

BIBLE STORY: THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

Luke 14:15-24

Central Thoughts

- The Great Supper represents forgiveness, eternal life, and salvation in Christ.
- The invitation represents the call of the Gospel to faith in Christ.
- The excuses are all the works-righteous ways that sinners try to save themselves.
- The poor, maimed, lame, and blind represent all sinners for whom Christ died.
- We partake of the Great Supper by hearing Christ's Word and by partaking of His body and blood in the Lord's Supper.

Discussion Questions

Jesus told the parable of the Great Supper following a discussion with the Pharisees about how they only invited to their feasts those who could repay them. He condemned their pharisaical works-righteousness by calling them to "invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:13-14). The Parable of the Great Supper teaches us that the call of the Gospel to faith in Christ is a call of grace and not based on human merits or works.

In response to hearing how they should invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind to their feasts, what did one of those who heard Jesus say?

"Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

Who is the bread in the kingdom of God?

It is Christ, our Savior. To "eat bread in the kingdom of God" is to receive, trust, and cling to Christ who comes to us in His Word and in the Sacrament of the Altar.

Who is the certain man who gave a great supper?

God the Father

What is the invitation to the Supper?

The call of the Gospel to faith in Christ

What is the Supper?

The gift of salvation in Christ that we do not deserve and that we cannot earn

How do we partake of this supper?

By hearing Christ's Word and by partaking of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper

What is proclaimed in the invitation that shows that forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation have been fully accomplished and prepared for us in Christ, without any contribution on our part?

"Come, for all things are now ready"—Jesus has done it all for us!

Who are the first to be "invited" to the Great Supper of salvation in Christ?

The Jews, including the works-righteous Pharisees to whom Jesus was preaching.

What did they all begin to do and what does it mean?

They made excuses as to why they could not come. They rejected the invitation because they rejected Christ and did not believe in Him as their Savior.

What is the first excuse and what does it represent?

"I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it." The Jews misinterpreted the promise made to Abraham about receiving the land. They believed they had earned the right to the land, the property, the real estate. But "the land" or "ground" is about the gift and inheritance of salvation, not about acquiring real estate or property that you believe you have the right to.

What is the second excuse and what does it represent?

“I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them.” The Jews misinterpreted the Law of Moses (the five books of the Law) and its purpose. They believed that the Law showed them how they could save themselves and bring about a prosperous life according to their own desires. But “the five books of Moses” are about Christ and the call to forsake all attempts to manipulate God by your own efforts performed by the Law. The Law is about Christ and the call to repentance, not about acquiring what our hearts desire.

What is the third excuse and what does it represent?

I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.” The Pharisees misinterpreted the gift of a wife and marriage. Marriage and family is about living in Christ and passing on His love and salvation to the next generation, not about serving the appetites and desires of the flesh.

What verb in each of the three excuses demonstrates a works-righteous faith?

“I have bought...” The Jews took Christ out of the promise made to Abraham, the gift of the Law, and marriage, and turned them into ways to acquire what they desired. When you take Christ out of faith, you become self-serving, self-centered, and self-righteous.

How does God respond when one rejects His Son and the invitation of the Gospel?

He is angry when His Son and the gift of salvation is rejected.

What does the Master command after those who made excuses rejected the invitation?

“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.”

Who do “the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind” represent?

All sinners who have been made poor, maimed, lame, and blind by sin.

What does it mean that “still there is room” even after all have been invited?

The promise of grace and salvation in Christ is greater than all sinners who need His forgiveness.

What does the taking of the invitation into the streets and lanes, and the highways and hedges signify?

How the Gospel is to be preached to all people all over the world.

Who will not benefit from the invitation of the Gospel?

Those who reject it in impenitence, self-righteousness, and unbelief

Meditation on the Bible Story

The call of the Gospel invites all of us to see ourselves as poor, maimed, lame, and blind sinners for whom Christ shed His blood for our forgiveness and to give us the gift of eternal life and salvation with Him. The Great Supper of salvation begins now in this life as the repentant, baptized faithful hear Jesus' Word and receive His Supper, and it continues without end in the life that is to come. The promise land, the purpose of the Law, and even why we marry can only be understood and received rightly through faith in Christ. The “land” is not about acquiring real estate for oneself, but about receiving eternal salvation in Christ. The Law is not about how we earn our salvation by our own merits, but about how we are called to repentance for our sin, so that we embrace Christ who has fulfilled the Law for us. Getting married is not about fulfilling the selfish desires of our flesh, but about living in Christ and passing on His love and salvation to our wives and children. Our heavenly Father extends the invitation of the Gospel to us constantly that we might feast eternally with Him, with His Son, and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that will never end.

Prayer on the Bible Story

Heavenly Father, by Your Word and Spirit, teach us to believe that we have been made poor, maimed, lame, and blind by sin, so that we hear the invitation of the Gospel, and run with repentant faith to the Great Supper of Jesus' forgiveness, life, and salvation that never ends; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



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