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The Words, Works, and Person of Christ

The Gospel of Luke

“No Time for the Lord”

April 16th, 2023

Sermon Text: Luke 14:15-24

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 25

Luk 14:12-24 He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. (13) But when you give a feast, invite the

poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, (14) and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

(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 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.’”

The grace and salvation of the Lord in Christ is quite often portrayed in Scripture as a great feast or banquet. For example:

Isa 55:1-2 “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. (2) Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Of course there are many feasts specified in the ceremonial law which the Israelites were to observe.

There are many weddings and associated feasts also, such as this one in the parable of the 10 virgins-

Mat 25:10 And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

And then you have this:

Rev 19:6-9 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (9) And the angel said to

me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Feasts, then, are used very, very often as a picture of the kingdom of God. A king putting on a great banquet out of pure kindness, graciously desiring to bless his guests. And that is what you have here in Luke 14-

(16) But he 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.'

Jesus was at a banquet in the house of a ruler of the Pharisees when He gave this parable. He healed a man there (it was the Sabbath) and this added to the tension. And He had just admonished the guests for positioning themselves in the seats of honor, showing their arrogance.

It was at this point that someone said: “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”

We are not told what this person’s motive was for saying this. Perhaps it revealed that the common assumption among these Jews is that without doubt each of them would enter the kingdom of God. Jesus’ parable is most probably a rebuke of this false assumption.

Luk 14:16-17 But he 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.’”

It was a GREAT banquet. The man giving it is not said to be a king, but certainly he was very wealthy, having many resources and servants. Listen to JC Ryle:

The verses before us contain one of our Lord’s most instructive parables. It was spoken in consequence of a remark made by one who was sitting at the table with Him in a Pharisee’s house. “Blessed,” said this man, “is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” We are left to conjecture as to the object of this remark. It is likely that he who made it was one of that class of people who wish to go to heaven, and like to hear good things talked of, but never get any further.

Our Lord takes occasion to remind him and all the company, by means of the parable of the great supper, that *men may have the kingdom of God offered to them and yet may willingly neglect it and be lost forever.*

We are taught, firstly in this parable, that God has made a great provision for the salvation of men’s souls. This is the meaning of the words, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many.” *This is the gospel.*

The gospel contains a full supply of everything that sinners need in order to be saved. We are all naturally starving, empty, helpless, and ready to perish. Forgiveness of all sin, and peace with God, justification of the person, and sanctification of the heart, grace along the way, and glory in the end are the gracious provisions which God has prepared for the needs of our souls. There is nothing that sin-laden hearts can wish, or weary consciences require, which is not spread before men in rich abundance in Christ.

Christ, in one word, is the sum and substance of the “great supper.” “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.” “My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me” (John 6:35, 55-56).

Ryle, J. C.. Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Luke: A Commentary (Updated Edition) (pp. 326-327). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

Note again: He invited MANY. It was a great kindness and he delighted in doing so. And it was a great privilege to be invited to this event, put on by such a notable and eminent man, to be held no doubt in a great house, served with many servants, the tables spread with the finest cuisine. No doubt such an event had never been seen before. A GREAT banquet indeed. This is the grace of God in Christ.

To be invited then was a great, great kindness and privilege. It was an act of remarkable grace. It would be something like us being invited to (I won't say the White House these days), something like being invited to come to Buckingham Palace for a huge royal feast where you would personally meet the King. All expenses paid. You just needed to come. Surely you would drop everything to go. Here is Ryle once more:

We are taught, secondly in this parable, that the offers and invitations of the gospel are most

broad and liberal. We read that he who made the supper sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, "Come; for everything is ready now."

There is nothing lacking on God's part for the salvation of man. If man is not saved, the fault is not on God's side. The Father is ready to receive all who come to Him by Christ. The Son is ready to cleanse all from their sins who appeal to Him by faith. The Spirit is ready to come to all who ask for Him. There is an infinite willingness in God to save man if man is only willing to be saved.

There is the fullest warrant for sinners to draw near to God by Christ. The word "Come" is addressed to all without exception. Are men laboring and heavy-laden? "Come to Me," says Jesus, "and I will give you rest." Are men thirsting? "If anyone is thirsty," says Jesus, "let him come to Me and drink." Are men poor and hungry? "Come," says Jesus, "buy wine and milk without money and without cost." No man shall ever be able to say that he had no

encouragement to seek salvation. That word of the Lord shall silence every objector: "The one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out."

Ryle, J. C.. Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Luke: A Commentary (Updated Edition) (p. 327). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

But...that is not what these people did.

Luk 14:18-20 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.'

Jesus' hearers would have been shocked to hear of such rudeness and unthankfulness. A great affront to a great and kind man. What most if not all of them did not see, because they refused to see it, is that THEY were the guests who refused the invitation. The invitation of the Lord.

And why did they refuse to come when the Lord graciously invited them to believe in His Son and enter His kingdom? *Because they just didn't have the time for or interest in it.* Christ and His kingdom, this gracious gospel invitation, was really of no value to them at all. The pearl of great price was nothing to them.

What did they value? This world and all that was in it. Excuses, excuses, excuses. And so it is today as well –

How many people today have no time for Christ, no time for God's Word, no interest in remembering Him on the Lord's Day? The answer of course is, *most*.

We have in this part of the parable a vivid picture of the reception which the gospel is continually meeting with wherever it is proclaimed. Thousands are continually doing what the parable describes. They are invited to come to Christ and they will not come. It is not ignorance of the gospel which ruins most men's souls; it is lack of will to use their knowledge, or love of this present world. It is not open debauchery which fills hell; it is excessive attention to things which in themselves are lawful. It is not avowed dislike of the gospel which is so much to be feared; it is that procrastinating, excuse-making spirit which is always ready with a reason why Christ cannot be served today. Let the words of our Lord on this subject sink down into our hearts. Infidelity and immorality, no doubt, slay their thousands, but decent, plausible, smooth-spoken excuses slay their tens of thousands! No excuse can justify a man in refusing God's invitation and not coming to Christ.

Ryle, J. C.. Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of Luke: A Commentary (Updated Edition) (pp. 327-328). Aneko Press. Kindle Edition.

What, then, did Jesus say the man decided to do? Notice first of all this-

Luk 14:21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. **Then the master of the house became angry....**

Nothing incites the wrath of God more than this chief of sins – *man refusing to acknowledge or give thanks to Him. Man living his life as if God were irrelevant.* That is exactly what these wicked people were doing. And this is something every person today needs to look to in their own life. *Is there any way in me in which I am living my life as if God were nothing to me?*

And so the man issues this order:

...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.’

It is quite likely that the first invitees who scorned the banquet represented the Jews. God had extended great privilege to them ever since Abraham, but they had continually spurned His invitations to be His people. They were continuing to do so when Christ stood right before them there in that Pharisee’s home. And so, what the Lord is telling them is that He is now taking His grace, the gospel, *to the people whom they themselves spurned. The poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. People who could offer nothing at all in return. People who knew their poverty.*

(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.’”

Who were these people in the highways and hedges? It is most likely that Jesus had the Gentiles in mind here. We see this thing happening in the Apostle Paul’s words to the Jews –

Act 18:5-6 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with the word, testifying to the Jews that the Christ was Jesus. (6) And when they opposed and reviled him, he shook out his garments and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

As we saw in our study of the Barren Fig Tree, there comes a time when the Lord says, “chop it down.” That is what Jesus is speaking of here – *none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet*. Their opportunity was over. They had spurned His grace for the final time.

But notice this as well – see the incredible, gracious energy by which the Lord seeks His people and do not miss that word – *compels*. *He compels them to come. He sends out His Spirit along with the gospel to His elect, and the Spirit irresistibly compels them to come to Christ in faith.*

If you are a Christian today, there is only one reason why that is so. Apart from this, NO ONE would ever come to the banquet. And that reason is this: God’s Spirit worked mightily in our heart and mind, made us new creations, and gave us the gift of faith. Not only were we made willing to come, *we were compelled to come. The invitation was irresistible, and that is why there is no boasting for us. Salvation is of the Lord.*