

Parables – Banquet – myfishbites.com

Read Luke 14.15-24 - Parable of Great Banquet:

Intro

Jesus was at a feast at the home of one of the Pharisees, must have been hard for Jesus because he knew lots of people were watching him, waiting to try and trick and accuse him. But like Psalm 23.5, God prepared a banquet for Jesus in the middle of his enemies and Jesus was faithful, knew what he had to do, why he was there and did it.

Then Jesus healed a man, doing something that people considered wrong as it was a Sabbath. Jesus did care about this Judaic and religious tradition, he just healed the guy saying 'hang on a minute guys, if your child fell down a well on a Sabbath, you wouldn't wait until the next day, you'd help them straight away.' No-one could argue with that.

Then Jesus gave his middle class audience a lesson on not getting humiliated in public.

Then he spoke about not just inviting friends and important people to a meal but inviting the poor, the crippled, the people who couldn't repay. Again, breaking the whole rules about religious posh people eating their meals. These people invited people round who were important but Jesus said you get blessed when you invite round so-called 'unimportant' people.

The Story Itself

This is a story towards people who consider themselves 'worthy' and are given an invitation to God's Kingdom but who reject it for one reason or another. Jesus says that the Kingdom of God is open to anyone, and often it's the people who others consider 'unworthy' that accept. This may also be a warning to Jews with Jesus saying the Kingdom of God is also open to Gentiles.

The Main Points

1. Jesus has prepared a big banquet to which many (all) people are potentially invited. But to go to the banquet you have to be prepared to accept the invitation and to follow the instructions and actually turn up.

The challenge – have you accepted the invitation? If you have, are you fulfilling the instructions laid out in God's Word. Let's not assume we are worthy of anything.

2. The guests were invited when the meal was ready, the host taking great pride in his meal and hoping, wanting people to attend. Then he sent out his invitations, expectantly.

The challenge – God has prepared an amazing banquet – heaven – a place unbelievably amazing. Like when God made us, God has made it good, very good. More than this, God wants you and I to be in relationship with him, he really does. He wants us to attend, he invites us and hopes we'll attend. Will you?

3. The guests expressed disinterest – saying they were busy..

- One had bought a field and needed to go and look at it - One had bought 5 pairs of oxen, had to go and try them - One had just got married, couldn't go

The challenge - let's take a look at Ezekiel 16.49. God is speaking against Jerusalem through Ezekiel. 'This was the sin.. of Sodom.. she was proud and had plenty of food and lived in comfort, but she did not help the poor and needy.' So God was also angry with Sodom because of her injustice, pride, selfishness in not helping the poor and the needy.

There's an application here for us – let's not be too busy or consider other things above God. We must make God our priority and that means getting our hands dirty and helping other people to show God's love. Having new stuff is OK but God is number one. Getting married is great but God is still number one. God's love means nothing to others if we don't show it does it? Then that makes God look bad when in actual fact it's us.

4. The Master was angry when people refused his invitation to the banquet. So he sent his servants out to the streets to find the needy, the lame, crippled, blind, depressed, homeless, alcoholics, drug addicts, thugs, prostitutes.. even then the banquet wasn't full so the Master said, go out into the areas and find more people to fill this banquet.

The challenge – what a picture of God's heart. How God's heart is broken when people reject his message, how he is hurt. We all know what it's like to be rejected, it has to be one of the most deeply painful things ever. Imagine how much worse it is for God.

Think of a time when you were rejected and remember how it felt - maybe you split up with a girl or lad, your friends left you out, there was a social and you were forgotten, you went to a party and felt left out.

God's answer wasn't to sit around and waste a good party. No way, the Master sent his people out to tell others about this great banquet, out to the streets, the people who were hurting and considered worthless. These people hear the offer, couldn't believe it was true, accepted and arrived at this amazing banquet, no doubt their eyes were popping out!

But it didn't end there. The banquet wasn't full so the Master said 'go' (Mt 28.19) and spread the message about this amazing banquet, tell all people and only when the banquet is full can we start the banquet properly.

You know, God's Kingdom will be filled with people from every tribe, nation and tongue. Not until this is fulfilled will Jesus return. You want to speed Jesus' return to the earth? Then get out there and take the message of hope, the Gospel to people of every tribe, tongue and nation, to everyone who is on the streets and beyond. God's house will be full, what a privilege to be able to share in this!

Finally

A big thing is said by the Master – 'none of those who I invited first will eat with me.'

So here we learn that there are some people who will not get into God's Kingdom. God's kindness extends almost infinitely, but not quite. We must be very careful to give others repeated opportunities to respond to God. We must also be warned that God does not necessarily knock on our 'door' forever..