

Parables of Luke, Lesson 4, January 28, 2020

Lk. 14:1, 13-24

This story would initially have been received as a laughably impossible scenario.

No such scene could have ever happened in this culture.

To have a great feast prepared for you by a prominent person would be one of the few highlights of your entire life.

Compounding the absurdity exponentially would be filling the table with the riffraff and the outcasts of that society, as Jesus said the rich man did.

1. The build-up of the parable. VV.1, 13-15

Jesus is invited to a luncheon that was planned partly to trick Him into healing on the Sabbath.

This leads to the statement in **V. 15** about that scenario in the kingdom of God where there is going to be a great feast. **Isa. 25:6; Rev. 19:**

The Jews endured endless rituals of legalism that went all the way down to the most minute aspects of hand washing and eating.

Why would they put up with such burdens and tight restrictions?

The more rules they kept, the more they deprived themselves, the more assured they were of that resurrection, so they kept adding more and more.

This is more or less how all religions work; why do people put up with all the rituals and rules and do's and don'ts and restrictions? Because they have the hope of eternal life, a false hope, but it's a hope.

What's wrong with that system, mainly, assuming that God agrees with it!

This man is assuming he's among those going to that banquet, so he makes what amounts to a toast in **V. 15** "I'll drink that!"

Jesus immediately corrects that thinking with this story; effectively, just because you think you're going doesn't mean you are!

Anyone living under a similar misguided assumption needs to know the truth.

Jesus shatters their false hope with a parable.

2. The invitation.

They would have easily identified with every aspect of this story to a certain point.

The invitations to these came in two courses: course number one would have been a verbal invitation given months in advance of the actual event telling them what and where, but not when the event would take place.

The second invitation would bring you the great news that the banquet was ready.

Again, this would be the highlight of a lifetime or at least the year; you wouldn't miss it for anything.

Pharisees loved the banquets, it gave them opportunity to show off, and it was their big thrill in life. Matt. 23:6.

3. The Excuses. V. 18

After the "come and get it", the most bizarre thing happens: the pre-invited and pre-accepting guests refuse to come.

Typically, they would have lived in great expectation of this event: "Will it be this week? Will it be today? Tomorrow? "

"They all alike began to make excuses"; here is where those listening would have said, "surely, this is joke!"

Not going was unthinkable, given the social fabric to that day, and it also would have been a huge breach in social ethics.

To say you would go and then essentially refuse to come was considered fighting words in those days; it would equivocate to hatred and a declaration of war!!

Hundreds would have been invited, but Jesus gives us three sample excuses.

1. Bought a piece of land; why do they need to go see it today? What would they see that they couldn't see tomorrow?

This is absurd.

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2. Bought 5 yoke of oxen. Again, what would you miss if you tried them tomorrow?
3. Married, also absurd; marriage was a long courtship process and you wouldn't have overlapped that banquet with this one.

Why not just bring her?

4. The Inclusions V. 21

Angry would have been an understatement. All this expense, all this work, all this preparation, all this time and expectation, and the response is indifference and disdain.

He's invited the likely and they refused, so now he's going to invite the unlikely.

Those who lived across the tracks, who lived on the other side of town, the socially not so well to do, not running in the circles of this wealthy man.

These are the poor, the impoverished, the "unlikelys."

The story turns from one preposterous idea to another one; that this man would invite people like this.

The Jews prided themselves in being separate from people like this.

"Bring in" – They wouldn't have naturally agreed to attend even if they had been invited because the social norms would have made them think they had no business being there.

The poor would refuse because they had no way of paying this man back, which was expected in this culture.

All the poor are brought in and there are still seats! A really big banquet!

V. 23 The humble Jewish populace was pictured in the poor, but the next group are not Jewish.

This group are the ones not allowed into the city; they are the outsiders.

They would have to be compelled; it's not just against social norms, it's against the law to go into a city or into such a banquet as Gentiles "are you trying to get me arrested??!"

We've gone from the likelies to the unlikelys to the "no-ways".

5. The Exclusions.

V. 24 If anyone made such excuses and refused to attend, they would never get a second chance.

The Jews were the special invited guests, the invitation had been out a long time; they were God's chosen people, chosen to attend His celebration.

Jesus' earthly ministry was the effective second invitation. "Come, everything is ready, My Servant has arrived, the Son of God Himself."

"Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand" The King is here and is offered to them.

If Jesus was the way to the banquet, If He was the door, if He was the truth, they wanted nothing to do with it.

They all said yes to the first invitation, but no to the second one because they refused to accept His Son.

They preferred to die with their pride than to live in humility; they got their wish! **Lk. 13:34**

God's Reaction? What was the reaction of the rich man who was refused? He had every right to be angry; God's reaction is **permanent exclusion. Jn. 3:36**

Who will be in banquet? The ones who know they are unworthy, undeserving, unlikely, the No-Ways.

The tax collector who pounds his chest and says, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Not the Pharisee who says, "God, I think that I'm not like other men..."

Who's going to be at the table? Remnant of Jews, Gentiles and all who are willing to accept God's description of them: "Sinners in need of a Savior."

Who's not going to be there? Not the religious who refuse Christ ("Lord, Lord did we not in Your name work miracles and cast out demons..."), not the prideful who think they know a better way.

Take this parable as a warning. Unless you accept God's invitation to come through Christ, you won't be their either!