

The One Where Nobody Shows Up to the Party
Stories of the Kingdom #10
Luke 14:15-24 | March 12, 2023

PreSermon Comments

- Augmented reality, VR goggles, Pokemon Go...Kingdom Goggles
- Today: Banquet! A very similar parable in Matthew 22, but some differences

Introduction

- Concert last weekend. Talked about it with people, "oh man! I didn't know...I forgot!"
- What if the stakes were higher, like Tax Day (April 15). Cash back...or jail
- What if the stakes were ultimate...like life and death. Eternal life and death?

(big idea) Pay attention, or you'll miss out on the party

Heal the Sick

● Back to the beginning of Luke 14. Jesus in Jerusalem, part of the "feast narratives" in Luke **Luke 14** ¹ One Sabbath, when he went in to eat at the house of one of the leading Pharisees, they were watching him closely. ² There in front of him was a man whose body was swollen with fluid.

- Edema (older term dropsy). Remember this for the parable...

³ In response, Jesus asked the law experts and the Pharisees, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" ⁴ But they kept silent. He took the man, healed him, and sent him away. ⁵ And to them, he said, "Which of you whose son or ox falls into a well, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" ⁶ They could find no answer to these things.

Humble Yourself | vs 7-14

- Then, Jesus notices how they all jockey for position
 - Seats were literally arranged in order of importance
 - Honor/shame culture, they just did openly what we all do privately
- Jesus speaks a "parable"
 - *Imagine the embarrassment of getting bumped by someone more important*
 - *Instead, seat yourself lower so they can elevate you*
 - *Also, don't just invite people who can repay you, invite those who can't repay*
 - **THEN YOU'LL GET REWARDED BY GOD ON THE DAY OF RESURRECTION**

A Confident Man

Luke 14 ¹⁵ When one of those who reclined at the table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is the one who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

- At first glance, what's wrong with what he said? Nothing much.
- But remember, Jesus just did a whole parable about people putting themselves first
 - *Jesus: Remember, don't put yourself first!*
 - *Guy: Oh man, how great it's gonna be for people like me who get into the kingdom!*

The Huge Banquet

Luke 14 ¹⁶ Then he told him, “A man was giving a large banquet and invited many.

- Save the date or RSVP

¹⁷ At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who were invited, ‘Come, because everything is now ready.’ ¹⁸ “But without exception they all began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. I ask you to excuse me.’ ¹⁹ “Another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m going to try them out. I ask you to excuse me.’ ²⁰ “And another said, ‘I just got married, and therefore I’m unable to come.’

- Ancient marriage conventions excused newlyweds from a lot of things, like battle etc.

²¹ “So the servant came back and reported these things to his master. Then in anger, the master of the house told his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the city, and bring in here the poor, maimed, blind, and lame.’

- I am going to throw a party one way or another!

²² “ ‘Master,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, and there’s still room.’ ²³ “Then the master told the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges and make them come in,

- Country roads!

so that my house may be filled.’ ²⁴ For I tell you, not one of those people who were invited will enjoy my banquet.’ ”

(idea 1) God is throwing a party, and he will have a full house

- How do we imagine the idea of the gospel, of being a Christian?
 - *Ask a non-Christian friend of mine?*
- One of the most common ways that Jesus frames it as an invitation to a party
 - *Remember the three parables of LOSTness?*
 - God created a world of abundance and joy, but humanity has believed the lie that he was holding out on us, that there wouldn’t be enough
 - We turn to idols to satisfy us, but their parties always end with the cops
 - Jesus came to get us out of the holding cell, and to bring us back to the real party
 - **GOSPEL**
- In the context of this actual dinner party, Jesus is saying:
 - The religious elites are going to miss out
 - The regular ol’ Jewish folk who trust in him will get in
 - And also, we’re going to go out to the “country roads” and get the Gentiles too

(Idea 2) The party won’t be like many people expect it to be

- I am quite confident that this is Jesus saying to the cocky guy, “how can you be so self-assured that you’re going to be at the Kingdom party at the end of the age?”
 - The Good Place: “Who’s in the bad place that would shock me?”
 - *I’m a good person or I’m an important person or I’m the right kind of person*
- The only person getting into this party is the kind of person who does not presume that they’re getting into the party!
- **ONLY A HEART OF HUMILITY LEADS TO TRUE ASSURANCE**

(Idea 3) God's present kingdom is more important than anything

- The central point of this parable: the kingdom invitation trumps all you have going on
- Some people want to add God as an additional "good thing" they have in their life
 - *Friends, health/fitness, volunteer at kids school, work, and I go to church*
- Jesus says some extreme, hyperbolic things: "Hate your father and mother"
 - Jesus doesn't actually want us to break the 5th commandment
 - But the contrast is really important
- C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity* (paraphrase) Jesus is like the dentist...

(Idea 4) Some of the worst distractions are good things

- These distractions are not bad things
 - Buying a field. Vineyard was a sign of blessing!
 - Five yoke of oxen, way more than was common. Massive productivity!
 - Marriage is a blessing from the Lord
 - Wealth, work, women
- Jesus is highlighting a very real warning about the dangers of money!
 - **1 Timothy 6**⁹ But those who want to be rich fall into temptation, a trap, and many foolish and harmful desires, which plunge people into ruin and destruction.¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, and by craving it, some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.
- Is it wrong to also point out the danger of family idolatry?

Klyne Snodgrass The warning of Luke must be heard: the biggest obstacles to discipleship are possessions and family, but they are also the biggest opportunities for discipleship.

- Money, work, family are some of the greatest places for training in discipleship

(Idea 5) The kingdom invitation comes with a sense of urgency

- The attitude of the party rejects is so laissez-faire
- Jesus told his first hearers "the kingdom is here now"
 - Our lives are short
 - Also, Jesus will return soon
- If you're not a follower of Jesus, please don't put it off another day
- If you *are* a follower of Jesus, let that urgency propel you to share the kingdom message

Questions to Consider

1. Is your vision of the kingdom an invitation to a party?
2. What good things in your life need to be refocused for the Kingdom?
3. How can you cultivate a heart of humility that leads to assurance?
4. Where is your sense of kingdom urgency today?

Scripture Reading

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