

Can you come to dinner?

“Parable of the Wedding Feast”



“For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” Luke 14:24

That is a pretty harsh statement. Just because they refused an invitation to a banquet they are never going to taste that banquet again. But this wasn't just any banquet. It was a special invitation just as we receive a special invitation from God. He chose this story or parable to make a point. A parable is a word-picture which uses an image or story to illustrate a truth or lesson. I think Christ was trying to make the point that we never know when we are going to be called, and He wants to be sure that we are ready and have the wonderful food of His banquet. This particular parable is found in Luke 14:16-24.

If you read the Scripture with the verse above or read the words of the song printed here you will see the excuses are pretty lame. But aren't our excuses lame sometimes too. The words in the song follow the same examples set in the Scriptures. God has prepared a banquet for everyone. He has plenty and everyone is welcome. If we do not go, we are the ones losing. The gift is always there for the taking.

It wasn't that they weren't ever going to have a chance to eat again. But Christ was trying to tell the people that if they refused the love of God and His salvation, they would be doomed and eventually it would be too late.

As a youth, I learned this parable in a song at camp. It was lively and when I tried to have some of the people in our church sing it, they thought it was too disruptive until they heard the words and realized the message it was sending. I realize now that some of the songs the youth sing today may seem disruptive to some, but the songs speak to them. And I think that is why Christ chose to talk in parables. He wanted to make sure the people understood the message. The form is different, but the message is always the same.

Wedding Banquet

A certain man had a feast on his fine estate in town,
He laid a festive table and wore a wedding gown
He sent invitations to his neighbors far and wide
But when the meal was ready, each one of them replied!

The master rose up in anger, called his servants by name,
Said, "Go into the town, fetch the blind and the lame,
Fetch the peasant and the pauper for this I have willed--

My banquet must be crowded and my table must be filled!"

When all the poor had assembled, there still was room to spare,
So the master demanded, "Go search everywhere,
To the highways and the byways and force them to come in,
My table must be filled, before the banquet can begin!"

Now God has written a lesson for the rest of mankind,
If we're slow in responding, He may leave us behind,
He's preparing a banquet for that great and glorious day,
When the Lord and master calls us, be certain not to say.

CHORUS:

I cannot come!

I cannot come to the banquet, don't trouble me now,
I have married a wife, I have bought me a cow,
I have fields and commitments that cost a pretty sum,
Pray hold me excused, I cannot come!*

It is important to know that this parable followed a time when Christ was being challenged by the authorities. He had been invited to dine with the Pharisees. He was gaining popularity and they were concerned. They needed everything against him they could gather. He saw a man who was sick and questioned them "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" (Luke 14:3) They had been caught! He healed the man. Then he asked "Which of you, if you have a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?" (Luke 14:5) He knew their laws as well as they did, and He could use this knowledge to catch them up in some of their ways.

He also noticed they chose certain places to sit at dinner, so he questioned them again. He told them that when they were invited to a wedding banquet, they should not take the places of honor because someone more distinguished may have been invited. He told them they should take the least important place because then the host seeing where they were seated may ask them to move to a more important place and be honored. Then he said "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted." (Luke 14:11).

This all precedes the parable of the wedding banquet. Jesus had been invited as a guest. He was well aware of why he had been invited. They had not realized that Jesus was going to be able to take this invitation and compare it to the invitation to salvation.

We are invited every day to a banquet. The invitation is always there, but we have to accept that invitation. We have to be willing to be a servant, but eventually we will be honored.

Prayer: Lord, Thank You for inviting me to Your banquet. Help me to accept that invitation and to follow Your word. I know that You have a place for me and I pray that by Your grace, I will someday be at that wonderful banquet. I know that I cannot earn

it, but I know through faith that You are with me today, tomorrow, and forever. Thank You for the wonderful invitation. Amen

1. Why did Christ tell the people stories? Do we need to be told as a little child about His love?
2. Can Communion be considered a banquet?
3. What does it mean to accept the invitation to a wedding banquet?
4. How do we have to prepare for a banquet?
5. How do we have to prepare for the great banquet? For Communion?

Parable of the Wedding Feast

“Then said he unto him, ‘A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.’ And they all with one consent began to make excuses. The first said unto him ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.’ And the servant said, ‘Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.’ And the lord said unto the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.’” Luke 14: 16-24