

INVITED BUT EXCLUDED

Luke 14:15-24

Surveys/Polls => As I consider the implications of the many, popular surveys,
one of many thoughts that has crossed my mind:

*People don't always say what they mean;
nor do they always mean what they say!"*

Meadville: "Desire for Bible Study"

None available—"if only there were!"

But people didn't come—other factors were more important.

They weren't as hungry as they claimed to be.

THAT'S THE PHARISEES' SITUATION as we look in on them!

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARABLE

14:15

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

E: 14:15 => C: 14:13-14

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

One of the invited has been listening as Jesus warns them
about the danger of seeking first place for yourself,
of seeking personal prestige and advantage.

He responds. **This is a *diversionary* tactic.**

He wants to change the subject.

He uses *religious words* to **get Jesus off their back!**

He wants to be "*religiously correct*".

My travels. "What do you do for a living?" A minister.

O, isn't the gospel wonderful! I just love it!

Or, some other religious words that sound pious
and allow us to get on to a more convenient subject.

That's what this religious leader is doing!

"Well, whatever may be true about seeking first place,

ISN'T IT GOING TO BE GREAT

WHEN WE ALL SIT DOWN TO EAT IN THE KINGDOM?!!!"

Biblical concept: Kingdom viewed as a great banquet all the saints enjoy.

Isa. 25:6: "*On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines.*"

"Won't it be wonderful?!!!" he says.

"We're going to have such a great time
sitting around together with all us righteous folks!!!"

Isaiah indicates that all peoples will be there.

Pharisees don't understand that—but they understand about the banquet. And **THEY**
plan to be there!

They think *they* are included!

He assumes the guest list will be those they include in their invitation –**NOT** the
outsiders!

It's an excuse for inviting the "right" people to their banquets.

He uses "*pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by*" theology to escape the issue.

"Let's get off this discussion about whom we invite to our parties and think about how neat it will be to sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the rest of *our kind*."

Jesus doesn't repudiate it.

He just challenges the assumption that THEY will be the blessed ones:

"Really?!! Then why are you refusing to come to it?!!!"

THEIR INVITATION EXTENDED 14:16-18a Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' 18 "But they all alike began to make excuses.

Local custom: they would send a servant with an invitation in advance and get an indication of the guests' desire to attend.

When the banquet was ready, they would send for the guests.

To accept the invitation and not come was a serious insult.

You didn't do that!

This man's guests indicate a desire to come, but make excuses.

Their excuses are blatantly phony. They're insulting!

God invites His people to come to His banquet.

All the leaders of Israel *profess* a desire to come.

But, when the hour comes, they don't want to go.

The people of that generation, those invited to the banquet, aren't interested.

They're too busy carrying out their own plans!

God's desire doesn't matter to them.

THEIR THREE EXCUSES 14:18-20

1. I BOUGHT SOME LAND

-I HAVE TO CHECK IT OUT 14:18b The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

In middle east, land negotiations took time.

Why wait until after the deal to see it?

The contract required a description of the plot.

The buyer walked every foot of it before negotiating a deal.

They took no chances! **LAND SCHEMES**

Bailey suggests it's **a bold-faced lie and everyone knows it**

- meant to be an intentional insult to the host -
an obviously false excuse.

He could have invented a much better, more believable excuse.

He's making a deliberate statement

that his field is more important to him than the host.

2. I BOUGHT FIVE YOKE OF OXEN

-I HAVE TO TRY THEM OUT. 14:19 "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

Five yoke - too much for one operator - a large business.

Would he buy 10 oxen without checking them out first?

- a major commitment.

Would you make a major vehicle/equipment purchase without checking it out?

This too is **an insult**.

They have a **sellers' field** at the market where oxen can be tried before buying.

He never would have bought them without it!

Again the insult: **the beasts are more important to me than you are!**

[Parallel: sick man in Pharisee's house—animals are more important!]

3. **I HAVE MARRIED A WIFE**

–**I HAVE TO GO TRY HER OUT!!** (Whoops!)

18:20

"I have to spend time with her!"

"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

Bailey suggests: The wedding couldn't have been that day.

He would have been back that evening.

He had already agreed to go.

Now a *woman* (!) is more important to him than the relationship.

This time he doesn't ask to be excused.

He refuses to come.

Reminds me of what many young people say

about giving their lives to the Lord, to serve Him.

"I'll come Lord, but just wait until I find the right girl, get married, enter my career, have a few children, make some money.

Then, I'll be ready!!!"

"Just let me live a little first, Lord!"

THREE OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THEIR THREE EXCUSES:

1. **They're all EXCUSES! 14:18a**

"But they all alike began to make excuses.

They all affirmed that they WANT to go!

Now they start making excuses.

Their plans are more important!

2. **They're all insults!**

3. **They all reveal their interest in material things rather than in spiritual things.**

They may have to give up something!

They aren't ready to make the sacrifice.

They don't have to pay a cent—just accept His invitation!

They won't pay the price.

They don't want to give up what they have: **first place!**

The critical issue:

They're making excuses

because they don't want to go.

The host's response: He is furious!

They're deliberately, and insultingly, rejecting His offer.

They aren't interested in His banquet; they don't mind telling Him so!

THE INVITATION OF OTHER GUESTS 14:21-23 *"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' 22 "Sir," the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.' 23 "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full."*

The host is insistent.
 He plans to fill His banquet.
 He isn't willing to quit until every place is filled.
 He wants a full house!

He makes two attempts–

1. He goes to the outsiders–inside the city. 14:21

Who does he send them to seek?

The poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame.

Remember them?

Those the Lord told THEM to invite to THEIR banquets!

They're the outsiders!

But *they* accept God's invitation.

It's not the "religiously correct" that accept God's offer.

It's the outsiders.

The "down and outers". **Jas. 2:5-6** *"Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom He promised to those who love Him? But you have insulted the poor. . . ."*

The newly invited guests are **considered unworthy** by others, and would consider *themselves* unworthy.

They don't come because they're worthy;

They come because *they're invited*.

A second question:

Why do they look first "inside the city?"

These are still God's people–this is GOD'S CITY.

He's still after Israel.

Many come, but not nearly enough.

THERE'S STILL ROOM!! 14:22 *"'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'*

Second attempt made:

2. He goes to those outside the city 14:23 *"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full.*

*They go onto the highway, out of town, along the road,
 to bring everyone they can find!*

The homeless, beggars, undesireables, outcasts and pagans!

That leaves room for everyone–**EVEN US!!!**

The banquet is filled with this kind of people.

The invitation is extended to **ALL OUTSIDERS!**

It doesn't matter how far down they get, He's after them.

He wants them to come.

That invitation still goes!

THE EXCLUSION OF THOSE WHO REFUSE 14:24 *I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet."*

In the end they're excluded from the banquet.

They lose their chance!

God is waiting. He keeps urging.

BUT, He won't urge forever.

In the end those who reject the invitation are locked out!

It's not being invited that brings blessing

– *it's their response to the invitation.*

APPLICATIONS:

1. For Jews of that generation

Their King is present.

He's ready to establish His kingdom.

This is a warning to those who ought to be looking forward to His coming for the banquet—the kingdom.

Those who should welcome Him aren't interested in God's banquet.

They're about to exclude themselves from His banquet!

2. For outsiders. The original uninvited. US! – God's people today

The host sends His servants to go

– to urge – to compel “outsiders” to come to His banquet.

For His audience that day, the hope was the kingdom

God promised to Israel.

For the church today, our hope focuses on eternity.

Both groups end up in the same place.

The point of emphasis is different.

Whether we focus on God's kingdom or on eternity, . . .

There's room at His banquet for us!

Whether we focus on God's kingdom or on eternity, . . .

the question is the same:

Will we accept His invitation to come to His celebration?

What's your answer? Do YOU want to be included at the banquet?

This is YOUR chance! Don't let it pass by.

Trust Jesus today!

The host sends His servants to go

– to urge – to compel “outsiders” to come to His banquet.

BUT, not all people are interested in the salvation God is offering

Our misconception: if we just explain it well enough

Even Jesus couldn't do that! Some don't *want* to come.

We have to allow them that choice.

We can't make it for them

We aren't responsible for people's rejection of Jesus

Nevertheless, we're still sent to urge people

to join us at His banquet.

Recent studies confirm that while there are many variables, one thing that growing, dynamic churches have in common is: a high priority on evangelism.

This passage was important in the thinking of **D. L. Moody**.

One example occurred when he was 19.

It was common to rent church pews.

One Sunday morning Moody marched down the aisle with a motley crew of outcasts trailing behind him.

He rented four pews and determined to fill them with the spiritually needy.

He literally “went out into the highways, and urged them to come in!”

If people were to be won to Christ,
 believers would have to go after them.
 This was the last text Moody preached (Nov. 23, 1899) in Kansas City.
 He was a sick man, but he went.
 He told his students, "I must have souls in Kansas City."
 As he preached, he felt a throbbing in his chest;
 he held onto the organ to keep from falling.
 He preached the gospel and **50 people came to Christ**.
 He went home and died a month later.
 Moody was committed to going out on the highways and compelling people to come to the banquet.

Are we?

3. For the invited

God still says "Everything's ready. Come!"
 Nothing more needs to be done.
 All you have to do is accept the invitation to come.
 The host is standing at the door inviting YOU to come to His banquet.
 He sends his servants to beg, to plead, to *COMPEL* you to come.
 Yet, people make excuses.
 We focus on other things, the material, our jobs, our families
 – everything but what is ultimately most important:
God's kingdom and eternity.
 How about US? Do we really want to be included at His banquet?