

Remnant Life Church
August 7, 2016
The Parables of Jesus:
The Great Banquet – Are You In or Out?
Part 1
Luke 14:1-14

Excuses – they’re easy to make; can fit into almost any situation or scenario; come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and levels of believability, but ultimately usually only serve to move you backwards in some way.

Ill – 10 soldiers out on a 24 hour leave and none came back at the appointed time. The Sergeant was furious with them when they were not at morning roll call finally, almost 12 hours late, a single private staggers into the barracks dirty and disheveled. He said...on a date...lost track of time...I missed the last bus...cab I hired broke down...persuaded a local farmer to sell me a horse who died on the way...walked 10 miles to get here. Skeptical but let him off with a reprimand. Over the course of the next 2 hours 8 more of the soldiers came in with the exact same story...date...bus...cab...horse – finally the last man came in and started the story. The Sergeant stopped him not long after he started and said, “Wait, don’t tell me the cab broke down!” “No, Sarge” the soldier emphatically proclaimed, “My cab didn’t break down; it was just with all the dead horses in the road we had a really hard time getting through!”

READ – Luke 14:1-14

This chapter contains 2 parables bracketed by Jesus’s teaching on the Sabbath and the cost of being a disciple.

The Parables of Jesus

- What is a parable?
 - A short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson
 - Allegory – a story where each of the elements of the story represent something else
- The parable was the most often used style of Jesus used
 - The Bible records 39 parables
 - 7 of them listed in all 3 of the Gospels that recount the life of Jesus
- This parable might be classified as one of the lesser known but it carries with it a powerful lesson
- Scholars and pastors have interpreted its meaning in several way from the representation of Israel and their constantly turning their backs on God to the refusal of people to accept the invitation of salvation

Where is Jesus when he shares the parable of this chapter (context)?

- Two unusual elements are present...
- He is having dinner in the home of a Pharisee
 - A dinner invitation from a Pharisee was the golden ticket
 - Acceptance, value, worth – Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19)

- It is taking place on the Sabbath
- The Sabbath law of rest was given by Moses and carried a death penalty if broken (Ex 35:2)
 - The Pharisees seemed to think that this was their best chance of getting rid of Jesus
 - Several times in the Gospels they attempt to make this an issue with what Jesus is doing
 - The law was everything to the Pharisees but they also felt they were not always subject to the same laws that the 'common' man was – one of Jesus' issues with them
 - There were rules for the Sabbath which applied mostly to work and what you could and not do (Ex 23:12)
 - The 7th day of rest (Gen 2:2) in order to focus on worship of God and family
 - No manna on the Sabbath (Ex 16:25)
 - Rules of the Sabbath in Ex, Lev, and Deut.
- This banquet is not a spur of the moment event
 - Every aspect of it would have been carefully planned and controlled
 - The meal is being given (at least to outward appearances) to honor Jesus
 - In actuality it is just another attempt to trap Jesus and give the Pharisees reason to denounce Him or, even better, to have Him killed
 - It is interesting to note that a lot of Jesus' ministry revolved around meals (the importance of feeding not just the body but the soul as well)
 - His first miracle was at a wedding feast (John 2:1-11)
 - On a hillside he fed 5000 and then again later 4000 with just a few pieces of bread and fish (Luke 9:10-17; Matt 15:38)
 - The most famous meal the Last Supper (John 13)
 - Our future even promises the marriage supper of the Lamb (the wedding feast of God and His church) (Rev 19:7-9)
- But this not a relaxed meal filled with laughter; there is actually probably a great deal of tension – not from Jesus but the Pharisees – and it's about to get much worse
 - Luke 14:1 – He was being carefully watched
 - To 'watch closely' means exactly what it says – to stare with intensity
 - The implication in these verses is with the intent to do evil
- They begin to play out their plan by placing a sick man in front of Jesus (14:2)
 - Dropsy known as edema
 - A build-up of fluid most of the time in the extremities causing great swelling
 - Symptomology of a more serious problem with the liver, kidneys, or heart
 - Not pretty and this is not someone who the Pharisees, always concerned with the exterior and outward appearances, would have invited – except as a tool for their plan
 - This man was nothing more to them than bait
 - Of course Jesus has compassion and heals him
 - He confronts them with their lack of compassion for a hurting man because of a law that they would quickly break (14:5)

- Jesus is recorded in Luke and John as having performed 7 miracles on the Sabbath
 - This is the last of 5 in the book of Luke
 - Everything Jesus did was intentional with more in mind than just what was seen
 - Jesus was, every time he healed on the Sabbath, once again exposing the hypocrisy of the religious leaders
 - Jesus cared much more about the hearts of the Pharisees than the observances of law that actually had very little meaning to them
- Here Jesus asks the first of two questions that they cannot answer (14:3-6)
 - Not answering a question, in the rules of religious and political debate of the time, was the same as admitting wrong or conceding the point
 - This would have done nothing to endear Jesus to these egotistical scholars
 - Because they were smart men they would have understood the message behind Jesus' words
 - Having made His point with them about the Sabbath he now turns to the crux of His issue with them – Pride
- This dinner would have had a very exclusive guest list
- Jesus addresses not only what the Pharisees do but the motives of their actions through the first parable of the chapter -
 1. Not taking the seat of honor
 - The banquet tables were U shaped with the host at the bottom of the curve
 - The places of honor were those closest to the host with descending importance as you got further away
 - Jesus would have watched them jockeying for position since social standing is what determined much of what you could do in the community, who to marry, where to work
 - These things should not have mattered to the Pharisees – but they did
 - Jesus speaks of humility and says very pointedly – *“For everyone who exalt himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* (14:11)
 - Jesus is teaching from the words they should know and be living – *Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among his great men; it is better for him to say to you, “Come up here,” than for him to humiliate you before his nobles.* (Prov. 25:6-7)
 - Like many Christians today they know these words in their minds but not in their hearts to affect their actions
 2. Your heart dictates your actions
 - If you are living a life of humility and know that promotion comes from God not man then demonstrate it by what you do
 - Jesus tells them that the poor, the crippled, the “undesirables” should be their concern
 - Inviting the select means you gain your reward on earth; loving the unlovely means your reward is in heaven and everlasting (14:14)

- The tension is mounting because they know He is talking not just with them but to them and about them.
 1. The Bible speaks about pride and humility a great deal
 - Humble and humility – 88 times
 - The words pride, proud, boast, haughty – 216 times (nearly 3x's more)
 - We talked last week about selfishness – which is an outpouring of pride
 2. One of the highest duties of every Christian is to put others before yourself
 - It carries to places that the world tells you that you must exalt yourself
 - Don't buy into that lie! God will promote you!

- Next week we'll look at the second parable that Jesus tells them to warn them against what becomes very easy for most everybody to do – because of pride – make excuses