

Come to the Banquet

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- [0 : 0 0] Now we can turn back to the portion of Scripture we read, the Gospel according to Luke and chapter 14. We can take our text this evening from the end of verse 17.
- Luke 14, verse 17. The end of that verse will be read, Come, for everything is now ready. The parable of the great banquet or the great supper is about what we do with the Gospel invitation.
- When we hear Christ preach and when we hear him freely offered to us in the pages of the Bible, do we accept that invitation? Do we strive to enter into that kingdom?
- Or do we make excuses as to why we can't be Christians? The setting for this parable is an after synagogue or an after church, you could say, lunch at the house of the ruler of the Pharisees.
- And it's a lunch which is attended largely by the religious elite in Judah. The scribes were there. The Pharisees were there. Anybody who was anybody in the religious community in Jerusalem was at this lunch.
- [1 : 1 7] This is where the inner circle of the church were gathering after the service. And Jesus was there in their midst. Why was he there? Well, possibly because he'd been teaching in the synagogue that day and it was a custom to have the teacher invited to the lunch.
- Or possibly because they knew that he was a threat to their system. And in their jealousy they wanted to catch him out. They wanted to discredit his ministry.
- And so Jesus is there at the lunch with them and he doesn't waste time, does he? He doesn't waste time in showing them their hypocrisy and their sinfulness. You see, these people, they think that they're heaven-bound saints.
- And yet Jesus challenges the very foundation that they're basing their lives upon. Jesus is pulling the rug out from under their whole religion. And he calls them to mercy, to humility, to charity.
- And in doing that he implies that these things are completely absent from their lives. The marks of a God-fearing person just aren't there. So what hope then do they have of going to heaven?
- [2 : 3 0] And so Jesus tells a parable of the great banquet. To show who would be in heaven and to show who would not be in heaven.
- And I want us in looking at this parable, first of all, to notice that we have here an invitation. You find that from the beginning of the parable in verse 16, verses 16 to 17.
- And the first thing that we notice is that we are introduced to this man. We're not told much about this man, but that he's a master of the feasts. And all we know about him is that he has prepared this banquet.
- And that he's invited many people to this banquet. Now, when the Jews, and this is important, when the Jews planned a banquet, or a supper, or a party, we might call it, they sent out two invitations.

You would perhaps just send out the one. They sent out two. And the first invitation that they sent was a sort of prior notice invitation. It was kind of like a save the date that you sometimes get for weddings, perhaps.

[3 : 37] And those who were invited would reply to this first invitation, to this save the date invitation. And they would say whether they were going to come or not. Now, when the banquet, perhaps a few months later, or a few weeks later, when the banquet was actually ready, a second invitation would go out.

And this invitation was to tell them to come. You must now come. This was necessary for the second invitation to come at the time of the feast. Because, in these days, people didn't have watches.

And time was, of course, more elastic. But when everything was ready, the second invitation would go out, telling them to come. And that's what you see in this parable. These two necessary invitations.

And the first one, you see it in verse 16. Do you not? Where the man invited many. And the second one, you find it in verse 17, when everything is now ready and the messenger is sent out, the servant is sent out again.

Now, it's this second invitation and the response to that invitation that this parable really is dealing with. Because we see here that the servant goes out.

[4 : 47] And he goes out to those who have already been invited. And we can assume that they have accepted this invitation, their first invitation to this supper. And the message that he's told to proclaim to them is just this.

Come. Come, for everything is now ready. The preparation was now made. The fatted calf had been slain. The food was ready for plating. The wine was ready to pour.

The dining room had been decorated. You had the waiters and the waitresses. And they were standing there to attention. Everything was ready for this banquet. Every preparation had been made for these guests.

And Jesus intends this. In telling this parable, he intends it to be a picture of the gospel call. Come, he says, for all things are now ready.

The gospel has been prepared. It was in preparation from all eternity. And then in due time, Christ died for the ungodly. He set the gospel table, as it were.

[5 : 49] He made every preparation that was necessary for a sinner to be reconciled, to be made right with God. For a man to be forgiven. For a woman to go to heaven.

He did it all. He lived in obedience. He died in sacrifice. He rose in victory and he ascended in glory. He did it all. So that he might say to the world, to me and to you tonight, come.

For all things are now ready. I was once invited to a barbecue. I'm told to bring my own food. But that's not the way the gospel is.

You see, here the preparation is made for you. And there's nothing required of those who are invited. But that you come. That you come to the feast.

Jesus doesn't tell you to go and do this. Or to go and do that. And then to come. That's what other religions will do. That's a great difference between Christianity and other religions.

[6 : 47] They'll tell you, you go to the church. You go to the temple. And then you'll be saved. You do good works. You'll be a good person. And then you'll get to heaven. That's what they'll tell you. But not the gospel.

The gospel isn't go and do this. It is come. For all things are now ready. Come. For the preparation is made. Come, the Father says.

For all things are now ready. I have sent my Son into the world. That they who believe in him might not perish. But have everlasting life. Come, says Jesus.

For all things are now ready. For I have come into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. I have done it all. I have given myself to death in order that sinners might be forgiven.

I have risen from the grave in order that they might have life. I have ascended up to heaven in order that they might get to glory with me. That's what he says. And you know for the Jews in that dining room that day.

[7 : 48] The Pharisees who were sitting there having their food. All things were ready for them too. Christ was coming to the world. The Messiah of the Old Testament prophecies.

He was sitting at the table with them. He was there. And Jesus had shown himself to be the Christ. The Son of God. He had done healings. He had watched many wonders.

He had spoken with the tongue of the learned. They said of him, no man spoke like this man. And all that they had to do was to follow him.

To turn and to be saved. To repent and to believe the gospel. That's the gospel call that went out to them. And isn't it amazing that even this very evening.

That the same gospel call rings out in this church. As rang out over almost 2,000 years ago. In that Pharisees dining room. That the preparation that had been made in that day.

[8 : 49] Is the same preparation that is set before you today. In the Bible. The preparation is made. And so the call goes out from the lips of Jesus.

From the master of the feast. And he says, come. Are you laboring and are you heavy laden? Well, he says, come unto me. And I will give you rest. Are you thirsty? Well, if any man thirsts, says Jesus.

Let him come to me. And drink. Are you poor and hungry? Well, come, says Jesus. Buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Are you unsure? Well, him that cometh unto me, says Jesus. I will in no wise cast out. Come unto me, says Jesus. Because Jesus really is the sum and the substance of this great gospel feast.

Jesus is the bread of life. And so if you miss Jesus, you miss the feast. If you miss Jesus, you miss life. If you miss Jesus, you miss heaven.

[9 : 50] Friend, never was a table set before you like the gospel table. Never was such fair laid before you. You've never seen a banquet like this.

So rich and so eloquent. So lavish and so opulent. A feast which is the gateway to friendship with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. But will you come to the banquet?

Will you come to the banquet? Will you set everything else aside? And will you prioritize this gospel banquet? You've all, I'm sure, been invited to weddings.

And if you're invited to a wedding, you go, don't you? If you can at all go, you go. It's an honor to be invited. So you put it into the calendar and you mark the day.

And you might, if it's on the mainland, you book your plane. Or if you're a woman, you buy your dress or whatever you have to do. And when the day comes, all the preparation has been made by you. And then you go.

[10 : 52] Everything else is dropped on that day. You take the day off work and you go to this wedding. The wedding is given the top priority, isn't it? That's the kind of picture that we have here.

That's what we're invited to. There's a supper that's been prepared and you're invited to come. And the food is laid on the table. The drink is ready to pour. But what are you doing with the invitation?

What are you doing, friend, with the gospel? Have you made this gospel your priority in life? Have you dropped everything that is standing between yourself and Jesus Christ?

Have you accepted this invitation? That's a question. Have you prepared yourself for this banquet? Don't look adulous around you. Have you done it?

Or are you still sitting on the outside? Are you still making your excuses? Because that's the second thing that I want us to look at.

[11 : 53] The second thing that's put before us in this parable. I want us to see the excuses that the people gave for not attending the banquet. You see it from verse 18 downwards.

But they all alike began to make excuses. And what we have in these verses, verses 18 to 20, is the crisis point. The pivotal moment in the story.

Because we see that those who have been invited and those who had signaled their intention to attend, that they've now changed their minds. They're now refusing to go.

They're now making excuses. And what we see when we actually come to consider these excuses is that the excuses are weak, are they not? The excuses are feeble.

They're simply a cover for a deeper problem. They're simply a cover for their hostility to the master of the feast and to his banquet.

[12 : 51] And we're given three examples. Now I'm sure there's many more invited. But we're given three examples of the excuses that were given. To give us, as it were, a cross-section of the examples.

And the first man says, well, I can't come. You see, this man has bought a piece of ground. And he needs to go and see this piece of ground. And fair enough, I suppose, it's legitimate business.

But is it urgent business? Is it a priority? Do you lay all other things aside because of this business? Do you cancel all of your prior commitments?

Because you've got to go and see this land. Is it that important? And what kind of fool buys a piece of land without seeing it anyway? Well, the second man, he's not going to come either.

You see, he's bought five yoke of oxen. And he needs to go and examine them. He needs to go and test them. See if they're fit for the work. And again, legitimate business. A man needs to work.

[13 : 50] He needs to cultivate the ground. He needs to tend the land. But really, again, is this urgent? Is this not the kind of thing that can be put off?

Is this really a priority? To go to look at these oxen? And again, who on earth buys this amount of animals without even testing them to see if they're fit for the work?

Well, the third man, he's pretty definite about it, isn't he? Isn't he? Now, the others, they send their apologies. They're at least slightly apologetic.

But his is a flat refusal. Why? Well, because he's had the privilege of marrying a wife. And she, it seems, now takes up all of his time.

And again, fair enough, a very legitimate business. Proverbs tells us that whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing. And his flat refusal to go is probably an allusion to the Mosaic law.

[14 : 49] That when a man got married, he was given a year off, a year at home. But the problem with this is just that this was a year off, not from social commitments.

It was a year off from military service. From military service. From being for an extended period away from home. And so what we find again is that this is no real excuse.

It's a nonsense excuse. He could have easily gone. But he would not go. He would not go. That's the key. That's the key with all of them. They all could have gone.

But they would not go. Jesus knew in that dining room that the Pharisees and the scribes, that they were making their own excuses for their unbelief.

You see, Jesus was a stumbling block to them. Jesus wasn't what they had expected him to be. He wasn't what they expected the Messiah to be. He messed with their system.

[15 : 49] He didn't say the things that they wanted him to say. He didn't do the things that they wanted him to do. And so they didn't want him. He was shaking things up too much.

And so they backed up their unbelief with reasons. They justified it to themselves. Their own rejection to Christ's gospel.

And they said things like, We know this man. This is not the son of the carpenter. Or not his brothers and his sisters. Well, this is just a man. And a sinful man at that.

Look at him. He breaks the law. He heals on the Sabbath. He doesn't clean his hands and his feet as we do. This man can't be the Christ. We'll continue doing things our own way.

The way we've always done them. We'll continue in our own religion. In our own law keeping. We'll be fine. We don't need this man. We don't need his gospel. We don't need his salvation.

[16 : 44] And Jesus comes in this parable. And he tells them that they, the rulers of the synagogue, that they are no better than these men in the parable making their excuses.

He tells those, the rulers of the church, you are missing the feast. Because of their excuses. Friend, what excuses are you making tonight?

What excuses are you making? And don't tell me that you're not making them. Of course you are. The gospel presented before you. And if you're rejecting that, you have to have some reason to reject it.

You have to have some excuse to put it away from yourself. Because the banquet table, as we've seen, is set. All things are now prepared. And yet for many of you, many of you who I don't know, but many of you, you don't come.

You say to God things like, no. Not now, I can't just now. Another time I will come. Another time I hope to come. I hope to be a Christian in the future.

[17 : 47] And when the time is right for me, I'll come then. But I have too many things to attend to now. Things that are important to me. Things that I have to prioritize in my life. Things that I must do.

Places I must be. People I have to see. I have responsibilities. I have land to look after. Sheep to tend. I have a house to build. I have got a family to raise.

I have to put these things first now. You know, friends, what's striking about most people's excuses to the gospel is that they are actually legitimate things.

That they are good things. That they are proper things that they put between them and the gospel. It isn't because people are murdering or because they are worshipping idols that they can't attend the banquet.

No, it's because they are busy with the everyday, with the run-of-the-mill tasks of life. They avoid the feast because they make these things their priorities.

[18 : 48] Because they make the everyday duties of life and even privileges of life, they make them the focus of their life. And you know, friends, it's not open sin and iniquity which is going to fill hell.

Rather, it's excessive attention to lawful things, to good things. J.C. Reilly put it like this, referring to the song that they used to sing about King Saul and the future King David.

He says, infidelity and immorality will no doubt slay their thousands. But decent, plausible, smooth-spoken excuses will slay their tens of thousands.

And I expect that with you this evening, that your problem isn't hostility to the gospel. But rather it's this excuse-making, procrastinating, putting-it-off spirit.

That's what's keeping you from the feast. That's what's holding you back. Is that what's going to slay you? Is that what's going to send you to hell? Friend, no excuse can justify you in refusing God's invitation.

[20 : 06] No excuse can justify you in not coming to Christ. And oh, how petty your excuses will look in light of the great judgment day.

How petty your excuses are today in light of this great gospel banquet and invitation. How insignificant these things that you are treasuring and that you're putting before God now.

How insignificant they are when you compare them to the one thing that is needful. But when will you see this? When will you realize that God sees through your excuses?

Come, he says to you. Even in light of your excuses, he speaks into your situation. He speaks into your life with all of the things that are clouding your life and your judgment.

And he speaks through these things. And he says to you, come. Forget about these things for now. Come. Come. For all things are now ready.

[21 : 07] Well, thirdly and finally, I want us to consider the reaction of the master of the feast to these excuses. And it's a twofold reaction, as we'll see.

Because the servant, he returns to his master. And he's probably a bit embarrassed with the apologies that have been given, with the excuses that have been given. And he makes this announcement to the master.

He says, master, they're not coming. They're busy. They didn't want to come. The master has made this great preparation. The food is on the table.

The wine is in the decanter. And those whom he has invited have now signaled the final hour that they're not coming. And they're busy. How does he react?

What does the master do now? Well, he's angry, isn't he? And rightly so. He's angry with those who wouldn't come. He's angry with those who have made a conscious decision to avoid the feasts.

[22 : 11] With those fools who've sent their feeble excuses. He sees through the excuses. He sees the enmity in the excuses. He sees their antagonism to himself and to his suburb.

He sees it for what it is. And he reacts really in two ways, in two contrasting ways. He reacts in grace and he reacts in judgment. And first of all, I want us to see that he reacts with grace.

Because the first thing that he does is he sends his servant out to invite other people. You see, God is primarily a positive God. He works positively rather than negatively.

Of course, he works both. But he reacts positively. And what we see here, and what we always see in the Bible and in the history of this world, is that when God is rejected, he moves on.

And that's true on a corporate basis, on a national basis, as well as on a personal basis. When Christ is rejected by a church, by a people, by a nation, he moves on to another church, another people, another nation.

[23 : 19] You know, friends, the Bible makes very clear to us that there is more willingness in God to save than there is in man to be saved. That there is more grace in God to be given than there are hearts in this world willing to receive it.

And so we come to verse 21. And 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 lands of the city and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.

Now, as we've seen, the distinguished guests, they refused to come. Those for whom the feast was made, they had no interest. You see, they didn't see the glory of this feast, nor did they respect the master of this feast.

And so the master sends his servant out again. He sends him out on this urgent task. Go quickly, he says. As if to say, before the food gets cold, before it's all wasted, you go out.

Before all my preparation becomes a waste, you go to the streets and to the lanes of the city and bring the poor and the beggars and the prostitutes. You bring those who look down on by society.

[24 : 35] The outcasts, the sick and the crippled. You bring the deaf and the blind. Anybody who will come, you bring them. You drag them if you have to. Arrange carriages for them if they can't walk.

And so the servant goes out, doesn't he? He does as he's told. And he recruits. And he brings people in. And he comes back with this report in verse 22.

Sir, what you commanded has been done. And yet there is room. Room for more. You see, master, your house is so big.

And your preparation is so great that we could provide for more here. And so we come to verse 23. And the master said to the servant, you go out to the highways and to the hedges and compel them to come in.

My house may be filled. Go out and get more, the master says. My house needs to be filled. And if you've been to the city, if you've been to the streets and to the lanes, you go to the villages.

[25 : 36] You go to the highways and the hedges. It's a Suthi saying. If you've been to Stornoway, well, you go now to back and to point. You go to Ness and to the west side. You go to Lofs and you go to Haras.

You go to all of these places. And you compel them to come. And when you go to the west side, you start down in Borth. Then you move to Shadr and Balanrushal. And you call the people to come.

And you come to Barvis. And you make your way to Bru and to Arnul and to Braga and to Shobost. And wherever they will listen, you call them to come in. And you compel them to come in. You show them both the urgency and the glory of this gospel banquet.

The Pharisees and the Jews, friends, they could reject the gospel as much as they liked. And indeed, they still do. But God's house will be filled.

And not just for those who are religiously respectable. Not just for those who've got the church background and have always been, as it were, on the scene.

[26 : 39] No, what we see in the gospels is that Jesus goes to the multitudes. He goes to Jew and Gentile. He goes to the poor and to the sick. He goes to the outcasts, doesn't he? Remember the accusation that they made about him.

And they said, this man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. That was the accusation. And Jesus wouldn't deny it. It was for sinners that he came. And it was two sinners that he went to.

We find women amongst his followers. We find tax collectors, prostitutes, fishermen, shepherds, those whom the world looked down on. Jesus went to them.

He goes to them and he loves them. And he invites them to come. Oh friends, how we need to learn from Jesus. How we need to learn from the master of the feast and from the servant in this parable.

Because there's a house to be filled, isn't there? There's a church to be filled in Barbas. There's a mansion to be filled in heaven. And we're commanded to go out to the world with this message of the gospel.

[27 : 42] And we're commanded to compel men to come in. To feast at this gospel table. To go quickly to the streets and to the lanes.

To the highways and the byways. And to compel them. To compel them with gracious lies. To compel them with persuasive language. To compel them with their urgency and with their message.

To compel them with this glorious invitation. Friends, we must go. This is something that the church must realize. We cannot sit. Watch the world pass us by.

Watch men and women walk to hell. We cannot do it. People around us are perishing. That's exactly what they're doing. They're going to hell. And they're there even on your very doorstep. Your neighbors.

Your friends. Your family. You're here tonight. And some of you, this is the way that you're heading. On your way to a lost eternity. There's some behind you.

[28 : 40] In front of you. Beside you. And this is their situation. And so knowing the terror of the Lord. We persuade men. We constrain them. We compel them.

We as a church have been entrusted with this commission. To go. To tell. To invite. We read of Mary in another place. That she did what she could.

Are we doing what we can? Are we as activists we ought to be as a church? Are we compelling people to come into this building. And into the kingdom of God? Surely we must.

Because there is a glorious. Marvellous. Wonderful. Provision set aside in the gospel. For any who will come. And so God reacts in grace.

But he reacts in another way too. Doesn't he? He reacts with judgment. We see that in verse 24. For I tell you. None of those men who were invited.

[29 : 37] Shall taste my banquet. You see he's so angry with those. Who've rejected his invitation. What he does is this.

He bars them. From his supper. Now this is very solemn. This is the way in which the master's anger is expressed. The door is closed on these people.

Their opportunity has passed. They're not going to taste of this supper. Should they change their mind tonight. Should they turn up at the gate. Should they bang on the door. Their day is gone. Why?

Well because they would not. They would not come. They hated the master. And they despised his banquet. And they would not come. We have to understand this within the context.

Of the self-confidence of the man in verse 15. Remember what he says. 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.

[30 : 37] Now the statement is undeniably true. What a blessing it will be to eat bread at that table. To sit at the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven.

And to drink with Christ in his Father's kingdom. But this man he expects to be at that supper. He expects the scribes and the Pharisees to be there in heaven.

Of course they'd be there. They were the holy ones. They were the ones who kept the law apparently. They were the ones who made many of the laws. Surely they would be there.

And yet these are the very people. Who think that they are safe. Who think that they are heaven bound. And they are the very people to whom Jesus directs his parable.

To these self-confident religious Jews. You see this remark in verse 15. It's not the remark of a pious Christian.

[31 : 32] But it's the assumption of a blind hypocrite. And Jesus says to them. You say you're going to heaven. But look at your lives. Religious? Yes, certainly. You pray on the street corners.

Of course, everybody praises you. You tie the mint and the cumin. But really, it's all a cloak. Really, you're out for yourselves. Really, the root of the matter is not in you.

Because you see, these were men who liked to have the places of honour. They liked to have all men think well of them. But there was no real humility there. There was no real love. There was no real fruit of the Spirit.

There was no real Christianity in these people. And this is all evidence, Jesus says, that they've neglected the main thing. That they're missing the point. And because they reject the Saviour, they can't be saved.

Because they reject the Lord, they cannot go to heaven. These were people who, in their religion and in their selfishness, had blinded themselves to Christ.

[32 : 34] And Jesus was saying this, that the door was closing on them. The opportunity was passing them by. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, and they were missing him.

And he was now telling them that they carried on this way, that God would bar them from this supper that they so expected to taste of. What a warning, friends.

What a warning for me and for you tonight. We live in a day, do we not, when everybody thinks they're going to heaven. But on what grounds? Biblical grounds?

Well, certainly not. There are no grounds to think that you're going to heaven if you're not a Christian living the Christian life. And perhaps you're here tonight, and you're not a Christian. You'll admit that.

But you think that when you die, you'll go to heaven. Surely you will. You're quite a good person. You've lived a pretty normal life. You've lived as other people do. You try to be kind to your neighbour.

[33 : 33] You try to read the word. Sometimes you come to church. Surely you'll go to heaven. But you know what the problem is, friends? The problem is this, that God knows your heart.

And are you telling me that your heart is clean? Are you telling me that your heart is pure? That it is without sin? God looks at your heart, and he knows your heart. And he knows if your so-called Christianity is real.

He knows whether you come to church out of habit or out of desire. He knows whether you read the Bible in order to take a box, or whether you do it in order to hear God speak.

He knows whether you're just religious, or whether you have a living faith in Jesus Christ. He knows whether you have come to this banquet, or whether in your heart of hearts you're putting up your excuses and rejecting this invitation.

He knows. Can't hide it from him. The Pharisees, they heard so much from Jesus' lips. And God knew what they'd done with it.

[34 : 39] You've heard so much of Jesus Christ. Many of you, have you not? God knows what you've done with it. He knows what you've done with Jesus, what you're doing with Jesus, whether you're accepting him or ignoring him, whether you're believing him or rejecting him.

He knows it. He knows whether you've believed in him. He knows whether you're turning away from him. He knows whether you've given your life to him, or whether you've made your excuses not to.

He knows whether your Christianity is real, or whether it's feigned, whether it's living, or whether it's dead. He knows. And if you continue to reject him, he will close the door on you too.

He will bar you from the feast. Now, we tend to think of this in terms of eternity. When we die, the door closes, and we are barred from the feast. But you know, friends, it's a very solemn truth that God can bar you from the feast because of your rejection, even when you're still living.

Through your continual rejection of the gospel, God can bar you from his kingdom. This happens. People who are so close to faith, perhaps in their early years, perhaps in middle age, and in their own minds, they turn away, they're rejected, and they never come again.

[35 : 56] And they go to their grave that way. Why? Well, perhaps it's because they've been barred from the feast. I wonder if God will bar you from the feast if you continue to reject him.

I wonder if he'll lock you out and not give you any more opportunity. How solemn is that, friends? Some of you are here tonight, and that's your situation.

You're yet to come. You're yet to come in. You're, as it were, sitting on the threshold of the king's palace. And you can almost smell the feast. You can perhaps hear the joy of the people inside.

And you're here tonight, and you hear this gospel invitation, but you've not responded to it. You've not accepted it. You haven't left your street or your land, your highway or your hedge.

You are where you were. Oh, friend, let me encourage you to come. What's stopping you? What's hindering you from coming? Any barriers? Well, they're of your own making, not of God's.

[36 : 58] Any excuses? They're of your own design, not of the Saviour's. Jesus says to you tonight, do you want to know what God says tonight? Do you want to know what Jesus says tonight? Well, he says to you, come.

The Spirit and the Bride say, come. The Church says, come. Your minister, I'm sure, he says, come to you every week. I say, come to you tonight, because everything is prepared.

All things are now ready, and yet there is room for more. God's house is not yet filled. His jewels are not yet all made up. There is room yet at the gospel table, and the captain says, there's room for you, and room for millions more.

But the question I want to leave you with is a question that I have put to you many times already tonight. Will you come? That's what it comes down to. You can blame all sorts of factors for you not being a Christian, but this is what it comes to.

This is what it comes down to you too. Will you come? Will you come to Jesus Christ? Will you come to this banquet, this feast, this gospel that you've been invited to?

[38 : 06] Will you come? Come, friends, for all things are now ready. Amen. Let us pray. Gracious and ever-blessed God, we pray for thy spirit to move men and women to come, to repent, and to believe the gospel.

show them that God is real, that God is calling, and show them that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man cometh unto the Father but by him.

We pray, Lord, for men and women still in their sins, perhaps on the threshold of the kingdom. O draw them as bands of love, with irresistible grace and with an effectual call.

O be gracious to us, have mercy upon us, revive us and awaken us, and forgive us for our sin, for Christ's sake. Amen. Let us sing to God's praise in Psalm 36.

Psalm 36 on page 251. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens.

[39 : 35] Thy truth doth reach the clouds. Thy justice is like mountains great, thy judgments deep as floods. Lord, thou preservest man and beast, how precious is thy grace.

Therefore, in shadow of thy wings, men's sons, their trust shall press. They with the fatness of thy house shall be well satisfied. From rivers of thy pleasures thou wilt drink to them provide.

Because of life, the fountain pure remains alone with thee, and in that purest light of thine we clearly light shall see. Thy lovingkindness unto them continue that they know, and still on men upright in heart thy righteousness bestow.

psalm 36 verses 5 to 10 five stanzas to God's praise. Thy mercy, Lord, is in the heavens. Thy truth doth reach the clouds. thy mercy, Lord, is in thy hands.

Thy truth I faze I content and I judge men keep as is Lord, bow We serve the sun and peace Of precious is thy grace Therefore, in shadow of thy wings Men's arms their trust shall place

[41 : 48] If with the finest hope I own Thou be well satisfied From rivers of thy pleasure's love We'll drink to them from high Because of life the fountain dew Remains alone with thee And in the purest light of thine

We truly light shall see Thy lovingkindness unto them What did you that thee go?

And still for men A bright in heart Thy righteousness bestows I'm just going to invite the two men to lead us in prayer First of all Matthew Hibdage And then Ian Mordom and Colab Lord may we come give you thanks for another opportunity to gather in your house Lord may we come give you thanks for all we have been able to enjoy everything this weekend To contemplate all that has been done in our place to go on Jesus Christ

I give you thanks for how we have been reminded of Christ raised on the cross And to see our means of salvation there Lord we rejoice in your goodness towards us Lord Lord we rejoice in you that if we trust in you that we are adopted into your family Lord we marvel now The guilty sinners as we are We come into a loving relationship to view our heavenly Father Lord we give you thanks for the opportunity to

To sit at your table To remember all that the Lord Jesus Christ has done for us We thank you For this night he is enthroned as Lord in heaven In the seeding of our behalf Lord we have received a stark warning We have received a stark warning this night Lord each of us has been warned of our need to accept the invitation Lord and so Lord in your grace and your mercy we pray that you would open our eyes to this Lord that you would suffer our stubborn hearts Lord that we would heed your call Lord for the evening and see you Lord

[46 : 36] That there would be any who do not know you Lord That they would Dread their knee before you and submit to you Lord that you would give them the air and seek to do so Lord we give you thanks for your servants who have faithfully preached your word Lord we pray your blessing upon us for that Lord we pray that you would just Continue with us Lord That you would bless all that we have received and that you would make us thankful for Lord especially Lord that you would Have us to heed the call of the gospel Lord to pray all this to be forgiven for our sins In Christ's name Amen Almighty God and Father in heaven

We can praise you this night That you are our loving God That you gave your only begotten son That whosoever believes in him should not perish That have everlasting life We are thankful for the free offer of the gospel That has been given even this night And throughout the pulpit of our island And oh Lord we are thankful that we can sing And we can sing as the psalmist did When he said how precious is thy grace Oh Lord let each and every one of us be able to say Amazing grace how sweet the sound O Lord we ask that we would heed the warning that we heard tonight Again and again one word echoed throughout this building And that was come And we marvel O Lord that you are a God who says come to your people

You are a God who wants to speak peace to your people And O Lord as your children When we think of those who are outside of Christ All we can do is bring them to you in prayer And we thank you O Lord that you are a God who hears prayer Lord from the depths to thee I carry my voice Lord do thou hear Unto my supplications voice give an attentive ear O Lord that each one of us here tonight might be able to say That I love the Lord because my voice and prayers heeded here I when I live will call on him who bowed to me is here O Lord we live in a world of trouble Not a week goes past where we do not see in our villages and in our districts The procession of a funeral And O Lord we pray that that would not harden our hearts

But that it might be blessed to us In the sense that we might ask the important questions of ourselves And again we thank you for the offer of the Gospel That was put before every one of us this night And O Lord keep us as Christians from being stumbling blocks From keeping anyone from Christ O Lord we marvel as Christians that we are not what we once were We mourn that we are not what we ought to be But we praise you that we are not yet what we shall be O Lord help us to continue to go on in strength and faith Help us to run the race with full endurance looking unto Christ He is the author and he is the finisher of our faith And as we heard this night none of us has any excuse The Christian has no excuse for slothfulness And those who are outside of Christ have no excuse Your word tells us that if we draw near to you You will draw near to us

So bless us we pray And draw us we pray We thank you for the servants of your Gospel Bless them we pray We thank you for them And even in their tender ages That you would give to them discerning minds That you give to them wisdom And that the seed that they sow Might be watered by the prayers of your people That we might praise your name For days of fruitful harvest in these districts Lord who before us we pray Hear our prayers And forgive us our sins For Christ's sake Amen Amen Well we can bring our worship to a conclusion Sing to God's praise in Psalm 23 Psalm 23 on page 229 Reading from the beginning I sing you the whole psalm together The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie in pastures green

[51 : 42] He leadeth me the quiet waters by My soul he doth restore again And me to walk with me Within the paths of righteousness Even for his own name's sake Yea though I walk in death's dark vale Yet will I fear none ill For thou art with me and thy rod And staffed me comfort still My table thou hast furnished 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 O Psalm to God's praise The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie in pastures green The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie in pastures green He leadeth me the quiet The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie in pastures green

He leadeth me the quiet The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He makes me down to lie in pastures green He leadeth me the quiet The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He leadeth me the quiet The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want He leadeth me the quiet The quiet waters high The quiet waters high My soul he can't restore again My soul he can't restore again And me to walk down me Within the gods of righteousness

