

# Parable Of The Great Supper

by Martin G. Collins

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In analyzing the Parable of the Great Supper (Luke 14:15-24), we must consider the two parables that precede it: the Parables of the Ambitious Guest (verses 7-11) and the Feast (verses 12-14). Although all three are spoken at the same time in the same house, Jesus describes three different occasions: a wedding, a feast, and a great supper. It is evident that His entire conversation contains a single main theme.

First, Jesus tells the Parable of the Ambitious Guest, which is about a wedding and the right and wrong ways of inviting people. He adds to what He had said about the Pharisees loving the best seats in the synagogue (Luke 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, and the humble will be exalted (James 4:10; I Peter 5:6).

Then, Jesus tells the Parable of the Feast, giving his host a lesson on whom to invite to a meal. The key to the parable is, "Lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid." If the host invited only his rich friends, of course, he would expect them to offer him like hospitality, but when people act on this basis, they derail true hospitality. Godly hospitality occurs when one serves others while expecting nothing in return (I Peter 4:9).

The Parable of the Great Supper is Jesus' response to a fellow dinner guest exclaiming, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" All three parables deal with the general theme of hospitality, but the last adds humility and self-examination.

1. What spiritual principle did the guest stimulate in Jesus' mind? Luke 14:15.

**Comment:** The Jews thought the Messianic Kingdom would have an earthly prince in whose magnificent and splendid reign they would be delivered from all their oppressors to become the most distinguished and happy nation on earth. They anticipated that time as one of great happiness and joy when even the just ancient Israelites would be resurrected to enjoy the blessings of the Messiah's reign. This guest understands the "resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14) in the common Jewish way and speaks of the special happiness the Jews expected to enjoy due to their arrogant view of their spiritual state. He presumes that only Jews would receive the blessings of the Kingdom. In the parable, Jesus exposes and corrects the ignorance of those who, in their pride, misjudge their true moral condition (I Corinthians 10:12).

2. What does the first lame excuse expose? Luke 14:18.

**Comment:** This excuse raises some questions: Would a Jew buy land sight-unseen? If he had, how could he see what it was like in the dark? Could he not wait until morning to inspect it? Most likely, the man had seen it before buying it, but he was more concerned about his investment than in an invitation to supper. He represents those whose possessions require all their attention. He allows his physical wealth to rob him of spiritual wealth (James 5:1-3; Matthew 6:19-21). People sometimes plead that they must

neglect obedience to God, justifying themselves as so pressed by the affairs of the world that they cannot find time to pray, read the Scriptures, or worship God (Matthew 13:22). This kind of thinking reveals spiritual blindness. God does not allow any excuse for neglecting His way of life, commanding us to seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

3. What does the second lame excuse expose? Luke 14:19.

**Comment:** Unlike the first excuse, this one seems to be an unnecessary act. However, the man's tone is definite and final, even unapologetic in refusing the invitation. He never doubts the validity of his excuse, putting his work first and assuring himself that he has no responsibility to the host (Ecclesiastes 2:22-23; 12:14; I Corinthians 3:9-13). The oxen he wants to test can represent technology. Many falsely believe that advancement in technology equates to human improvement and progress.

This man's conduct shows his inclination to satisfy himself before accepting a friend's invitation. Like all sinners, he was selfish, justifying his own worldliness and sins and refusing to accept God's offer of salvation. He represents those who are so absorbed in their work or hobbies that they set aside no time for prayer, meditation, or the weightier matters of life (Matthew 6:24). What a catastrophe it is when a job, finances, entertainment, or self-centeredness leave us no time for God and self-examination!

4. What does the third lame excuse expose? Luke 14:20.

**Comment:** This is the most insignificant excuse of all, yet such excuses are used frequently. It is amazing that people allow themselves to be excluded from the Kingdom of God with such weak reasons. The man's abrupt, brusque, and impolite excuse is empty of substance and void of thought. He represents those whose domestic cares and responsibilities control so much of their time and interest that they neglect their relationship with God.

Balanced and right marriage and family relationships never keep us from a right relationship with God. Quite the contrary, they enhance and promote it. Nevertheless, Jesus intends to teach us that the love of relatives and friends often distracts our affections from God, preventing us from accepting the blessings that He wants to bestow on us (Luke 14:26-28; 18:29-30; I Corinthians 7:29-33). For instance, some excuse themselves from appearing before God on the Sabbath to worship Him because another family member cannot or does not want to attend.

Jesus pictures God's choice in the kind of guests He desires at His table. The parable shows a progression of urgency as time grows short. The first invitation is conveyed to the Israelites simply as "come." The second, "bring in," is directed at the spiritually poor, injured, crippled, and blind, symbolizing the Gentiles without previous access to the truth. The third, "compel," affects an even lower class of people representing the spiritual fringes of this world.

None of the three invitees has any desire to fellowship, expressing the same willing captivity by the cares of this world. Many fail to realize that the invitation is from God the Father to his children, and failure to respond constitutes willful disobedience. None who so decidedly reject the offer of the Kingdom will be saved (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-31). 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. How important it is to cherish God's offer of the blessings of His way of life and eternal life in His Kingdom and to examine our own dedication.