

Does God Ever Compel Us Luke 14:15-24

A question as we begin our study of these precious words of scripture today. "Will God ever 'compel' a person to come to Him"? Many believe that God would not and does not! But what do these scriptures tell us about that blessed "truth"?

Here in Luke chapter 14 that I'll read for us in a moment, our Lord gives us a parable that speaks about how He calls people's souls to Himself. But before I read these precious words for us, may I again 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 of a parable.

But folks, I'll say again that with this particular parable, some of the details are so very, very important, and their precepts correlate so well with other scriptures, that I really do need to "dig a little deeper" than just the surface meaning.

So then, with that being said, turn with me again to these blessed words of our Lord given in Luke chapter 14, beginning with verse 15. Here, the Lord Jesus was dining with a group of religious leaders,

¹⁵ When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!" ¹⁶ But he (the Lord Jesus) said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷ 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.' ¹⁸ 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.' ¹⁹ And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' ²⁰ And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹ 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.' ²² And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' ²³ 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. ²⁴For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.' " (Luke 14:15-24)

Here in a simple parable Jesus is giving the mandate of the great commission, to
¹⁹ 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, (Matthew 28:19)

This is the call for all of us to go out into the highways and byways, into our workplaces, into our neighborhoods, into our friendships and especially into our own families, and with great compassion, invite all who will listen to come to the marriage supper of the Lamb, to salvation and to redemption.

And thankfully, as He so often does throughout these scriptures, Jesus also takes the opportunity to give us a special insight glimpse into how His "call to redemption" will be carried forward, how He will not rest until all people have been given the opportunity to receive His blessed salvation.

But also on beyond that, here within these words, Jesus unfolds a mystery for us as He reveals that He will not be tied down to the convenient doctrines that men so often develop, doctrines that seek to wrap the precious scriptural truths up into a tight little bundle of ideas and principles so that we can more easily comprehend them.

I speak specifically about the two strongly held doctrines of "free will" and of "foreordination".

Here Jesus very simply put them all together as one and said to us, let's make this call to redemption work for everyone. And so, in these words, we see where some were "invited" to come to Him and then others were "compelled".

With these words folks, Jesus declared to all who will listen, "There is but one truth and it rises above all of the man-made doctrines, and that truth is that my Father and I love all of the people of this world, and so much so that we will, through "Grace", cross all boundaries of logical thought to bring men and women into the kingdom of God."

May I say all of this again . . . that with the best of intentions, very Godly men will, through diligent study of these scriptures, take God's clearly given word and His plans, and seek to formulate them into tightly woven doctrines so that we who

are less learned in these scriptures can better and more easily understand the otherwise unfathomable truths of God.

And that has been especially so with some of the truths that the Lord Jesus is revealing to us within this parable, truths about "His Will" and about the doctrines that we have come to believe about the "free Will" of man. And here specifically addressing the question about whether or not every person has an absolute right to express their free will as it relates to receiving or rejecting the blessed salvation that the Lord Jesus provides for us.

Here in this parable, the Lord Jesus is presenting each of the precious truths that He wants us to know about His gift of redemption.

Here, Jesus speaks about "inviting" some people to receive His precious plan of redemption. But then also, these words don't stop at that one simple option. These scriptures also tell us that as God calls people to Himself, He may not just invite them, He may "compel" them, and even forcibly so. And also, that that kind of call is given long even before that person is born, even before the foundations of the earth were laid.

But folks, in such lofty matters as these, our minds are so very small. And in our struggle to fathom the depths of God's truth, we sometimes perceive a conflict within all these possibilities. Our small minds especially seem to want to separate out most biblical principles into "either-or" categories. We choose to believe that all things must be either one way or another. And we believe that God must think that way also.

But thankfully, God does not have a small mind like ours and He is not restricted by such boundaries as "either-or." As this parable tells us, God, through "Grace", has the ability to turn our either-or circumstances into an "also".

Plainly put, God is not always limited by a situation or circumstance being either one way or another, but rather, through "Grace" those situations and circumstances might be an "also", or an "and".

For example, some of our Reformed friends insist that God makes all the choices and His calls are specific, absolute and irresistible. But here we see where He also extends "invitations", invitations that some people are allowed to accept or to reject.

May I say that again? Within this parable, there are some men and women, like you and me, who are invited to come to Jesus, but they have the ability to resist His call.

Others do come, of their own will, and then also, there are others who end up being “compelled” to come to Him.

Listen again to these words, and notice how all of our popular doctrines seem to be melded into one, not an either one way or the other, but rather, an also.

¹⁶ But he (the Lord Jesus) said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷ 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.’

¹⁸ 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.’

¹⁹ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ ²⁰ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ ²¹ 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.’ ²² And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ ²³ 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.

²⁴ For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’ ” (Luke 14:16-24)

Again, let me remind us that this parable is speaking of the “marriage supper of the Lamb”, that most special of all events, when we dine with our Lord Jesus at His table in heaven.

This parable is so rich and so filled with Spiritual meaning that I want us to gather all that we can from it today. So, let’s go back and carefully consider each part of it.

And as we begin, may we keep in mind that our God is sovereign, absolutely sovereign in all of the matters of our existence. And within His sovereign plans, He is also providential, inserting His Will into every circumstance of life that takes

place, and by His great “Grace” doing things in a way that we might not easily understand.

And with those thoughts as our guide, let's examine these words carefully, first noticing here that there was one group of people who were initially “invited”, “invited”. And some bible scholars insist that this first group is the nation and people of Israel. And that may be so, because the gospel was sent first to the Jew and then to the Gentile.

But here again, this too might be one of those “alsos”. This invitation may be to the Jews, but also to many others, others like you and me.

But here, with this invitation, it was a specific invitation, to specific people. And as we see, they resisted His call and they refused His special invitation.

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus spoke another time about this special marriage banquet and about the responses to His call. And there He said, “Many will be called, but few chosen”.

Also note here that the Master, though He was angry, was not deterred. He sent His servants out to invite others, and this time, there were many who accepted His grace and mercy.

But folks, there is a lot of room at God's table. There is always room for one more. Listen again!

²² And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' ²³ Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:22-23)

Oh dear Christian, it is God's earnest desire that His house be filled.

And note also within these words that a very important doctrine is being given here. God is very willing to “compel”, to forcibly bring some people into His Kingdom. Does this mean that that group may be resistant and require God's forcible hand? Maybe, and sometimes, but not necessarily!

This may be the “foreordained” group of people, people chosen long before they were born, long before they were ever able to do anything right or wrong.

Which brings another thought to mind. In the Book of Romans chapter 8, God speaks about the “Plan of Redemption” that He designed long before the foundations of the earth were laid. In verse 29, He tells us

²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (Romans 8:29-30)

Within these precious words is another of the mysteries that our bible scholars struggle to explain. It involves the word “call”. It would seem from this passage that all who are called will be saved. But recall that in Matthew chapter 22 Jesus said that “many are called but few are chosen”. Is this a contradiction? No! Not at all! Many of the bible scholars who attempt to explain these mysterious words tell us that God issues two kinds of “calls”, a general “call” and a “specific effectual call”. And it is those who receive the “effectual call” who enter into the kingdom of God.

Again, these truths have within them a special mystery that has not yet been made fully known to the small minds of men. But even so, the promise that God has interwoven into these words is so very comforting to those of us who receive His call because the promise remains that those whomever He calls, He justifies, and those whom He justifies, He also glorifies. This is our guarantee that we who receive Him as our Savior will sit and eat with Him at the great banqueting table of the Lamb!

And these words give me a special peace because I believe that I am probably one of those who would not have made it otherwise. Before I was saved, I lived a wretched lifestyle and I would not have chosen to follow Christ of my own “free will”. I was far too depraved to be able to make that choice. No! God, in His great “Mercy” and “Grace” had to “call” me and then “compel” me to come to Him.

And this brings to mind another scripture verse given by the Lord Jesus, where He said that “no one comes to Me except my Father ‘draw’ them.” And please understand and accept that this word for “draw” is a “compelling draw”, not a gentle one, not a simple “wooing” as some insists it to be. Thanks be to God, the Holy Spirit used whatever force necessary to get me into His kingdom.

So then, within this one parable are most all of the doctrines that have to do with God's "invitation" and "call" to come to Him for salvation and eternal life. And the one unfathomable ingredient that ties together all these seemingly conflicting opportunities for salvation is "Grace", God's indescribably wonderful free gift of "Grace", "Grace" that sometimes defies most all the well-meaning doctrines devised by men. Let me give those to us once more.

In the first group, God invited specific people, but they rejected Him and they received their just punishment. Verse 24

²⁴ For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' " (Luke 14:24)

Then, God issued another invitation, but this time not to specific individuals, but rather this call seems to be of a "general" nature.

²¹ . . . Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, '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 then, for the next group, note that the Master used the word "compel". Listen!

²² And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.

²³ Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. (Luke 14:22-23)

Again, for those people who don't want to accept the fact that Jesus might "compel" someone to come to Him, I encourage them to carefully examine the original Greek word that is being given here. It is clear and it is plain. The word means what it says . . . "compel", and even forcibly so.

And I also encourage those same resistant ones to simply reread the account of the conversion of the Apostle Paul. Paul didn't come willingly.

Again, may I strongly encourage us to not try to always wrap God's truth up into a tight little bundle so that we can easily understand it. We need to fully enjoy the mystery that He will always keep flowing within His precious truth.

Before we close, let me touch again on one more of the emphatic statements God is making within this parable. Here, He strongly warns against our love for and our attachments to this world and to the things of this world.

Here, we see that kind of love and attachment in the busyness, the pressing nature of the things that we own and the events of our days.

And God's word is clear when He tells us that we really cannot serve two masters.

As we can see within this parable, at some point in time, we will be required to make choices. And while we might not fully recognize the serious consequences for the choices that we are making at the moment, we do make choices. The ultimate choice being made will always be a choice between the things of Christ, or the things of this world. As with this first group of people, their choices were in favor of the things of this world, a newly acquired piece of property, or some yokes of oxen, or a new wife or husband who wants us to follow after them.

The warning to us about not loving this world or the things of this world is given to us clearly in 1 John 2. Let me read those words to you.

¹⁵ Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

¹⁶ For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

¹⁷ And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides forever. (1 John 2:15-17)

These words are given to us for our own warning, but they are also given so that we might know what we are up against as God's servants as we go out into the highways and streets and neighborhoods and families to invite them to come to Christ. This world has such a powerful attraction to the souls of men and women.

And satan is so clever with his methods of grabbing hold of us and holding us captive. As I observe the ways of man, I find that "logic" is one of satan's favorite means of controlling us. "Logic"!

By that, I mean that "logic" screams out within a person saying, "but I must tend to my business, that new land I purchased, the oxen I bought".

And it's much the same for us in our day. Our logic loudly calls out to us, "but I need to work to afford the house and the car and the truck that we own. And yes, I know that some stranger at the daycare center is raising my child, but how else are we supposed to pay the bills?"

And sometimes, perhaps often, our logic says to us, "my workplace requires me to work on Sunday, so I have no time for God."

Or our logic says, "but I really don't have time to study my bible or lead my family in devotions. Our family schedules are so messed up. I can barely get myself taken care of."

Before we close today, let me ask each of us, "Do you, do I make excuses to God?"

As Christians, we ourselves are saved, but what about those who are not. What about His call for us to go out and to invite others into His kingdom? Are we too busy, too shy, too uncomfortable or too embarrassed to do that?"

Folks, there are really only two choices that are available to anyone and to everyone. One choice is an eternity in heaven, the other choice is an eternity in hell. We must not make the wrong choice, neither for ourselves nor for others.

And we don't really have to know exactly which of the people out there are simply invited to come to Christ, or who it is that He may eventually compel to come to Him. We need only to be faithful servants who go out and give the invitations. Listen!

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Let's pray.