

Laying hold on Eternal Life: BY GIVING THEIR LIFE BACK TO GOD

This morning God's Word has a powerful illustration of how we should pray for our families. Remember we are to be Raising Godly Families – One Prayer at a Time.

Open with me this morning to one of the truly great prayers of a father for his son. This prayer is in 1st Chronicles 28.9.

1 Chronicles 28:9 " As for you, my son Solomon, **know the God of your father**, and **serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind**; for the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. **If you seek Him, He will be found by you**; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever. (NKJV)

Now as we turn over to 1st Chronicles 29, let me tell you about David as he prayed for his son Solomon.

David wasn't perfect but he prayed.

David made many mistakes but he always loved the Lord.

David's children may not all have turned out to be saints but he was God's man.

David might have failed here and there as a father – but in God's sight he was a man after God's own heart.

So here is a grand lesson for us as we seek to Raise Godly Families – One Prayer at a Time. Listen to David as he prays that Solomon Gives his life back to the Lord. Please stand as we read 1st Chronicles 29.10-20.

The Lord says David was very special. We wonder how does God figure that? To answer that and to see the larger lesson of giving our life to God back up and look at the entire life of David.

- As a boy King Saul offers great rewards for anyone who would face Goliath. David says keep all that I'll go for the Name of the Lord. (I Samuel 17)
- As a young man David has trophies of his great triumphs, but those he lays before the Lord at the Tabernacle. (I Samuel 21.9)
- At the end of his life David confesses something. While he was winning every battle, conquering and plundering every kingdom around Israel, he had been following a plan. David was storing up all the treasures he could for the Lord! Look at 1st Chronicles 22.14:

Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the Lord one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them.

Did you catch that? David had a fabulously successful 40-year career in two locations (Hebron and Jerusalem 1st Chronicles 29.27), which netted him incredible financial gain. But all the way through his whole heart was the Lord's. So he treasured up all that he could and gives it to the Lord. Here is the tally in terms we can understand in late 2002:

- A talent weighs a hundred pounds. So David says I have saved 100,000 talents of Gold, which equals 5,000 tons of gold. Which equals 10,000,000 pounds of gold, which equals 160,000,000 ounces of gold which totals at Fridays close \$53 BILLION DOLLARS.
- One million talents of silver would be 50,000 tons of silver, or 100 million pounds or over \$7 BILLION DOLLARS.
- So David was the wealthiest man of all time until he gave it to the Lord and Solomon inherited the kingdom. The Buffets, Gates, Fords and Rockefellers all pale in comparison. Most of their wealth is mere paper not gold & silver!

	Ounces	Gold	Silver
Ounce	1	\$327.00	\$4.65
Pound	16	\$5,232.00	\$74.40
Talent (100#)	1,600	\$523,200.00	\$7,440.00
Ton (2000#)	32,000	\$10,464,000.00	\$148,800.00
666 talents	1,065,600	\$348,451,200.00	\$4,955,040.00
100 T. Talents	160,000,000	\$52,320,000,000.00	\$744,000,000.00
Million Talents	1,600,000,000		\$7,440,000,000.00

We just found out one of David's biggest secrets. This is one of the secrets of David's life that is often overlooked. Every part of David's life was devoted to the Lord. His whole life was given to the Lord. Even though he sinned at times, failed at times, and struggled at times, he was supremely devoted to the Lord. Look back at the first few verses of 1st Chronicles 29. Here David reveals his special stash. His secret treasures. These he also gives to the Lord.

If you compare 22.14 with 29.3-4 you can add up that David gave the Lord before his life ended over \$60,000,000,000 in gold and silver. That is an amazing sum for any era of the world, but especially for a shepherd boy! It is almost as if David knew already what Jesus would later promise. He said that those who sacrifice on earth would receive "a hundred times as much" in heaven (Matthew 19:29). That's 10,000 percent – an impressive return!

This changes our whole understanding of treasures. True treasures are what we keep beyond this life. False treasures are what we have only for the moment. Now turn with me to Psalm 49:16-17

Do not be afraid when one becomes rich, When the glory of his house is increased;
For when he dies he shall carry nothing away; His glory shall not descend after
him.

How do we pray and train and lead our children to give their lives back to God? By
praying that they treasure the Lord and see life as their treasure to give back to him.
That chorus we sang last month says it all. Try to repeat it with me:

All I have belongs to you,
For all I have has come from you.
Nothing I own, nothing I possess,
Is by my own hands, its by Your Faithfulness.
So please take this offering,
From a heart of Thanksgiving.
For You've given all I have.

A life given back to God as an offering is exactly the theme of one of the most impactful
books I have read this year. A few weeks ago while on the plane flying to Jordan I was
reading through a pile of books and articles that I save for long stretches of time. In one
sitting of maybe half an hour my heart was stirred by the simple and powerful message
of a small book by Randy Alcorn called **The Treasure Principle**. I would like to share
the 6 key points of this book:

Treasure Principle Key #1: *God owns everything. I'm His money manager.*

- Job 31:24-28 **If I have made gold my hope**, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; 25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; 26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; 27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: 28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: **for I should have denied the God that is above**. (KJV)
- Job 41:11 Who has preceded Me, that I should pay him? **Everything under heaven is Mine**. (NKJV)
- Psalm 24:1 **The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, The world and those who dwell therein**. (NKJV)
- Psalm 50:10-12 For every beast of the forest is Mine, And the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the mountains, And the wild beasts of the field are Mine. 12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you; **For the world is Mine, and all its fullness**. (NKJV)
- Matthew 6:21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
- Matthew 16:27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done."
- Acts 20:35 I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

"When¹ we come to grasp that we are stewards, not owners of our money, it totally changes our perspective. Suddenly I'm not asking, "How much of *my* money shall I, out of the goodness of *my* heart, give to God?" Rather, I'm asking, "Since all of 'my' money is really yours, Lord, how would you like me to invest your money today?"

When I truly realize that God has a claim not on a few dollars to throw in an offering plate, not on 10 percent or 50 percent but *100 percent* of "my" money, it is revolutionary. Suddenly I am God's Steward, God's Money Manager. I am not God. Money is not God. God is God. He is in his place, and I am in mine.

Not only does God own everything, God controls everything. Again, the implications are enormous. I don't have to own everything. I don't have to control everything. It is in better hands than mine. And when catastrophe strikes I can honestly adopt the posture of John Wesley, when he said, "No. The Lord's house burned down. That means one less responsibility for me."

As Wesley did, I must remind myself of both God's role and mine to gain perspective in the face of loss or turmoil. What a life-changing and freeing perspective is God's ownership and sovereignty when the house is robbed, the car is totaled, and the bike is stolen ... and even when the diagnosis is cancer.

When we come to Christ, God puts all his resources at our disposal. He also expects us to put all our resources at his disposal. This is what stewardship-and life-is all about."

Someone² once said, "We're most like God when we're giving." Gaze upon Christ long enough, and you'll become more of a giver. Give long enough, and you'll become more like Christ. Giving jump-starts our relationship with God. It opens our fists so we can receive what God has for us. When we see what it does for others and for us, we open our fists sooner and wider when the next chance comes.

- God says, "If a man shuts his ears to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered" (Proverbs 21:13).
- In Isaiah 58:6-10, God says that His willingness to answer our prayers is directly affected by whether we are caring for the hungry, needy, and oppressed. Want to empower your prayer life? Give.

A TRUE STEWARD AFFIRMS THAT JESUS HAS THE RIGHT OF DISPOSAL. Matthew 19:21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (NKJV) He is the owner, we are only employees. Christ asks that He be above all our treasures on earth be they money or possessions.

A TRUE STEWARD OBEYS WHAT GOD ASKS AND GIVES. Luke 12: 33-34 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NIV)

¹ Alcorn, *Money, Possessions, and Eternity*.

² Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 2001, p.30-32.

A TRUE STEWARD HAS UNRIVALED LOVE FOR CHRIST AS THE DESIRE OF OUR LIFE Luke 14:25-26 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: 26 "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters -- yes, even his own life -- he cannot be my disciple. (NIV) Matthew 10:37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. (NKJV)

A TRUE STEWARD HAS UNRESERVED SURRENDER FOR CHRIST Luke 14:33 "So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (NKJV)
THIS DEALS WITH PERSONAL POSSESSIONS!

A TRUE STEWARD AFFIRMS ALL WE HAVE HAS COME FROM THE LORD 1 *Corinthians 4:7* For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

The believers in Corinth were doing what they pleased with their bodies and their lives. And why not? They said, "It's my life." Paul said, "No, it's not your life. You own nothing, not even yourself. When you came to Christ you surrendered the title to your life. You belong to God, not yourself. He is the only one who has the right to do what he wants with your life-your body, your sexual behavior, money, possessions, everything. You owe him your full obedience."

A TRUE STEWARD AFFIRMS THAT THE LORD WANTS US TO GIVE OURSELVES BACK TO HIM 2 *Corinthians 8:5* And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. (NIV)

This was a very sobering week for me as I immersed myself in this whole topic of God and mammon. The world has two parts: God's and not God's. What ever is not God's is mammon. So anything not given to God becomes mammon...Wow -- that is a thought to ponder. What have we sought to retain the ownership of – is a way we despise the Lord.. If we were to interview the Rich Businessman of Luke 12 we would find that God called him a fool because he thought all that stuff was his. What would he say about his life now? What I had in life was mine temporarily, what I kept to the end I lost forever!

A TRUE STEWARD REALIZES THAT SOME REFUSE TO THEIR OWN PERIL. Luke 12:20-21 "But God said to him, `You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' 21 "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God." (NIV)

Jesus teaches us that some hold on to things with grasping clenched fists and lose them. He advises the way to keep things longer than you can hold your breath. His plan is for us is to open our hands, hold those treasures palms upward and say, " You are the Giver of all that I have. You alone are the Owner of all things. I am Your servant forever. I will be a steward for you of all these possessions. When You want anything back just tell me, they are Yours!" Such an attitude changes us from how much of MY money should I give to how much of HIS money should I keep!

Stewardship is resisting SATAN'S STRATEGY. Since money is one of the essentials of the work of the Kingdom, it is not surprising that the great adversary does all in his power to prevent it from finding its way into God's treasury, and for that he has many tricks in his bag.

1. BY SPENDING: He encourages over commitment in buying: purchasing more than one can afford on time payments, so that there is little left over to give to God.
2. BY UPGRADING: He plays on our competitive instincts and incites us to constantly upgrade our standard of living, so that increases in income are already committed. When John Wesley was earning 30 British Pounds a year, he lived on 26 British Pounds and gave the rest to God. When his salary was raised to 60 British Pounds, he lived on 26 British Pounds and gave the rest to God.
3. BY WAITING: He dries up the fountains of generosity in the heart by suggesting postponement of giving to some future time. The stifling of a generous impulse today makes it easier for us to do the same tomorrow.
4. BY LEVERAGING: He so arranges things that the assets of the generous man become frozen or over-committed, that he cannot give what he genuinely wishes to give. Expanding business too rapidly often demands reinvestment on a scale that leaves little for giving.
5. BY KEEPING IT TO THE END: We live in such an age of uncertainty. Many elderly fear that their savings will be exhausted before they expire. Many others want to pass the wealth on to their children. This causes us to be guilty of undue stacking. We all need to be sure we give all we can in our lifetime, and have the joy of seeing our money work for God. God promises a reward for "deeds done in the body," not out of it. To be generous with God from right motives brings its reward here as well as hereafter.

To be giving and sacrificing is to be Christlike and blessed. It is as wise to prayerfully plan to sacrifice, as it is to think Henry Flagler was wise when he trusted John D. Rockefeller for those few shares at the infancy of his new company Standard Oil. Flagler's shares went on to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars in the 1920's! What a wonderful investment he made. Want to be just as fortunate? Then get Christ's heart for this world, be moved with compassion and ask for the grace of giving and the Lord will work wonders through your treasures given Him of any size!

TAKE MY LIFE # 379

This hymn reflects the stewardship of the godly Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879) who wrote the lines we so often sing without due seriousness of commitment: "Take my silver and my gold, Not a mite would I withhold." It is a matter of record that this hymn was autobiographical.

Frances Ridley Havergal did what she sang. In her writings is this personal testimony: "'Take my silver and my gold' now means shipping off all my ornaments-including a jewel cabinet which is really fit for a countess-to the Church Missionary Society... I don't think I need to tell you I never packed a box with such pleasure." This was giving with hilarity!

HOW DOES THE SACRIFICE OF DEVOTION APPLY TO US HERE AT TULSA BIBLE CHURCH?

TEACH THEM TO GIVE TO JESUS SOMETHING THAT TRULY COSTS DEARLY TO LET GO. 2

Samuel 24:24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. The New International Version

TEACH THEM TO START SACRIFICIAL GIVING TODAY IN ORDER TO LAY UP TREASURES WHERE THEY NEVER GET RUSTED, ROTTED, RUINED OR STOLEN. Matthew 6:19-20

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. The New International Version

TEACH THEM TO SHOW LOVE TO THE LORD JESUS BY INVESTING MY DEAREST TREASURES INTO HIS BODY, HIS PRECIOUS CHURCH. Matthew 26:7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. The New International Version

TEACH THEM THEIR SAVINGS LAST FOREVER WHEN INVESTED IN JESUS CHRIST.

Revelation 3:18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. The New International Version

I. **PRAY FOR THEM TO LAY HOLD ON ETERNITY..** Rewards make an eternal difference.

- . Proverbs 24:11-12 Deliver those who are drawn toward death, And hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. 12 If you say, "Surely we did not know this," Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? **He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?**
- . Daniel 12: 3 And they that be **wise shall shine** as the brightness of the firmament; and **they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.** (KJV)
- . Matthew 19:27-30 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" 28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 **"And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold,**

and inherit eternal life. 30 "But many who are first will be last, and the last first. (NKJV)

Luke 14: 13 "But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 "And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; **for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.**" (NKJV)

II. **PRAY FOR THEM TO LONG FOR HEAVEN.** Life on Earth is for sending building materials to heaven.

A. Heaven is a literal city with individual dwelling places.

0. John 14:2-3 In my Father's house **are many rooms**; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. (NIV)

0. Revelation 21:16 The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long.

B. The Carpenter from Galilee is constructing us individual dwelling places with the materials we send Him.

0. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 **his work will be shown for what it is**, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. 14 **If what he has built survives**, he will receive his reward. 15 If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. (NIV)

C. Those we invest in here will welcome us there!

0. Luke 16:9 I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, **you will be welcomed** into eternal dwellings.

0. 2 Peter 1:11 and **you will receive a rich welcome** into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (NIV)

D. We will sit at meals with other saints

0. Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will **take their places at the feast** with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. (NIV)

0. Revelation 19:9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: **ˆ Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper** of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God." (NIV)

III. **PRAY FOR THEM TO VALUE LITTLE THINGS.** If you are faithful with little things you will be with big things! God is into little things.

Luke 16:11-12 So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12 And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? (NIV)

Luke 19:17-19 "ˆ Well done, my good servant!' his master replied.

ˆ Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of

ten cities.' 18 "The second came and said, `Sir, your mina has earned five more.' 19 "His master answered, `You take charge of five cities.' (NIV)

IV. **PRAY FOR THEM TO TREASURE PEOPLE.** True riches are people who we take with us.

- . 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy. (NKJV)

V. **PRAY FOR THEM TO FLEE IDOLATRY**

- . We can only serve one master: Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. (NKJV)
- . Riches impede genuine faith: Matthew 19:23-24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that it is **hard for a rich man to enter** the kingdom of heaven. 24 "And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (NKJV)
- . Intense longing for things is idolatry: Colossians 3:5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. (NKJV)
- . Greed produces sorrow: 1 Timothy 6:9-10 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. (NKJV)

VI. **PRAY FOR THEM TO SEEK TRUE SPIRITUALITY.**

. GOD SAYS THINGS NEVER SATISFY

- 0. Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 He that loveth silver **shall not be satisfied** with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity. 11 When goods increase, they are increased that eat them: and what good is there to the owners thereof, saving the beholding of them with their eyes? (KJV)
- 0. Isaiah 55:2 Wherefore do ye spend money for *that which is* not bread? and your labour for **that which satisfieth not?** hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye *that which is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. (KJV)

. GOD HATES WORLDLINESS

- 0. James 4:4-5 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy? (KJV)
- 0. 1 John 2:15-17 Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (KJV)
- 0. Revelation 3:17-18 "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked -- 18 "I counsel you to

buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. (NKJV)

GOD WARNS US TO FLEE ANXIETY: Make a list of all the things you need and then start crossing things off. Remembering the One who said, in Matthew 6:25-34 :

- 0. LIFE IS MORE THAN EATING AND EXISTING v. 25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?
- 0. YOU ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO GOD v. 26 "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"
- 0. GOD TAKES CARE OF HIS OWN v. 27-31 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?
- 0. GOD KNOWS YOUR NEEDS v. 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.
- 0. GOD GIVES EACH OF US THE PRIORITY OF OUR LIVES v. 33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.
- 0. GOD ASKS US TO GIVE OUR CARES TO HIM v. 34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof. (KJV)

VII. PRAY FOR THEM TO LEARN DIVINE PRIORITIES.

- E. God wants us fruitful: Matthew 13:22 "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (NKJV)
- F. God wants us unentangled: 2 Timothy 2:4 No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. (NKJV)

God wants no excuses: Luke 14:16-24 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 "and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 "But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 "And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 "Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 "So that servant came and reported these things to his master. 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 here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' 22 "And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23 "Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 'For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' " (NKJV)