You begin to do His work, He not only gives you joy and fills you with that joy, but He supplies all of your need according to His riches and glory. As He will tell those that are in Philippi, he says, "Don't worry about this. Start giving it and see if you can shovel out faster than Him." God has a bigger shovel, right? You're just not going to outdo God in this. And so, you see the graciousness of God.

It says in verse 14,

(Luke 14:14) "and you will be blessed..."

Not "might be". Once again, future tense; Jesus is going to emphasize this.

"... since they do not have the means to repay you..."

And you probably need to infer at this juncture "now". Some people, they do something nice or something, they go, "Where's my 'thank you'?" And I'm going, "Forget about thank you. You're getting stuff from God. Stop

worrying about what they can give you, you're giving expecting nothing in return; absolutely nothing from them. That's the reason you invited these people and every time you open up your house that's the way you should be thinking. It doesn't matter if it is family, it doesn't matter if it is a friend, that's the way you should be thinking. I'm not here to get something from them. I'm here that I might do the will of God and display the love of God to them that has no strings attached. That's why I invited them today.

And so, the passage reads,

"... since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid..."

Once again, in the future tense. How does he end the verse?

"... at the resurrection of the righteous."

What Scripture and what Jesus is doing in the passage is He's displaying a point that we oftentimes, I think, overlook. And that is that we believers are motivated by something very different than the world. We're motivated

by that wonderful word called "hope". We have a confident expectation that God is going to change everything that this world, Isaiah 5, is upside down. We call good evil and evil good. We're an upside-down world, but the day is coming when everything's going to be made right. We believe that.

Turn with me to 2 Peter. You'll see this as well in 2 Peter. If you look with me in the last chapter, in Chapter 3, you'll see this hope that we have, what a wonderful hope it is, that the day of the Lord is going to come. And to the world, His coming is going to be like a thief because all the things that they had invested in is going to pass away.

That's why it states in 2 Peter 3:10,

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar..."

That means even the spaceships and everything out there. I mean, just because you land on Mars or something doesn't mean you're safe. Maybe someone ought to tell somebody.

Anyway,

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

(2 Peter 3:11) Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,

(2 Peter 3:12) looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

(2 Peter 3:13) But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells."

Now, everything is not right now. And you're going to be doing ministry, and you're going to be helping people. And yeah, you're not going to be hugged; you're not going to be loved; you're not going to be embraced. You probably won't even be given anything. But that's okay. I'm not doing it for that. I'm doing it for that day in which finally, right will be honored. See, we live in a world

where, according to Psalm 49, they honor people that have a lot of money and have a lot of prestige. And the same people that take advantage of people, we honor those kinds of people because they line their pockets with your money. And we go, "Wow, how wonderful they are." Well, you paid for it. It's not because they love you. But everything's upside down. We think wrong. The stars, the people that we admire and adore... But the day is coming when the ones that are going to be elevated are the least, the servants. God's looking for those; those who would open their house to people that couldn't pay them back, that couldn't love them back. This Luke passage is actually the first time in the gospel that the word "resurrection" is mentioned. And so, in this context, the first time that it's mentioned, Jesus wants you to know that the resurrection is going to make everything right. And those that are doing right will be rewarded accordingly to this. We believe in the resurrection. If you look with me, you're right here in Peter. So, if you look in 1 Peter 1, it says this,

(1 Peter 1:3) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope..."

It's invigorating to realize that I have something to look forward to. I mean, quite frankly, I know people have a hard time with this, but people go to work and they don't get paid the first day they go to work. Sometimes they even hold a paycheck for a week or a month. But they keep going to work. Why? Because they know something's coming. Now, we live our life that way. We believe God is faithful. He's promised. He told us that He was going to do this, and we saw Him raised from the dead. We know resurrection is a given. 1 Corinthians 15 says, look, if you don't believe in the resurrection, you're most to be pitied. You're believing in bogus stuff. But we believe there is a resurrection and we believe that God is going to reward us and we're doing this for Him. We're not doing this with the applause of men or the recognition of men.

"... a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

(1 Peter 1:4) to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

(1 Peter 1:5) who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(1 Peter 1:6) In this you greatly rejoice..."

Not in the fact that this is easy today; not in the fact that the person smells good today; not in the fact that they're going to treat you well today. We're not doing it for that. I mean, there is a peace, there is a joy that comes upon your heart when you do what God tells you to do. No doubt about that. But we're talking about something even far greater than that. We're protected by His power.

"In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed..."

Put it in the context- People are losing their lives. They've lost their homes; they're losing their lives. And he goes, "Eh, little trials just for a little bit. But we're going to heaven."

(1 Peter 1:7) "So that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

(1 Peter 1:8) and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now..."

It's that "now" that bothers us, "Where's the immediate gratification now?" And God goes, "You're not going to feel it now every time. But don't do it for now. The time is coming."

"... and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,

(1 Peter 1:9) obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls."

This is faith. That's how you know you have faith. The way you know you have faith is you do stuff that you don't get rewarded for today. That's how you know it's faith. Hope that is seen is not hope, as Romans says.

So, are you going to reevaluate your invitations? It puts the rubber where the road is. I mean, are you serious about caring for people? When Scripture talks about the poor, what it's talking about is, it actually uses an interesting word in the Hebrew, "*dal*," which means the lowly, the weak and the needy. There are people that are hurting. They're not in a position to give you anything. Invite them in. Help them in some way. Open up your home. Don't just gratify yourself with people that can somehow make you feel good. God has called us to a higher calling. We have a mission. We're called to be like Him. And how wonderful it is that He ate with the tax gatherers and the sinners. And if you look at the Gospel of Luke, it seemed like He had more fun with them than He did with the Pharisees. Because all they were about was criticizing and condemning. Who are you inviting?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we ask You to change our hearts. Help us to be like You. We don't think like You. That's why we need to repent. We need to think

differently. You tell us for the joy set before You, You endured the cross. Boy, we didn't deserve that. You shouldn't have taken us in. We've been nothing but trouble. We've given You nothing but heartache. We've not gratified You in any way. And yet, while we were sinners, You died for us. You've called us to follow You, to take up a cross and follow You. You've called upon us to work not for the wage of today, but the wage of forever. And so, we do.