

Fil-Am Community Church
Pastor David Bennett
23 Feb 2014
Luke 14:15-24

“Invitations, No Excuses”

Good Morning Fil-Am it is so good to see so many of you here this morning, didn't want to think we take it for granted that you come here, we do not and are forever grateful that you chose to celebrate with us.

There are a few things I would like to let you know this morning the first is that **you matter to God!**

God said you were wonderfully made

I would also like to let you know that, not only do you matter to God, but **you also matter to us**, and we are so grateful to fellowship with you today.

Please fill out one of the visitor cards so we can follow up with you, send you the sermon notes and see if there is any way we might be able to better serve you.

Ok let's get into the word of God or more importantly let's get the word of God into you!

The message this morning is taken from Luke and is the Parable told by **Jesus of the Dinner**

Jesus used the technique of telling parables frequently in order to reach as many people as possible.

Simply put a Parable is an earthly message with a heavenly meaning, revealing a truth.

Let me see if I can set the stage, Jesus was **invited to a party**, make no mistake about it this was no ordinary party, this was a party thrown by the religious elect, the **Pharisees**. They were the keepers of the law, the ones who were supposed to be setting the example, to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world.

Why would they invite Jesus? They saw him, but they **didn't know him**, they had witnessed his preaching but had never embraced him. They knew he was different from anyone that had ever met; anyone could see he was...

- ✓ special,
- ✓ he was different
- ✓ he performed miracles
- ✓ brought the dead back to life
- ✓ healed the lepers
- ✓ walked on water
- ✓ made the blind to see
- ✓ the deaf to hear
- ✓ he spoke with Authority

Jesus **challenged them**.

- ✓ He challenged them on their desire for position
- ✓ He challenged them on who to bring into their homes

They saw him but didn't know who he was, they were **curious**, they were examining him...

Many of you here today may be **examining church**, you have seen it, but haven't quite embraced it. You are not quite sure what it all about...

The Jews pictured their future kingdom as a great feast with the patriarchs as honored guest, and so Jesus **used this picture** to illustrate the importance of accepting God's invitation to "Salvation's Supper."

Salvation is a **feast**, not a funeral, everything we need has already been provided, all we have to do is accept the invitation, to come and be filled!

Ok for time's sake we are going to try and get back to the parable

We will start at Luke 14:15...

¹⁵ "When one of those who were reclining at the table with him heard this, he said to him, blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the Kingdom of God."

Remember Jesus could **read their mind**, he could see into their hearts, and knew they were examining him, and he responded.

¹⁶ *“But he said to him, a man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many.”*

Ok let me once again set the stage for what is happening at this time...

The party Jesus was invited to was a big one it was a banquet, what typically happened during that time was people would send out invitations to get a **commitment** for the party or event and once they had the required amount of people who confirmed their commitment to come they would then be told, OK now that we have enough **committed people** we will let you know when and where the event will be once we have worked out the logistics first. So once all the arrangements are done I will let you know...

So we will pick up the parable with verse 17.

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...”*

Remember they had **already accepted** the invitations; they had previously made the commitment so the host could now make the preparations for the number that had accepted.

Now pay attention to the excuses they gave...

Excuse Number one...

¹⁸ *“The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’”*

Excuse Number two...

¹⁹ *“Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’”*

Excuse Number three...

²⁰ *“Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’”*

²¹ *“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.’”*

Remember these are the same people that the Pharisees would **never socialize with**, they were considered the outcast, not the social elite.

This is who Jesus asked to come in and dine with, the ones the Pharisees would never accept.

They had no excuse like the others did, they were the poor that could not afford to buy oxen, the blind who could not go and examine real estate, the poor, blind, lame, who were not usually given in marriage.

This crowd would be hungry and lonely, and only too happy to accept an invitation for a **FREE banquet**.

We will continue with verse 22...

²² *“Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but **there is still room.**’*

Remember when Christ was born there was **NO ROOM**, now through Christ there **IS ROOM!**

Continuing with verse 23...

²³ *“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.*

²⁴ *I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.”*

Now we will look at the reason they didn't attend the banquet, Excuses!

Excuses are the **problem**, we all...

- ✓ Have them
- ✓ Find them
- ✓ Invent them

It reminds me of when I was training for the Marine Corps Marathon a few years ago, with my co-worker, neighbor and good friend. We would leave the house every morning between 430 and 445 A.M. to get up to the Pentagon and get a run in prior to the start of the work day. Every day we would start from the Navy Annex on top of the hill and head past the Pentagon toward the Washington Monument. Now almost every day while we were running I would ask,

- ✓ When are we at the half way point?
- ✓ When are we turning around?
- ✓ How far are we going?

I would continue with a barrage of questions, I wanted to turn around I didn't want to put in the time and effort required.

I remember waking up and calling him and saying, it looks like rain this morning, I'm not running. I would come up with any excuse to skip the morning runs...

I was looking for an easy way out, a way of getting out of the **commitment** I made for training.

Excuses, we as adults, hate excuses when our children use them, for why they...

- ✓ Did not clean their room
- ✓ Do their homework
- ✓ Failed a test

It is always an excuse, someone else's fault, never their own.

Now just ask yourself where the kids learn so much about making excuses?

They learned it **from us!** When we make excuses for...

- ✓ Not working out
- ✓ Not pushing away from the table
- ✓ Not following through with things we've said
- ✓ Not spending quality "Family Time"

Excuses keep us from stepping up and **accepting responsibility**

Excuses kept them away from the meal that was prepared for them, for the banquet that was prepared in their honor.

Now let us look a little deeper into the excuses given and see if we can't figure out what was going on there.

Excuse Number 1 is found in verse 18:

¹⁸ *"The first said, I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it."*

This person was caught up with or **consumed** with the things of **this world!** When we fall into this trap you will see that you will never be satisfied, you will always want more...

Look at it this way, as soon as you get the next big thing, I-Phone 3 guess what happens, the I-Phone 4 comes out, just like X-Box then X-Box 360 now X-Box-One. You will always wind up chasing the next big thing.

They are all excuses, excuses that keep us from the banquet God has prepared for us...

I bought a field that is why I can't come to the banquet..

Excuse Number 2 is found in verse 19...

¹⁹ *"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me."*

This person is **consumed with responsibility**, so many things going on?

Can anyone relate to this?

They are so busy, busy doing all kinds of things

- ✓ Busy setting the table
- ✓ Busy clearing the table
- ✓ Busy washing the dishes
- ✓ Busy with school
- ✓ Busy with work
- ✓ Busy with FACEBOOK, etc.
- ✓ Busy with bring busy

We get so busy that we push out **what really matters in life**. This is an illustration that I am sure you have heard, however, would like to use it again as I think if you listen to it again with Business in mind it may take on a different meaning.

A philosophy professor stood before his class with several items laid out on a table in front of him.

As the class began, he picked up a large, empty glass jar and proceeded to fill it with **rocks**, each about 2" in diameter. When he had piled the rocks to the brim, he asked the students if they thought the jar was **full**?

They all agreed that it was.

The professor then picked up a box of **pebbles** and poured them into the jar, shaking it slightly so that the pebbles rolled into the gaps between the rocks.

Once more, he asked the students, if the jar was **full**?

Again, they agreed it was.

With that, the professor picked up a box of **sand** and poured it into the jar, where it filled the spaces between the rocks and the pebbles. Once more, he asked the students if the jar was **full**.

Again, they agreed it was.

The professor then produced two **cups of coffee** from under the table and proceeded to pour their entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand.

The students laughed.

"Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this is your life.

- ✓ The **Rocks** are the **important things** - your family, your spouse, your health, and your children - things that would still make your life full even if everything else was lost.
- ✓ The **pebbles** are the **other things** that matter, -like your job, your house, your car.
- ✓ The **sand** is everything else; the **small details** of life.

"If you put the sand into the jar first, there will be no room for the pebbles or the rocks. The same goes for your life.

If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will **never have room** for the things that are most important to you.

Take care of the rocks first - the things that **really matter**. The rest is just sand."

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the coffee represented.

The professor smiled, "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a cup of coffee between friends."

No excuses, they are looking for reasons to get out of the party, not that the master had asked them to do anything like manual labor, he had simply asked them to come join the party, sit down and enjoy the meal he had prepared for them.

The final excuse, Excuse Number 3 is found in verse 20...

²⁰ *“Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’”*

Now this person was consumed by or with a **relationship**.

Please listen to me saints there is nothing wrong with a relationship that is unless it distracts you from attending the banquet the Lord has prepared for you.

Don’t make any excuse or push back from God’s table, when he is asking you to come in and dine with him.

Saints please remember, what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose your soul? (Mark 8:36)

God is saying I love you; he is **inviting you** to the banquet he has prepared for you.

There may be some here today that are saying Come on Pastor Dave, I’m **not worthy**, I’ve made too many mistakes in my life. I am not worthy to sit at God’s table, I’m not good enough!

But God has made a way for you to come; there is **still room** at his table.

Remember who were the first people that were invited to come and worship the baby Jesus?

The shepherds, who were considered the outcast of their day.

The only pre-requisite for us to come to God is for us to acknowledge that we are a **sinner and in need of salvation**.

The great things to remember is that there is **still room...**

No matter how many times we have rejected God there is still room at his table.

How many are thankful that we serve a God of **second chances**?

God says the table is set, all things are ready now, Come! Nothing more needs to be done for the Salvation of your soul, because Jesus Christ already finished the work on the cross. The feast has been spread on the table for you, the invitation is free, and **you are invited to come.**

Today you might be here and you are not a Christian; oh don't get me wrong you have been to church many times, however never made that commitment to Christ.

Saints I would tell you...

- ✓ **Come back** to his table
- ✓ **Come back** to his grace
- ✓ **Come back** to his mercy
- ✓ **Come back** to his forgiveness
- ✓ **Come** feast with God

We know in your word where it says we are **not promised** tomorrow, found in Proverbs 31.

I don't want to **miss the opportunity** to dine with you. Don't miss what is being offered to you today.

The Table is set and you are being invited, **Come and Dine** with me....

So if that is you today I offer you the opportunity to come and dine with him, as the praise and worship group comes to the front I will ask you to stand. If you feel lead to come to the front I would be glad to pray with you.

Let us pray...

“God thank you for your Son! I confess that Jesus is the Savior and I am a sinner in need of saving. So right here, right now, I am putting my faith in Jesus Christ, I want to sit at your table and dine with you **TODAY!**”

For all the believers that may have lost your way and have gotten so preoccupied with the “**Busy**” in your life that we are missing the banquet that has been prepared for us, that if the Lord is talking to you today, simply do the same either stand where you are or come to the front and I will pray with you. Simply say father **I want to sit at your table**, I want to dine with you, not just today but every day. Amen!