

Extending The Savior's Invitation

Scriptural Text: Luke 14:15-24

Jesus used this parable to explain His invitation to humanity to receive His salvation. The Bible gives many invitations. We were lost & God has done His part by giving us His Son (**John 3:16**). We were dying to sin & Christ has done His part by dying on the cross for us (**Romans 5:8**). We were ignorant of sin & the Holy Spirit has done His part by reproofing us of our sins (**John 16:7-11**). Despite many invitations by the Divine, man continues to reject this great gift & this great call. We reject the Savior's invitation by making excuses for non-performance. The word "excuse" has several meanings. When we give excuses, then we are rejecting the One who gives the invitation. When we give excuses, then we are refusing the One who gives the invitation. When we make excuses, then we are avoiding the One who gives the invitation. As Christians, we are the servant in this text, who works for the man, who is the Lord, who prepared this great banquet that those who were invited may partake. Therefore, as we go out & invite people to respond favorably, humbly, & obediently to the Master's invitation; if & when they make excuses for not giving their RSVP, then they are not rejecting, refusing, & avoiding us, but rather they are doing this to Jesus.

The Celebration (Luke 14:16-17)

This banquet created by the Master is a celebration. It is a celebration to thank Jesus for His sacrifice. It is a celebration to worship & honor God eternally for all the great things He has done. For this reason, invitations were sent & they were sent in advance. Each person invited had enough time to prepare for the banquet. This is why we all will be without excuse when Jesus comes again. The Lord would not have sent us to invite you to respond to Him if He did not want you to become a part of His divine fellowship.

Not only were these invitations sent, but the invitations were sought as well. This means the servant did the will of the Master by extending His invitation, but the servant also followed up with those whom they invited. As Christians, it is not enough to teach someone the gospel & encourage them to come to Jesus, but we are commanded to follow up with the invitee & challenge them to obey before it is eternally & everlasting too late. Notice some of the Savior's invitations to man today. The Savior invites us to have a life of safety, security, & serenity. Listen to your Bible! In **Matthew 11:28-30**, Jesus said, "**Come unto me, all ye that labour & are heavy laden, & I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, & learn of me; for I am meek & lowly in heart: & ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, & my burden is light.**" The Savior invites us to receive salvation through Him. Listen to your Bible! In **John 6:45**, Jesus said, "**It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, & hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.**" The Savior invites us to a life of service. Listen to your Bible! In **Philippians 2:13**, the Bible reads, "**For it is God which worketh in you both to will & to do of his good pleasure.**" The Savior invites us to surrender our will to His will. Listen to your Bible! In **Romans 12:1**, the Bible reads, "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.**" The Savior invites us to a life of sacrifice & selflessness. Listen to your Bible! In **Luke 9:23**, Jesus said, "**If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, & take up his cross daily, & follow me.**" The Savior invites us to support the spreading of His word. Listen to your Bible! In **Romans 10:14-15**, the Bible reads, "**How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a**

preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, & bring glad tidings of good things!" As Christians, we have accepted the Savior's invitation. Our coming together with saints of like precious faith ought to be a celebration of God's goodness towards us. Our sharing of this joy should be enthusiastic. Therefore, it is time for the redeemed of the Lord to say so (**Psalms 107:2**).

The Complaints (Luke 14:18-20)

In life, whenever there is a celebration, of necessity, there will be some haters; some individuals who will complain about something. The individuals in this text fail to realize how privileged they were to be invited to the banquet of the Master, yet they made excuses for not attending. Unfortunately, people today are no different in the excuses they give for not responding to the Savior's invitation.

The first man had a purchasing excuse. This man bought ground & wanted to see it. No one buys ground without first seeing it. This was a very poor excuse. The second man had a proving excuse. A man bought oxen & wanted to test or prove them. No one test animals after the purchase. An individual would test the animal before the purchase & work them for profit after the purchase. Again, this is another foolish excuse. The third man had a pleasure excuse. He believed he had the perfect excuse. Because he was married, he could not attend. I do not know much about this man, but I am almost certain his marriage did not keep him from other events.

We must be very careful what we use as an excuse for refusing, rejecting, & avoiding the Savior's invitation because God can easily remove our excuses to guarantee faithfulness. If our possessions are the reason we give for not obeying Jesus, then God can take away our possessions. If our jobs are the reason we give for not obeying Jesus, then God can take away our jobs. If our spouses are the reason we give for not obeying Jesus, then God can take away our spouses. Excuses are not acceptable to God at any level. He knows the reason behind every excuse.

The Concern (Luke 14:21-24)

By concern, we are talking about the importance of this text. This is the Lord's response to the excuses. The concern is the Christ's counter to the complaints regarding the celebration. First, we hear the instructions. **"Go out quickly into the streets & lanes of the city, & bring in hither the poor, & the maimed, & the halt, & the blind."** Secondly, we are told that the house is still incomplete. There was still more room at the banquet. As Christians, regardless of how many we may win to Christ, there is always room for more. We should never be satisfied, until all men have come to Christ (**John 12:32**). Thirdly, we must still extend the invitation to all. This invitation requires that we go to reach the goal. In "going," we must go out & invite all to come, regardless of community, regardless of race, & regardless of social status. The goal is to fill up the house of God, which is the church of God, the pillar & ground of the truth (**1 Timothy 3:15**).

Question: Do we make excuses? 1) For not reading our Bible like we should? 2) For not praying like we should? 3) For not attending worship like we should? 4) For not giving like we should? 5) For not fully surrendering to Jesus like we should? 6) For not evangelizing the lost like we should? Remember, God knows the real reasons behind our excuses. Excuses are nothing more than lies in disguise. Never make excuses, but let us resolve, "We will always do our best to be faithful to God by any scriptural means necessary." This will please God & help us to be more than what we have become. Let us not make excuses for failing to extend the Savior's invitation. Let us not make excuses for failing to accept the Savior's invitation.