

Come And Dine  
Luke 14:15-24

As I read this parable given by the Lord Jesus that we will study in a few moments, I'm reminded of how our Lord invited the many thousands to come to dine with Him, first the five thousand and then the four thousand.

And then also, how there on the shore of the Sea of Galilee just after He had risen from the dead, He invited His disciples to come and eat fish and bread with Him.

And then especially, that sweet old country gospel hymn, "Come and Dine", that tells us about that blessed banquet that our Lord calls us to enjoy with Him when we get to heaven. What a joy-filled time that will be for us!

And this parable tells us all about that wonderful banquet saying that His banqueting table is open to anyone and everyone who will come to Him.

But before I read these precious words for us, may I make mention that many bible scholars caution us about taking too much information from a parable, that parables were generally given to express only one thought and that readers should not try to closely analyze all the words within a parable.

But folks, with this particular parable, some of the details are so very, very important that I will just have to "dig a little deeper" than just the surface meaning. There are some sweet truths given here and we'll talk about them in depth over the next week or so.

With that being said, listen as I read these words for us given in Luke chapter 14, beginning in verse 15.

<sup>15</sup> When one of those who reclined at table with Jesus heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" <sup>16</sup> But he (the Lord Jesus) 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.' " (Luke 14:15-24)

Recall that the setting for this occasion is one where Jesus was gathered at a dinner party with a group of Scribes and Pharisees. And as He observed their ways and behaviors, His heart's desire for them was that they would understand some of the deeper needs of their souls, especially for the need of humility, and for the surrender of their souls to the God of these scriptures.

And here, Jesus used the occasion of this social gathering to express a biblical truth to them that they obviously had not been able to truly understand.

Here, He explained to them that to have a mindset of always seeking for opportunities to elevate and enhance their own positions of pride and importance was not an honorable pursuit for men of God. And further, that when they would make up their invitation lists to their dinner parties, they should not just invite people who could benefit their social position within the community, but rather, with Godly humility, they should invite people who were truly needful and would truly appreciate the blessing they had to offer. Verse 13,

<sup>13</sup> But when you give a feast, invite *the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.* (Luke 14:13)

And here, Jesus' promised them that if they would humble themselves and follow this simple instruction, very special blessings would come to them. Verse 14,

<sup>14</sup> And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just." (Luke 14:14)

And also in another place, Jesus had reminded them that treasures sought for and gained while here on this earth would only benefit them for the moment, and sometimes not even at all. And because of that, it would be far better for

them to lay up treasures in heaven, treasures that would benefit them for an eternity.

And here, Jesus' words evoked a response from a man in the crowd that set the stage for Jesus to give another of His wonderful biblical truths. The man said,

<sup>15</sup> . . . "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (Luke 14:15)

As I first read those words, I was curious at this man's response. To some degree, his words sound like one of those almost absentminded responses that says, "yes, we know about that sort of thing".

But let me assure us that there are no words within this bible that are of a miscellaneous value. All of these words have great and eternal meaning. And without question, it was the Holy Spirit who prompted the man to say those words.

<sup>15</sup> . . . "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" (Luke 14:15)

What is the importance of these words, and especially, why are they important to us now in our day? These words are important because there will surely come a day when all things on this earth will be called to a close, both for us individually as we die, and for us as a people when the trumpet of the Lord will call us to gather with Him in heaven.

And it will be at that time that the great "Wedding feast of the Lamb" will be held. But be aware, these words by this man, while appearing to be just a simple statement, also present a crucially important question to us, a question that asks, "Who will those people actually be that will take a position at the dining table of Christ when He comes into His kingdom?"

In these words, Jesus was saying very clearly that we will be very surprised at who will be sitting at His banquet table at that very special "Marriage Supper of the Lamb".

Yes, He does invite all sorts of people to dine with Him in His kingdom. And yes, He does invite the rich and the famous. He loves them and wants them to be saved.

But here in this parable, Jesus reveals a reality that takes place in the ordinary daily life of those who are more well-to-do. People who own things get caught up in that ownership and in the activities of the stuff they own, causing them to miss out on the "better things". Listen! Verse 16,

<sup>16</sup> Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many,

<sup>17</sup> and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.'

<sup>18</sup> But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'

<sup>19</sup> And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'

<sup>20</sup> Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'  
(Luke 14:16-20)

Notice that these matters and these activities do not, in themselves, seem to be of a sinful nature. They are just common, ordinary matters of daily life. And certainly, many people do far worse things that keep them from coming near to Jesus.

But even though these aren't sinful matters and activities, they do still occupy the time and the behavior of these people and prevent them from coming near to Jesus, and from coming near to what they will find later would surely have been a far better thing.

Some who read these words suggest that these people were just making polite excuses, and so they may have been. But the real reality behind their not coming to be near to Jesus was that they did not really want to, at least not enough to make the provision of time to do it. Yes, all those reasons might have been really pressing upon them at the moment, so much so that they felt compelled to make choices in the way that they did.

And we can relate to their circumstances because that same sort of thing takes place all through the many activities of our own daily lives. We also feel compelled to make choices, choices of one thing over another, and most often guided by the most pressing and urgent of those things, a pressure that we often call, "tyranny of the urgent".

Other expressions that I've heard used as I talk to very busy people is that they were busy "killing alligators", or "peeling onions".

And in reality, that sort of lifestyle is very common to most all of us, often without our even knowing it. We live our days as busy as those people on the New York Stock Exchange floor who are frantically calling out bids and prices that change instantly, winning and losing on a moment's notice.

And to add to the problem, nowadays, our work responsibilities in the evenings and weekends, and especially on Sundays have become as pressured and as complicated as they once were only from 9 to 5, Monday through Friday. Those who work in retail stores, restaurants and other such places are prevented from taking part in many of the better things that Christ would have them be involved in, like church and family.

Consider for a moment, all the many demands being placed on the mothers of today. Those mothers who used to be "stay at home moms" now put in a full day at their workplace, and that is only the beginning. They then have to rush home to the kids, picking up fast-food at McDonalds along the way, grabbing their kids and quickly hurrying out to soccer or band practice, or baseball, or a dance recital.

And by the time they are finished with all those things, they seem to barely get themselves home in time for bed, and then it starts all over again the next day.

And that is one of the dangers that Jesus is pointing to in this parable. The things, the opportunities, and the pressures of daily life are strong and demanding and they really do at any given moment, seem to be very pressing and necessary, choices constantly being made of one thing over another.

Let me read these words again, and notice that these people's excuses are very little different than the ones we make when we try to explain to ourselves and to others why we never seem to have time for God, no time for bible study, no time for prayer, no time for family devotions, and no time for church.

<sup>18</sup> . . . The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'

<sup>19</sup> And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'

And then in verse 20, we hear demands coming from within the family.

<sup>20</sup> Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'  
(Luke 14:18-20)

These are choices that they made, but these choices are not very different from the choices that we make. And like these, sometimes our excuses really are just "lame" excuses. But also, sometimes our reasons are very legitimate and important, at least they seem so at the moment.

But still, whether ours are legitimate excuses or not, in the final analysis, they are still choices of one thing over another, and as with this parable, the best things often lose out to the more urgent things.

Here, hidden within the simple words of this parable, Jesus is telling us about a very special "spiritual" invitation that He offers to each of us, an invitation for us to abandon most of those pressing demands of daily life and to instead, come to Him, to come and sit down with Him at His table, to allow Him to provide for us and to serve us His very best of provision.

He knows that the systems of this life that the world, the flesh and the devil have developed around us have captivated us and have drawn us into a very busy lifestyle. He knows that the careers that we have chosen prevent and even prohibit the time for such things as bible study, and prayer, and family devotions, and church.

And He knows that it is all part of a clever plan that the world, the flesh and the devil have put into place in our lives.

Listen to these words again. We might not say the exact same words, but we will say very similar ones,

'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'

<sup>19</sup> And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.'

<sup>20</sup> Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'  
(Luke 14:18-20)

Folks, let me say with all urgency that these words are a stern warning. Whether we are saved and just not yielding our lives to Christ or if we are not saved and

make no place for Him, the consequences for our responses will be severe. We dare not continue to refuse to come to the wedding feast of the Lamb.

Someday, in eternity, those who are not saved will look over into heaven and will see others feasting and enjoying the delights from the table of Christ, but they will not be allowed to enter in. They will be told to "depart from Him, for He never knew them".

For those of us who do know Christ as Savior but simply refuse to make time for Him, this is just as stern a warning. Yes, we will be able to dine with Him at His table, but perhaps our joy will not be nearly as good as for those who do make time for Him.

Folks, we dare not follow that path. We not only need to passionately desire to be in Christ's presence, we need to be as this servant and be out in the highways and byways searching for others to bring into His feast. Do you do that? When was the last time and how often do you invite others to come to church, to hear and to feast upon the bread of God's Word.

And take careful note from these words that Jesus wants you and me to reach out even to the most unlikely of souls around us, that we must never discount anyone when it comes to sharing the gospel with them, from the sweetest of old ladies to the meanest of old men, the drunks, the drug addicts.

And what about those folks of other nationalities and color. Do they not need the Lord and His salvation as much as you do!

Listen! I know that when I sit down to dine with Christ at His table, some of all those different kinds of folks will be there. How do I know that? It's because I know that all that those dear ones have to do is simply surrender their lives to the Lord Jesus and He will immediately invite them to sit down.

And you and I ought to be the ones who are carrying that invitation to them. He said,

'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.' (Luke 14:21)

And no, talking to strangers and inviting them to give their hearts and lives to the Lord Jesus is not an easy thing to do, especially if you are shy and unsure about

what you will say. But please take courage and understand that the “servant” mentioned within this parable is first of all, God’s Holy Spirit who will abide within you as you go out to speak to those people. He is the “Servant” who will give you the courage to talk and He will give you the exact words to say if you will simply be willing to take that first step.

Now, before we finish with our consideration of these words, may I remind us that God always has more sweet and inviting truths within His words than we can ever imagine. One of those sweet truths is that our Lord’s banquet must not wait until we arrive in heaven. It can and it really must begin even now, in this life, in our living years. And He tells us about that in the words of John chapter 6 where He says to us,

<sup>35</sup> . . . “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. (John 6:35)

In these words Jesus is saying to us that yes, we do have physical and temporal needs such as hungering and thirsting. And that yes, He will satisfy those needs. But even more needful are our Spiritual needs, our needs for Him and for the Righteousness that He can, and that He will give to us. That He Himself is the fulfillment of everything that we could ever want or need for this life and also for all eternity, that He Himself is the actual “bread” that will satisfy any hunger that we might have, and that He Himself is the actual water that will quench any thirst that we might have. And that we can have that satisfaction even now, before we leave this life and join Him at His great banqueting table in heaven. And He calls to us even now, saying “come and dine with Me”.

His words are such sweet and precious words of truth . . . “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.” Sweet words of truth!

One final note before we close . . . Here in the passage that we have been studying, Jesus went one step further in the call that He was making upon men’s souls. Here in verse 23 of our passage, He said some very mysterious words. He said,

<sup>23</sup> . . . ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:23)

What does that mean, “compel them”? Does that mean that we go out there and drag them “kicking and screaming into salvation.”



No, at least not physically so. But certainly our invitation should be as passionate as it can possibly be. And the Lord willing, we'll talk more about these mysterious words of our Lord in next week's study.

As we close, may I say simply that our Lord Jesus is worthy and is deserving of all the effort we can give. And yes, so are the souls of all those people we might impact with our witness. Their eternity hangs in the balance.

Listen to these words of the Lord Jesus given in Matthew chapter 28,

<sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Let's pray.