

ALL ARE INVITED Sunday School- April 25, 2010

Unifying Topic: INCLUSION IN COMMUNITY

Lesson Text

I. Who Will Be In The Kingdom (Luke 14:15)

II. What Is Your Excuse (Luke 14:16-20)

III. Everyone Is Invited (Luke 14:21-24)

The Main Thought: So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. 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 hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. (Luke 14:21, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People send flimsy regrets to invitations without realizing that what they missed could have been a fantastic, life-changing event. Who is offering a life-changing event today? God is inviting everyone, anyone, to a banquet of food for the soul, and we had better not miss it!

Lesson Aim: To help students appreciate understand how Jesus lovingly invites all into His kingdom.

Life aim: To teach how Jesus warmly extends His invitation for us to share in the blessings of His kingdom now and for eternity, and to know that we can enter His kingdom by trusting in Him.

14:15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him. Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

14:16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.

14:17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

14:18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs to and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

14:19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

14:20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

14:21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, God out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

14:22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

14:23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

14:24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

HISTORY:

14:1-6 Healing on the Sabbath

A chief Pharisee invited Jesus to a meal on the Sabbath, and Jesus was sitting at the meal surrounded by religionists. They watched Jesus with critical eyes. The word watched (*parateroumeno*) means to observe with a sinister purpose; to look with critical and cynical eyes. They were looking for some mistake or some wrong He might do.

They overlooked what was really needful. The man with dropsy* was not an invited guest; he just appeared. They didn't see the need of this man. He was a reject, an abnormal person who was down and out in society, a man who was in desperate need. There are two serious failures seen in this event.

1. The failure of going about one's business and not reaching out to help the needy. In this case, it was the religionists who were going about their religious business.
2. The other failure is using the needy for one's purpose. The purpose may be to show that one is benevolent, or to ease one's conscience, or to add to one's statistics by bringing them to church. Whatever the case, the motive is impure and regretful.

NOTE:

*Dropsy – The term dropsy is no longer used in medical literature. The condition is swelling caused by edema or water; "swollen arms and legs."

The man stood before Jesus and Jesus was touched by the man's need. Jesus saw a unique opportunity to teach a much needful truth: the truth that healing and helping a needy man is much more important than religious form and ceremony, than religious ritual and rules. "Jesus spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" **v3**. The law said absolutely not. No work whatsoever, not even the healing of a man could be done on the Sabbath. What Jesus did was show that the very object of true religion becomes that healing of man, not form and ceremony, not ritual and rules.

- Religionists are always putting their form and practices of religion before meeting the healing needs of men.
- Religionist will observe his religious worship and form without ever repenting of his sin and turning to God in complete surrender and self-denial. Too often he places his trust in his baptism, religious ceremony, church membership, worship attendance, rules, and regulations, instead of in Christ Himself.

The religionist refused to confess the truth taught by Jesus. Jesus asked them right out if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath, but they kept silent. They knew that it was a no-win situation for them. If they said it was lawful, they'd have nothing to accuse Jesus of. If they said it was not lawful, then they would have to explain why not, and be forced to debate with Him. And no one ever won a debate with Jesus! The religionists failed to see the inconsistency in their belief and behavior. The illustration by Christ was powerful. A man would set aside his religious rule to help his oxen out of a ditch. Why then should a man who was in need, not be put before religious rules? No words are exchanged between the man who is ill and Jesus -- at least Luke does not record any conversation. The man is healed and sent on his way. He goes back to family and home a new man having experienced something of the coming of God's reign. The conclusion is that the religionists were silenced and Jesus brings hope and healing, while his adverse critics bring rules and regulations to those who are seeking the presence of God in their lives. What can any say against what Jesus has just taught if they were truly honest and thoughtful?

14:7-11 Places of Honor

Jesus was still at the feast of the chief Pharisee and the meal begins to get underway. Jesus had also been watching them closely. It was at the dinner; time for everyone to be seated for the meal, and Jesus noticed how some of the invited guests scrambled for the chief seats. Today we usually place the names of the most honored guests at the plates. However, in Jesus' day the highest seat of honor was on the right of the host and the next highest on his left, and so the ranking continued alternating back and forth until the lowest ranked person sat the farthest away from the host. Very simply, the closer one sat to the host, the higher the honor. When Jesus saw how some quickly moved up close to the host, He saw an opportunity to teach the great importance of humility. The phrase "*the chief rooms*" (tas protoklisias) means the chief seats. Jesus began to speak a parable **v7**. Jesus' purpose for the parable is not just to have us focus on the story, but the main principle illustrated by the parable.

This parable is of the "*Ambitious Guest*" invited to a **wedding or marriage feast** which teaches right and wrong ways of inviting people. He adds to what He had said about the Pharisees loving the best seats in the synagogue (Lk.11:43), making it clear that humility comes before true exaltation. Those not seeking promotion are to have the important places in social life. Those who exalt themselves will be abased (*belittled*), and the humble will be exalted (*lifted up*).

Jesus spoke directly to the man who wants recognition, honor, and position. He spoke something that is very practical and should be clearly seen even by the ambitious man who should not sit in a seat that is higher than his position or capability lest a man more honorable enter and replace him. If the ambitious man takes a higher seat, four things are likely to happen:

1. He will be displaced.
2. He will then find all the other seats taken.
3. He will have to take a lower seat.
4. He will be embarrassed.

What the ambitious man should take, is the lowest seat and place of honor. Then three things are likely to happen:

1. His presence is acknowledged by the host.
2. He is rewarded, moved up to a higher seat and position.
3. He is recognized and honored by all, no matter how high or how far from the top the position is.

The point to of the parable is twofold: self-exaltation abases (*belittles*) and humility exalts **v11**. Too many times, we scramble to get to the front of the line, to the top of the heap, to be king of the mountain. But Jesus came and taught us to be servants, to esteem others higher than we do ourselves, to look out for others' interests instead of our own. This parable's point is clearly contrary to the ambitions and behavior of most men. With **Self-exaltation/Pride**:

1. He debases others; treat others as less and lower than himself in order to exalt himself.
 - a. Downplays the person or their ability, position or performance, appearance or acceptance.
 - b. Demeans others, trying to wound and injure, shame, and humiliate.
 - c. Debases other, trying to tear down, hurt, lower, and damage.
2. Acts self-sufficient or is forced to act like they are...
 - a. In control °in charge °very capable °independent °above others
 - b. The great problem with being self-sufficient is that a person feels he does not even need God in his life. He may be religious, but he does not live a changed life that demonstrates a true trust and

dependency upon God for salvation and life.

3. Corrupts morality and justice; exalts himself by governing all things by whatever moves him ahead and gives him the greatest position and recognition. They will
 - a. Lie °steal °cheat °abuse °ridicule °shame °not give recognition °hold others back
4. Lives a life of struggle; always feels torn within to maneuver and outdo others in order to get the highest seat or recognition possible. He seldom knows peace within, no matter the appearance given.

Humility (*tareinophrosune*) means lowliness of mind. When men looked at Christ, they saw the strength of humility through the influence of One Who was perfect in meekness and lowliness of heart. With **Humility/Exaltation**:

1. He walks as a servant to others, always ready and willing to help.
2. He behaves in an unassuming manner, not being showy or pretentious, prideful or haughty, arrogant or assertive.
3. He assumes a spirit of lowliness and submission, or oneness and identification with others, not showing conceit or superiority or being boastful.
4. He possesses a sense of lowliness and unworthiness, to have a modest opinion of himself, knowing that others are just as significant and valuable.
5. He comes to God on a regular basis and confesses his spiritual need and unworthiness.

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" James 4:10.

Humility is a problem to most men. Why? Because the world looks upon humility as a sign of weakness and cowardice. They see a humble person as a person who cowers and cringes before others, as a person who the world takes and uses, misuses, overlooks, bypasses, ignores and neglects. Men fear humility. However, the opposite is true, because humility leads a person to Christ and to conversion; leads a person to realize his full potential; leads them to evaluate themselves, and work at improving to become all that they can and should be; and lastly humility leads one to develop healthier relationships with people. Now, after all said, consider this good part:

1. The humble man will be acknowledged, both by men and by God because of the spirit and energy in serving others, no matter how lowly his position. His putting others first, dedicated to serving and working to help others will be seen and acknowledged by others.
2. The humble man will be rewarded. His presence, energy, and effort will be desired and promoted and placed where he can serve to the maximum.
3. The humble man will be honored by all. He will have lived to serve and help others, therefore, he is exalted and all will rejoice with him.

14:12-14 Who to Invite?

Now Jesus turns to the host of the meal and talks about hospitality. Previously the parable had been spoken to the guests; while this second parable is spoken to the host. *"Don't give a dinner for your friends or family and rich neighbors. Rather invite people who have no possible way of paying you back. Invite the poor and dispossessed and you will be blessed by God in the end" v12-14.* Jesus is not saying that we can "never" have our friends, etc., over. Whether it's a dinner party or donating our time to some good cause, or whatever, our flesh is thinking, (I'll make me feel fulfilled, I'll get something in return, I'll look good doing it, people will like me more, etc.), Jesus says to do the opposite of what our flesh wants.

"And when you do good things, do them secretly, so that no one finds out" Matt.6:1. It's not the activity that is condemned, but rather its purpose. Here, Jesus teaches, that works of charity are better than works of show. The next time you have a social dinner, invite someone who isn't socially acceptable. Stress hospitality towards those who cannot repay you in this life. The 14th verse says, *"And you shall be blessed..."* Look at His Promise with His Word standing as surety. You may not get any dinner invitations after that, but you'll certainly have a good seat at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb! *"...for you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."* This proclaims the fact that God keeps the account of all things and, to be sure, every good thing will be rewarded at the Resurrection, i.e. the Judgment Seat of Christ. Put your name in it!

LESSON:

Luke 14:15 Who Will Be In The Kingdom

14:15 Blessed In The Kingdom

Jesus was still at the feast of the chief Pharisee and His comments prompts a response from one who sat and heard Him. When Jesus mentioned the resurrection (v14), all of a sudden one of the Pharisees broke forth in joyful praise: *"Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" v15.* It was on this same occasion that Jesus taught

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another parable known as the parable of "*The Great Supper*" v16. What the Pharisee meant in his thinking was the Jewish picture of the great Messianic Feast. The Feast was to be given by God for His people when He set up His kingdom on earth. The man saw the glory of the kingdom of God, but failed to see how to get in. He saw himself and the Jewish nation only as being invited to God's Great Supper. No outsider, or Gentile, or serious sinner would ever be an invited guest. Jesus knew what was in the mind of the Pharisee, so He set out to correct his misconception of the Great Supper of God. Note three things:

1. The Great Supper of God will be come; be held.
2. The Great Supper of God will include guests from the highways and hedges of the world, not just Jews.
3. The parable of the Great Supper can apply to Israel in verses 16-22, and to the Gentiles in verses 23-24. Men are saved by responding to God's invitation, and they are lost by making excuses. God is planning a Great Supper where all who accept his invitation will be gathered together. Once the guest list is filled, time will be no more; all things will end. The doors to His banquet hall will be closed forever.

Luke 14:16-20 What Is Your Excuse

14:16-20 The Invitation and The Excuses To The Great Supper

The parable begins: A certain man gives a great supper and extends his invitation to many. It was customary to send two invitations* to a party—the first to announce it, the second to tell the guests that all was ready.

NOTE:

* ¹To the Pharisees, the sending of the first servant to give, extend, or announce the invitation, speaks of the Old Testament prophets, while the sending of the servant the second time, was to tell the guests, "*It is now ready*" and is representative of John the Baptist, the first prophet in over four hundred years, and also Jesus' disciples mentioned in the tenth chapter of Matthew. The invitation is an invitation to salvation. It was first offered to the Jews, who, for the most part ignored it, and then to the Gentiles. Jesus is the servant and the Lord is the heavenly Father. Jesus is calling and God is long-suffering toward man.

Therefore, when all was made ready, the servant was sent out to notify them. It was now time! However, those invited began to make excuses...

1. One had bought a piece of ground, and said he must go see it – Lk.14:18 – Materialism/self-interest.
 - i. Mark 8:36 "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"
2. Another had bought five yoke of oxen, and wanted to test them – Lk.14:19 – Business/self-will.
 - i. Remember that Jesus had called his disciples away from their jobs to follow Him.
3. A third said he had married, and could not come – Lk.14:20 –Family/ self-love.
 - i. Paul the apostle wrote, *1Cor. 7:32-34 ...One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided.*

These three excuses betrayed the fact that they were too wrapped up in the things of the world to be concerned with the things of God. Note that it is not because they could not come to the wedding feast, but that they would not come to the wedding feast. They simply failed to respond to the invitation. This speaks not only the Jews, but to mankind in general who fail to seek out God or respond to Him. The provisions for God's Great Supper have now been secured and are waiting for the guests to accept. The invitation is given more than once. It comes in the future as well as in the past.

Luke 14:21-24 Everyone Is Invited

When the Master of the house heard about these things, he was very angry; thereby quickly sending his servant into the streets and lanes of the city (v21) for his house to be filled. Now God's choice goes beyond what is to be expected at His table. The parable shows a progression of urgency as time grows short. The original guests represent the nation of Israel and the poor, lame, etc. represent the Gentiles and those outside "the system." The Host (God), the One giving the feast offered the kingdom to Israel, but they rejected the offer. So here he moved to a wider circle than before. The servant, having obeyed his Lord, reported that he had invited the poor, maimed, blind and lame and still there was room for more guests (v22). So, the master instructs his servant to extend the invitation to those who did not even dwell within the city.

The Lord of the house then tells his servant to go outside the city into the highways and hedges and constrain (compel) them to come to the feast that the house may be full (v23). The Greek word used is *anagkazo*, "*compel*", force, of inner and outer compulsion, and then weakened, strongly urge/invite, urge upon, or press. There is a compelling

¹ <http://www.gotquestions.org/parable-wedding-feast.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

force about the Gospel when it is preached under the anointing of the Spirit. Many fail to realize that the invitation is from God the Father to his children, and failure to respond constitutes willful disobedience.

Jesus closes the parable in a curious way, almost as if he is voicing the words of the host himself. *"I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet"* v24. It is a sentence that is filled with hurt and anger at rejection. It is dangerous to reject the truth of God. The invitation is full and free, but when people turn willfully away from it, God leaves them to their chosen way of destruction. Today the Lord's servants still have a difficult time in getting enough people to accept the invitation. None of those who had refused the dinner invitation would be welcomed at the Great Supper. As a result, God called us, the Gentiles, (the scum of the earth), to attend His dinner. May we never begin to make the same excuses as those that were made – using our possessions, occupations, or obligations to keep us from Him.

SUMMARY:

²Jesus was invited by a prominent Pharisee (Lk.14:1), (maybe at the house of Simon, the Pharisee). He (Pharisee) invited all the other Pharisees of the city, however, he did not invite any poor or '*less fortunate*' people. Jesus had just healed a man who had dropsy, on the Sabbath. Therefore, it was not the friendliest invitation and He was closely watched for His actions. The feast is supposed to be the place of joy, fun and relaxation, but this feast (Jesus at the Pharisee's house) was different. There seemed a constant tension and conflict between the guest (Jesus) and the invitees (host) (Lk.14:4, 6). The parable of the Great Supper/Feast/Banquet is the third of the lessons,

- First, it was to illustrate humility; it was for the guests who were seeking self exaltation (Lk.14:7-11).
- Second, it was to illustrate selflessness and seeking reward from Heaven, it was for the host (Lk.14:12-14).
- The third lesson goes into the most basic requirement of the feast – Who will be invited in the Kingdom of God? (Lk.14:15-24). The businessman, the farmer, and the married man were invited.

All of them knew about the invitation, but they gave priority to other things in their lives, their refusal had similar undertone, *"Let me finish my important things or relations, I will come some other time!"* These passages give a clear picture of the Lord's great invitation to mankind and the flimsy excuses men give for not accepting His invitation. How often have we heard, *"I cannot come to God, because of my family, parents, wife or children,"* or *"I cannot accept God's invitation because of my business or job, they are far more important at this time!"* A person's business, profession, and affairs must not be allowed to consume his life. God is to be the center of a person's life and God is to be the One around whom all else revolves. Remember, no one or thing, should ever keep us from God.

You can't blame the host for being angry when he hears of these rude and unanimous rejections. The host will not have an empty house at his feast. He will have guests! He invited another guest list: anyone who wanted to come and fill his house so that there was no room for the original guests were welcomed. The list of guests to be invited is identical to the list Jesus had suggested to his Pharisee host in verse 13—those who could not repay him by inviting him in return—the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. Our affection to our work or relationships often proves a stumbling block in our pursuit of God.

The man who initially said, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God" was correct. Those who refused Jesus' invitation to dinner regrettably did not share this man's enthusiasm (albeit superficial) for the kingdom of God and its blessings. The Parable was a direct warning and pronouncement of condemnation on the Pharisees. And is also a message to us, to make sure we are relying on God's provision of salvation, not our own good works or religious service.

Inclusion In The Community

Inclusion simply means to be included. The invitation is First, conveyed to the Israelites, simply as "*come*." Secondly, "*bring in*," directed at the spiritually poor, injured, crippled, and blind, and symbolizing the Gentiles who were without previous access to the truth. We are included. Thirdly, "*compel*," affects an even lower class of people representing the spiritual outer edge of this world. Are you hearing the invitation's call? Jesus invites you now! How important it is to cherish God's offer: His blessings, His way of life, and eternal life in His Kingdom. Examine the excuse that will keep you out.

APPLICATION:

Do you give to be rewarded by others or by God in the future? Are you making excuses to avoid responding to God's call? The time will come when God will stop inviting us, and it will be too late to get into the banquet.

² <http://bibleseo.com/luke/parable-great-feast-luke-141524-bible-study/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>