



FAITH AND GRACE CHURCH

LEARNING FROM THE MASTER (JESUS CHRIST- OUR CHIEF CORNERSTONE)

STUDY 21-55 – THE PARABLES OF JESUS - Parable No. 30-The Parable of the Great Banquet

TEXT: Luke 14:15-24

LAST WEEK: The Parable of the Lowest Seat at Feast (LUKE 14:7-14)

LESSONS: -Humility really matters; When we seek to take honor to ourselves, we will always be humbled-if not on earth, then for all of eternity. The promise of exaltation for the humble and humiliation for the proud is one ultimately fulfilled in eternity.

-Do not associate with people on a "what's in it for me?" basis. That is self-centered living; we are called to follow Jesus, and He showed others-centered living.

-It teaches the great importance of looking forward to the resurrection of the dead.

The parable of The Great Banquet (LUKE 14:15-24)

INTRODUCTION

The Parable of the Great Banquet is found in Luke 14:15-24. It is similar to the Parable of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14), but with some significant differences. The story in Luke's Gospel was told at a dinner that Jesus attended. Jesus had just healed a man with dropsy and taught a brief lesson on serving others. Jesus then says that those who serve others "will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (Luke 14:14). At the mention of the resurrection, someone at the table with Jesus said, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God" (verse 15). In reply, Jesus tells the Parable of the Great Banquet.

In the parable, a man planned a large banquet and sent out invitations. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to contact each of the invited guests, telling them that all was ready and the meal was about to start (verses 16-17). One after another, the guests made excuses for not coming (verse 20).

When the master of the house heard these flimsy excuses, he was angry. He told his servant to forget the guest list and go into the back streets and alleyways, the roads and country lane and make them to come. (verses 21-23).

Jesus ends the parable by relating the master's determination that "not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet" (verse 24).

The statement that prompted the parable is key. The man who, in verse 15, looks forward to dining in the Messianic kingdom probably subscribed to the popular notion that only Jews would be part of that kingdom. The parable Jesus tells is aimed at debunking that notion, as the following explanation makes clear:

The master of the house is God, and the great banquet is the kingdom, a metaphor that was suggested by the speaker at the table. The invited guests picture the Jewish nation. The kingdom was prepared for them, but when Jesus came preaching that "the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matthew 4:17), He was rejected. "He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him" (John 1:11).

The excuses for skipping the banquet are laughably bad. No one buys land without seeing it first, and the same can be said for buying oxen. And what, exactly, would keep a newly married couple from attending a social event? All three excuses in the parable reveal insincerity on the part of those invited. The interpretation is that the Jews of Jesus' day had no valid excuse for spurning Jesus' message; in fact, they had every reason to accept Him as their Messiah.

The detail that the invitation is opened up to society's maimed and downtrodden is important. These were the types of people that the Pharisees considered "unclean" and under God's curse (cf. John 9:1-2, 34). Jesus, however, taught that the kingdom was available even to those considered "unclean" (cf. Acts 10). His involvement with tax collectors and sinners brought condemnation from the Pharisees, yet it showed the extent of God's grace (Matthew 9:10-11). The fact that the master in the parable sends the servant far afield to persuade everyone to come indicates that the offer of salvation would be extended to the Gentiles and "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people" (Romans 15:10).

The master is not satisfied with a partially full banquet hall; he wants every place at the table to be filled. John MacArthur's comment on this fact is that "God is more willing to save sinners than sinners are to be saved."

Those who ignored the invitation to the banquet chose their own punishment—they missed out. The master respects their choice by making it permanent: they would not "taste of my banquet." So it will be with God's judgment on those who choose to reject Christ: they will have their choice confirmed, and they will never taste the joys of heaven.

The basic message of the Parable of the Great Banquet could be stated this way: "The tragedy of the Jewish rejection of Christ has opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles. The blessings of the kingdom are available to all who will come to Christ by faith."

The inclusion of the Gentiles is a fulfillment of Hosea 2:23, "I will say to those called 'Not my people,' 'You are my people'; and they will say, 'You are my God.'" God is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9), and "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).