

The parable of the Great Banquet

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Date: 24 May 2026

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[0 : 00] So let's come back to that passage we read in Luke chapter 14, starting at verse 15.

And then, as I mentioned, Jesus then went on to give a parable about humility, and he told the host to invite those who could not repay him or give him any favor in any way to invite such people to his banquet.

And then after this, one of the guests there said in verse 15, blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God. That's a true statement. But the question is, who will eat bread in the kingdom of God?

Who will feast in the kingdom of God? And this prompted Jesus to give this parable of the great banquet.

[1 : 43] Who will feast in the kingdom of God? Who will be there? So, my first heading as we go through this parable is, come, everything is ready.

Come, everything is ready. Jesus says that a man gave a great banquet.

It's not just a banquet. It's a great banquet. And a banquet in itself is something rich and luxurious. And Jesus says, this is a great banquet. It's on another level altogether. And when it was all ready, it was all prepared.

He sent his servant to tell those who had been invited to come because it was all now ready.

Everything is ready. Tell them to come. It's all ready.

[2 : 49] In those days, it was customary to give two invites. Two invites. People would be invited to come on a certain date to which they agreed to come.

And then on that day, they would be invited to come. A messenger would be sent out to round these homes and would call them to come.

Everything's ready. Therefore, to turn down such an invitation that they had already agreed to, Well, that's quite a disrespectful thing to do.

Especially when we see the excuses they give. I mean, things happen in life, of course. But the parable is aiming at just...

They had no excuse for not coming. So it's quite a disrespectful thing to say that they would come and when the day came, they didn't... They put down some excuses.

[4 : 01] Now, the man in the parable who gives the banquet, he represents God in the parable. And the great banquet, well, that's referring to the kingdom of God.

God. And those who are initially invited are the Jews.

Right from the beginning, God has promised salvation. All the way back to Genesis.

Right in the garden, God makes a promise of one who's going to crush the serpent. And that promise begins to be unfolded all the way through the Old Testament until you have the revelation of Jesus Christ crucified on the cross and risen on the third day.

And the Jews, at this time, they're waiting for this Messiah, this promised Messiah who is going to usher in the kingdom of God.

[5 : 13] And this was their hope. At this time. And God, in His faithfulness, kept His promises.

That's one thing for sure. I will let God down easily, but He will never let you down. Never let me down.

He keeps His promises. God kept His promise. With the coming of Jesus, the kingdom and salvation of God had come.

The apostle Paul writes in Galatians chapter 4 verse 5, But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

And when Jesus Christ came, He preached, repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand. And through His ministry, as we read in the Gospels, He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, He raised the dead, He cast out evil spirits, all things that were written about the Messiah. [6 : 43] Jesus fully obeyed the law and was without sin. And on the cross, before He yielded His Spirit, He cried out, It is finished.

It is finished. That is, the work of salvation is completed. It's done. In the parable, Jesus puts it this way, Come, for everything is ready.

The forgiveness of sins the tickets to the kingdom of God are available, free of charge, to anyone who will believe.

Entry, somebody just slapped myself in the head to just grasp what's available to us. Because we hear these things and we go, entry into the kingdom of God has been made freely available to anyone who believes.

Do you get that? Have you grasped that? It's amazing. The gift of eternal life is freely available now, today, at this moment.

[8 : 27] Somebody in this building can receive it by faith. Right now, in this building, receive it. It's available.

It's his gift to whoever will believe. Please hear carefully.

Forgiveness, entrance into the kingdom of God with eternal life is available to whoever wants it. you can receive it today. What do you need to do?

Turn to Jesus Christ and put your trust in his life, his death, his resurrection to save you from your sins.

[9 : 28] That's it. That's it. Put your trust in him. Turn to him. Come to him and the gift of everlasting life will be yours because everything is now ready.

We're living in the gospel age. We're living in the day of salvation. The Bible says today is the day of salvation. If you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. Okay, second point.

They made excuses. Come, everything's ready. But now, secondly, they made excuses. With such a wonderful gift freely offered, you would think people would be running to Jesus.

But that's not what we see in the parable, is it? When the servant comes to invite them, saying, come, everything's ready, we find that those who were already invited made excuses and never came.

One man said, I just bought a field and I must go and see it. What a feeble excuse. Come on, who buys a field without seeing it, first of all?

[10 : 50] Nobody. The second man's excuse is not any better. He said he just bought some oxen and was going to try them out.

Again, who buys oxen without seeing them first? And can he not try them tomorrow? And the third man says, I just got married so I can't come.

He got married, past tense. I just got married, I can't come. Why? It's not on your wedding day. Why is that a reason not to go?

It's not. Did he not know the date of his marriage and did he not know the date of the banquet when he agreed to it? Sure he did. It's not really an excuse.

It's just, I can't be bothered coming. Someone once said, an excuse is the skin of reason stuffed with a lie.

[11 : 57] One time, Roddy Rankin, the free church minister in Plotten and Kyle had invited my brother Donald to church on Sunday.

None of us went to church. And Donald said, yeah, I'll go just to get rid of him. And he never went. The following Friday or something like that, after work, Donald was heading towards the north west bar in Kyle when Roddy Rankin pulled up in his car and he asked what happened to him.

I didn't see you on Sunday and Donald couldn't think fast enough and he said, I forgot. Not a good one, was it? And Roddy called him out and he said, no you didn't.

No you didn't. There will always be an excuse not to accept the invitation of Jesus Christ.

[13 : 03] Satan will provide an endless list of excuses and reasons not to come. I'll do it later. I'm too busy just now.

I'll think about it. You know. they come. But none of them are valid and God sees through every excuse.

If you believe that the gospel is true that eternal life and the kingdom of God can be yours today, what stops you from receiving the free offer of the gospel?

What stops you putting your trust in Jesus Christ today? every time the gospel is preached an invitation from the Lord has gone out to say you come.

Everything is ready come. Over the course of our lives how many times has the Lord given us that invitation to come?

[14 : 36] how many times has Christ graciously invited us to come? Thirdly, compel them to come.

Compel them to come. The servant comes back and informs the master of their excuses not to come and the master is angry when he hears about it.

Have you ever had someone make a terrible feeble excuse to you about something and you just know, you see right through it. Have that ever happened to you? You just know it's not true.

How do you feel when that happens? When you know deep down it's an excuse you're a bit upset, right? when we reject the offer of the gospel we insult the honor of God.

And as I was thinking about that when I was preparing this sermon I shook my head several times in disappointment.

[15 : 56] Why? Because I remembered several times when I rejected the gracious invitation of the gospel in my life.

And I was thinking to myself how arrogant was I? How ungrateful was I to God? No thanks. Not yet. No, don't want it yet. I want this life. I want this I want this I shook my head at myself. But I thought as well how merciful was God not to walk away from me.

God had every right to walk away from me. Has every right to walk away from us. How merciful was He?

However, the Holy Spirit did warn me on a number of occasions stop hardening your heart. Stop risking God walking away from you.

[17 : 09] So the master of the house instructed his servant to go out to the city streets and lanes and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame. And in the parable, this refers to the Gentiles, non-Jewish people.

The Jews had the promises of God but they largely rejected Jesus Christ as the Messiah. As R.T. Kendall says, we Gentiles become the beneficiaries of covenant mercy after Israel said no to Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

Now, of course, God is still saving Jewish people today and Jewish people are coming to put their trust in Jesus Christ as their Messiah.

Praise God. And there's work and we need to support that work. We need to pray for that work as well. And I personally believe that in Romans it speaks of a time when the Jewish people will return to Jesus Christ as their Messiah in huge numbers.

I believe that time is coming. Praise God there are Jewish Christians today. Praise God there are Jews coming to Christ today. But I believe there's a time coming, according to Romans, as you read through 9, 10, 11, that God is, there's going to be a mass turning amongst them to Christ.

[18 : 42] the poor, the crippled, the blind, etc.

That also implies that the gospel of Jesus is to be freely offered to anyone regardless of who they are. The gospel is to be preached to all people across the globe, to all colors, to all ethnicities, and to all classes.

Because heaven is going to be filled from people from all around the world. God so the master, so the servant informs the master that that's been done, but he says there's still room.

So the master says, okay, go out into the hedges, the highways and the hedges. Earlier he said go into the cities, now he's saying go into the villages and the countryside.

It's interesting if you read through the gospels, Jesus in his ministry went to villages, towns, and cities to preach the gospel. And friends, we are to do likewise.

[20 : 10] We are to do likewise because there are people in villages, towns, and cities who are going to come to this great banquet in heaven through Jesus Christ.

Isn't that wonderful? there are people, towns, and cities who are going to respond to this invitation. As the Lord said to Paul when he was in Corinth, and we read in Acts 18 9, and the Lord said to Paul one night in a vision, do not be afraid, but go on speaking, and do not be silent, for I am with you, and no one will attack you to harm you, for I have many in this city who are my people.

And so he stayed there, we read, and he stayed a year and six months teaching the word of God among them. And friends, I want you to see the heart of God here.

In verse 23, the master of the house, who in the parable is God, wants his house to be filled. Wants his house to be filled.

You see, God is not reluctant to save. Let's get that out of our heads. He wants his house filled. And so this, to me anyway, and I hope for you, should give confidence to go out with the gospel.

[21 : 43] Yes, some people are going to make excuses and not come, but others are going to accept the invite to the banquet, and will come, because God sends us out for that purpose, that heaven will be filled.

and if it wasn't for this, evangelism would be hopeless.

It's not the church.

Believers, you and I who believe, we're the ones who are to go out into the city streets and the lanes and the country highways and the byways and so on.

And we are to bring the gospel to them. And I want you to notice what the master says in verse 23. He says, compel them to come in.

[22 : 58] That's a strong word, isn't it? Compel them to come in. Compel is a strong word. Lord, we are to plead with them to come in Christ, urge and persuade them.

We are to do everything within our power to try and win them over. As the late principal Donald MacLeod once said, we have to awaken sinners.

We have to create the sense of need without which they will never come to Christ. Christ, we have to face them with the truth about themselves. But how we do that is very important.

How we do that is very important. Because the force behind it has to be love, not arrogance, not self-righteousness, not I'm better than you, but I love you.

I care about you. That's the motivating factor. Love is the motivator.

[24 : 15] 2 Corinthians 5, read in verse 11, therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others, we compel others, same word. And then on in verse 14, for the love of Christ compels us, controls us.

It's because we love them. It's because we care about them. Okay, finally, they shall never taste my banquet.

banquet. The master commands the servant to go out and invite everyone to come to the banquet because he wants his house full. But he also gives another reason in verse 24, for I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.

those who were invited but rejected that invitation, God says, shall never taste my banquet.

That is concerning words. These words are terrifying because as John MacArthur explains, bottom line, you will be excluded from the heavenly banquet.

[25 : 34] which means you will not be in the kingdom of God, nor among the blessed, nor among the blessed, nor will you be there at the resurrection of the righteous.

We need to pause on those words for a moment before we dismiss them and think what we're dismissing. Because when God says, you won't get something, you won't get it.

those who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ will not enter the kingdom of God. They will not see it, neither will they participate in it.

And God will give that invitation to another. and those who persistently reject will be lost in hell for all eternity.

We can't keep saying, one day I'll make that commitment, because what if we die today? God says in Genesis 6 verse 3, my spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh.

[26 : 52] But listen to me very carefully today. The invitation to sit and eat at the great banquet in the kingdom of God has been freely offered to you today.

So what say you? Are you going to come? Because everything's ready.

Christ has done it all. He's done it all for you. Everything is ready. We just need to come in faith, believe.

Jesus loves you. And here we have his free offer. Will we take it? Isaiah 55 verse 1, Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters, and he who has no money, come, buy and eat.

Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. why do you spend your money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy.

[28 : 07] Listen diligent to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live.

if we don't get anything of what I said here today, I pray that you get this. Jesus says, come, everything's ready for your salvation.

Come to me. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this beautiful invitation that has been given out to whoever will believe it.

Whatever we come from, whatever we have done, no matter if we have rejected it in the past, you are sending an invitation today to come.

and I pray that your spirit will draw us to come to the Savior, Jesus Christ, putting our trust in him and him alone to save us.

[29 : 33] Let your word not return to you void today, but let it achieve the purpose for which you sent it out. I pray that in all who are here today, one day be at that banquet in the kingdom of God.

Thank you for the gospel, Jesus. Thank you for the work of the Holy Spirit. Amen. We're going to sing Psalm 23.

In closing, Psalm 23, page 229. We'll sing the whole psalm to God's praise. So the Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me.

The quiet waters by. And that verse in verse 3, my soul he doth restore again. Let's sing this to God's praise.

Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want. He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me.

[31 : 31] The quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again.

And me to walk doth make within the path of righteousness.

In for his own name's sake. Yea, though I walk in death's dark fill, Yet will I fear none ill.

For thou art with me at thy road, And staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished.

[33 : 12] In presence of my foes, My head thou dost With oil anoint, And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life Shall surely follow me.

And in God's house forevermore, My dwelling place shall be.

Amen. Amen. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, And the love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with us all. Amen.

Amen.