

10.11.26

Luke

Chapter 14 - An Unprecedented Invitation

The Uninvited (vs. 15-24)

Luke 14:15-24: When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” But He said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’ Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’ And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in

here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ And the slave said, ‘Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.’”

I first read this and I came to the end, the last verse, "For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.”

I just couldn't get out of my head the word "uninvited". They had been invited, but now they're uninvited. It's hard to imagine that God would invite us to anything. I mean, He's God. And I'm not. And it's just unimaginable that God would want to have a relationship with us. The God of the universe is inviting us. Think about that. He's inviting us to be with Him. The Jews were not unfamiliar with this idea. It goes back to Isaiah 25:6, in which there is a declaration of God giving a grand banquet, and He's

inviting those to come. It's repeated again in Isaiah 55, so the Jews were very much into and understood the whole concept of that day in which there would be a grand and glorious banquet; in which they would come around the table of God and have fellowship with Him.

This particular passage is written in the setting of a meal. If you remember at the beginning of the chapter, a Pharisee has invited his guests to come; to refuse the invitation would be strange, especially to refuse an invitation from a Pharisee or one of high regard. So, Jesus comes. Jesus is one of the guests that was invited within the passage. And as He looks around, He realizes that all of those people that have been invited are people of great stature, people that are respected highly. And as He looks around, He begins to see them all clamoring for the best seat of the house, so to speak. And He reminds them that that's probably not the wisest thing to do. He then begins to describe to them about an invitation that they maybe should consider that they haven't. And that is an invitation of those that can't pay back; an invitation to those that perhaps can't afford them anything. Maybe

you should invite the poor instead of your friends and your neighbors and people that are rich that can give you back stuff, people of high regard. Maybe you should invite people of low regard. Because if you were to do this, you would actually be pleasing God more. Well, this is a strange way of thinking, especially to these that are of high position. And so, I guess in the context of maybe not even knowing what to say, somebody yells out.

And this is what he yells out, if you look at me in verse 15, (Luke 14:15) "When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!""

Immediately, turning their minds and their thoughts upon that wonderful, marvelous banquet of Isaiah 26, in which God says, "I'm just going to feed you with the greatest, and it's just going to be a marvelous time." The resounding voice in the audience is seemingly conveying that he's going to be there. And Christ is now forced to deal with the reality and to convey that reality to them. He turns to them and begins to speak to them in parables, which is not an unusual thing. Hosea 12:10 makes

reference to the fact that God used the prophets, and now Christ will begin to prompt not only through prophets, but through the prophets who spoke in parables. Because the wonderful thing about speaking in parables is that you can be direct without being oppressive. So, you can take the story, or you don't take the story, but the Pharisees were no dummies. They understood that He was talking about them and He was talking about the kingdom of heaven. Nevertheless, He tells a story; they can either accept the story or not. So, He begins with this interesting parable.

What we begin to realize is that Christ Himself is offended by, I would say, commonplace piety. It is when man begins to proclaim the blessings of God. It's interesting, this is actually attacked earlier in Chapter 11, if you look at me in Chapter 11, in which a woman in the audience, and you probably remember the passage in verse 27, as Jesus was there and there were people around and supposedly she just feels like she's got to, in her biased way, convey that women are important too.

So, verse 27 reads,

(Luke 11:27) "While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."

(Luke 11:28) But He said, "On the contrary..."

He is refuting what she stated.

"... blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."

It is presumptuous to think that people can go around blessing people, "God bless you, God bless you, God bless you," and I go, "I don't know if you have the power to do that," but people are doing it. There's no doubt about it. And they take on that position of blessing people. Jesus is very clear within the text, "You'll be blessed if you obey God; if you hear His words and you do them."

The same thing is stated by Jesus in John 13:17, where He says, "Look, if you know these things, you're only blessed if you do them." So, by virtue of just saying the words... And I think we feel better about the fact that maybe we know the words to say and we've declared the blessings

out loud and by virtue of declaring the blessings out loud, it's sort of a name it, claim it thing that you are blessed. This is not true. And Jesus begins to deal with those that are working in the realm of external declaration and with being vocally on board but spiritually detached. And we recognize this with a lot of people. We see somewhat individuals that are extremely assertive in what they declare and even knowledgeable. I've seen people, they know when to bow their heads; they know when to raise their hands. They do all the things that they need to do, and externally, you go, "Wow, what a righteous person that is." But I just want to remind you that God sees the heart and when it really matters, they seem to be absent on the things that really count. They seem to be vocal about the things of blessings and how wonderful God is and everything like that. And God says, "Well, how about doing this?" And they go, "Oh, my schedule is booked up." So, it is in this setting that Jesus begins to refute by virtue of a parable as we come to the passage.

So, we start off in verse 15.

(Luke 14:15) "When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!""

Of course, God is the One that invites. And Jesus has already stated in an interesting way that you might think you're invited, but you're going to be surprised.

If you look back to Luke 13, and all of this, once again, is kind of in the setting of the invitation being in the presence of God.

But if you look in Luke 13:26,

(Luke 13:26) "Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets'"

"By virtue of just proxemics, we should be in heaven."

Luk 13:27) and He will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you are from; DEPART FROM ME, ALL YOU EVILDOERS.'

(Luke 13:28) In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves being thrown out.

(Luke 13:29) And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God."

"But you won't be there." And I can just imagine how shocking that was; that they would perceive that they would not be there. It is the thought of man that "Surely, of all people, I'm the most important person."

Amos 5:18 reads this way,

"Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD..."

"It's not a good thing that you're doing that," he goes on to say, "because you're going to have darkness instead of light." So, just because somebody overtly declares something doesn't mean that it's true. And I've oftentimes thought about the passage in Isaiah 64 where the Israelites are crying out, "Oh, that You would rend the heavens and come." And I could just see God in heaven going, "If I rend heavens and come now, you'll all be dead." So, it was the grace of God that He didn't. It was the grace of God that He sent His Son to die on the cross for their sins, that they would not perish but have everlasting life. Nevertheless, man is bold, he's brash, he's

presumptuous, he takes these positions without any kind of thought, and he perceives himself as being superior when it just may be possible that he's not even invited.

We come to the passage and Jesus begins to tell this parable, if you look with me in verse 16,

(Luke 14:16) "But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many."

Now, right off the bat, I don't know if we can fully jump in and comprehend what He's talking about within the passage, but first of all, somebody invited you to dinner, you went. It was just protocol. You just went. So, that's a given. But the fact that it's a big dinner and the fact that He uses the term that seems to convey that this is not only not just a normal dinner, but this is a dinner of great formality. So, there is this great formal dinner in which people are being invited. And this is telling us that somebody of great standing is doing the inviting in order for him to do this. Obviously, somebody who was poor or somebody that was insignificant couldn't literally invite many. But many are invited within the passage, and it's telling us that this is something you don't turn down. This

is something that is a privilege to go to. Who would turn down such a thing?

So, He then begins to proclaim the parable within the passage, in verse 17.

(Luke 14:17) "And at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.'"

He's the one that made the dinner, he's the one that chooses the time, he's the one that does the inviting, and he's the one that's doing the calling. In other words, he's the one in charge.

Strangely enough,

(Luke 14:18) "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

(Luke 14:19) Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

(Luk 14:20) Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'"

Excuses. Well, that's bizarre. It really is. I mean, every Jew that's listening to this particular parable goes, "Who in the world would refuse an invitation? Who would resist the protocol that is there? Who would reject an opportunity to step up in the world by virtue of going to these dinners because it was all a thing in which somebody would be related to as being greater if in fact they went? And who would despise such a privilege as this of high standing? This in and of itself goes against reasoning. Nobody would do that. Nobody would make excuses. Nobody would do this. The word that He uses for excuses seems to have with it the connotation of belittling. It has that sense of deprecation in the sense that "This is insignificant, so I'm going to make up an excuse."

And if you look at the passage and as we'll look at it, you'll see all of these excuses are pretty well made-up in the sense that they didn't have to do them. Nevertheless, it is a sign of somebody seeing the invitation as insignificant. Now, the first question that has to come to your mind is,

who in the world would refuse such an invitation? The second thing that just jumps off the page is, lest any of us might come with a predication of self-righteousness, everybody refused. I mean, the universality of the rejection, it's just almost impossible to fathom within the passage.

He had the dinner hour, he begins to call them, and it says in verse 18,

"But they all alike began to make excuses..."

Everybody. What are the odds of that happening? It has given us one of the greatest anomalies of all of Scripture, "Not everybody? Really, everybody?" But there is a perception that some of us are a little bit better than others and Scripture is making reference; in fact, the first thing that probably comes to mind is that Romans 3, "For all have sinned." You read that, and you go, "Really, all?" He says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." So, right off the bat, what Jesus does is He just makes sure that nobody's hopping on the train of self-righteousness. And He says, "I just want to let you know, everybody refused. Everybody made excuses. Everybody

belittled the invitation. Nobody saw it as significant." And we're taken back by that. You should instantly be taken back by that because the greatest opportunity that has ever been afforded to you, you have now dismissed in your mind as insignificant, and you now begin to reject that which is there.

The excuses that are given are pretty interesting as you look at the passage because it seems to make reference to perhaps people on some occasions actually doing a little thoughtful thinking. And though, they are being in some way belittling towards the invitation; they at least at first try to be apologetic. And so, as you look at the excuses, they seem to kind of go down in quality. The first begins to make apologies for the fact that he's not going to be there.

And it says in verse 18,

"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'"

Well, at least there's some decorum there. The person is actually being considerate. They're being nice about the

excuse. What you're going to find out is, it doesn't matter. The fact that they're not going is strong enough, belittling, that God would see it as a horrible thing. Nevertheless, there is a sense of excuse. Now, what's interesting is that this person that has a piece of property and he has possession and there are the attractions of possessions, right? I mean, you have something. There's something about the things that you have that draw you and can draw man away from sitting down when God invites him to sit down. God is working in our lives. Hebrews reminds us this, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts." Hebrews reminds you that He's calling. Revelation 3:20 says, "Behold, He stands at the door knocking." God is inviting you. When that is, I don't know, but we all begin to make excuses. And sometimes, it's the possessions that we have, and somehow we're enamored with those possessions. If you think about just the legitimacy of his excuse, first of all, he bought the land, that's past tense, so it's not going anywhere. And why does he have to look at it and why does he have to have the possession of it at this point? He already owns it, so he can enjoy it another time. He has an invitation. He

should go to the invitation. The possession shouldn't stop him. Nevertheless, it's a flimsy excuse, but he's polite in doing it.

The second one then comes and it seems to be in the realm of perhaps responsibility or occupation with business. I mean, we all have business, right?

And so, he's bought some oxen and the way that it reads is,

(Luke 14:19) “Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen...’”

Which basically would be ten, two together.

"... ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’”

Once again, the reference seems to be "I have an occupation, a business. I have duties that I have to attend to. There are things that I have to go do."

There are interesting words that come into play within the passage. And if you look at the beginning in this chapter, in verse 18, as it says,

(Luke 14:18) "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go...'"

See that? That's talking about necessity. That's talking about a must. Who decided it's a must? I mean, think about it. Think about all the excuses that people make; why they can't fellowship with God; why they can't put Him first. And they'll make a statement like, "I would come, but I have to go." Well, who says you have to go? Who made that thing more important than the invitation with God? Who made that? That was you. The only reason that it becomes a must is because you said it was a must. **You** made it a must. You made it something greater than something with God. So, you come up with these excuses. Your thought is, it's by virtue of either being polite or by in some way conveying it as a necessity, because oftentimes our desires and the things that we long for, we define as "necessities" in our life, which they're not at all. I mean, what would it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lost his own soul? At what point do you say must is a necessity? And so, as we come

through Scripture, we begin to realize that man has all these thoughts and whether it's an attraction to his possessions or whether it's an occupation in his business or whether it's just fundamentally social ties and domestic interests, we would even put it in the realm of affection, "I have a wife."

The way the passage reads,

(Luke 14:20) "Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'"

That was probably the first time he ever listened to his wife! "I have a wife." What He's talking about is that, and I don't know if you noticed it, but no niceties in this one. In other words, he doesn't say, "Please excuse me, I can't come. I have a wife, I can't come." He probably feels a little bit more justified because it's a thing of affection. He probably feels a little bit more greater rationale because this is family. This is somebody close and "family first," right? You don't want to go there. Jesus clearly makes that declaration. Nevertheless, people began to make their excuses and they began to pursue property, they begin to provide for family, they have expenses, they

have devotion, they have love. All these things they begin to throw out that are far more important than meeting with God Who gives you life and breath and causes you to exist. Oh yeah, it's far more important to meet with the creation rather than the Creator. Blessed be he. So, as you look at the passage, all the excuses clearly began to wane as we read them. McLaren writes this, "We can trick our conscience; we can put off the messengers, but we cannot deceive the host." The host is declaring within the passage, "I know these are excuses. I know that this is just a way to belittle. I know that this is just a way of saying that the invitation is insignificant to you."

So, what do you do?

(Luke 14:21) "And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'"

Jesus already mentioned the dinner in which you should invite people not just because they can give you

something, but because they have perhaps need themselves that you should be ministering to them.

That's why He says in verse 13,

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

The passage is making reference to the fact that these are the ones who would come. Now, the question is, why would they come? And the answer is because they're crippled, because they're blind. What is He talking about? Because they have seen what this world can offer, and they are not enchanted by it. They have not been enamored by it. It's the difficulties, it's the hardship, it's the pain, it's the suffering. We all come before the cross wounded. We would not come without the wounding. But it is the wounding that brings us. And it is that which makes us receptive to the invitation. Strangely enough, we would not come on the merits of God being grand and majestic and glorious on His own. We would not come for that reason. We would come when we're broken, when we have heartaches and when we have trials and when we have tribulation.

And so, the master says, "Go, invite these. Go at once," as the passage will say.

(Luke 14:22) "And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'

(Luke 14:23) And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel..."

The way Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 5 is, "We're ambassadors of Christ, therefore we beg you."

"... compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.

(Luk 14:24) For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

There is an invitation of God and He has invited us to be a part of something marvelous and glorious.

Strangely enough, a man by the name of Judge Hale writes this in one of his books, "We are ruined by things we allow." His point is that the things that have become important to us, and we've allowed them to become important to us, have ruined us. What we should be doing is seeing that which is true, that which is great, that which

is marvelous. Having eyes, we can't seem to see this. Unless difficulty comes in our life and there's a humbling within our heart, within our spirit; then we become strangely receptive to the invitation that God has given us.

2 Thessalonians deals with, in many respects, the invitation of God. And if you look with me in 2 Thessalonians, you'll see how this comes into play. It is clear in the beginning of this that there is great persecution of the church in verse 4 of Chapter 1. Paul is encouraging those that are in the church to endure, to persevere in the midst of the afflictions. His point is that your endurance and your perseverance is an indication of God's righteous judgment, and this demonstrates that you've been considered worthy to come. In other words, the hardship that has been brought upon you has actually brought you to the Throne of Grace. A very interesting point. He goes on and talks about the fact that God will deal out retribution to those that mistreated you.

And his statement is in verse 8,

(2 Thessalonians 1:8) "dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus."

That's always been an interesting phrase to me, "do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." The gospel is an invitation that says, "Whosoever will may come." But it is an invitation with an imperative. You **must** come.

Rejecting the coming of God with the excuses that you have, perceiving that perhaps something is more important than God would just be unforgivable. "For it is He Who made us and not we ourselves." To disobey the gospel. What does "gospel" mean? Good news. It is the graciousness of God that would invite you. It is His kindness that died on the cross for your sins. It was His love that called you.

In 2 Thessalonians 2, he goes on, and he talks about this mystery of lawlessness that is already at work in our hearts and a sense of rebelliousness. How strange it is that we would disregard that which is so valuable.

It says, in the last days, if you read with me in verse 8,

2Th 2:8) "Then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;

(2 Thessalonians 2:9) that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,

(2 Thessalonians 2:10) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish..."

I want to clarify what this deception is all about, because he'll actually talk about the deception that comes from that lawless spirit that fundamentally is a person saying, "I'll do whatever I want to do whenever I want to do it." And that can be very deceptive in and of itself. But there is a more subtle deception that Jesus is talking about in the context of the invitation. And that deception is, we are oftentimes lured away by good things.

It is not a bad thing to have possession. It's not a bad thing for you to work and do business and do that which is profitable and bring prosperity into your home. It's not a bad thing to take care of your family and to feed them, and it's not a terrible thing to be affectionate to your wife

and to display love and care for her. But all these things become horrific, hostile, terrible things in your life when they take you away from the invitation. There's an invitation that God has given. And the passage reads here in 2 Thessalonians that there is going to be this strange deception that comes into this world.

(2 Thessalonians 2:10) "and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved."

Sometimes, the very things that are the greatest of our enemies are the things that are “good things,” the things that are allowed, the things that are okay. I mean, this isn't a list of unlawful things. It's not unlawful to go look at your property. It's not a horrible thing to have oxen. And it's a good thing to have a wife and to care for her. All these are good things, unless they take precedence over the invitation. And when they take precedence over the invitation, they become destructive things and deceptive things, and you begin to lie and you begin to somehow belittle the invitation of God, that He would call you. Who could imagine such a thing? That the God of the universe

would call you to sit down at the table with Him. And let me just say this- If you sat down with Him, would not your possessions be better? Would you not be more prosperous? Would your relationship with your wife not be better? Are you **losing out** by coming to the invitation? Jesus is revealing just their disregard, deprecation towards the things of God, how man sees them.

Think about all the excuses that you've made throughout the years when you had an opportunity to sit at the table with Christ, with His body, with His people. What is it that's drawing you away? "Ah, they sound like good excuses." And quite frankly, you can tag on the phrase, "I have to do this." But **you** made the "have to." You're the one. And it doesn't make it any more legitimate. God's calling us to sit down with Him. Are you listening?

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today with bended knee and with awe that You would even consider inviting us to be with You. This is strange. Even more strange that the world, every one of us, would pay no attention. We all

have things that have weighed us down, and we all have things that we have somehow elevated in our own mind to be greater or grander than You are. It's just not true. It is Your grace that brings us to a place in which we are oftentimes broken, a place in which we have a hard time moving, sore, disappointed. But then, we hear the invitation; somebody has invited us and the meal is on them. Somebody seems to care for us. It seems strange that they would want us there. We're not dignitaries. We're not important. We're not grand, majestic, or glorious. Nevertheless, we've been invited. We come in wonderment.

Maybe that's how you came. Don't think for one moment that you privileged God by coming. He was the gracious One. And how amazing it is that He would die for you, that you could sit at the table. Maybe your priorities have gotten messed up. Maybe you need to fix that.