



Part 1: The Inviting God

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### **The Parable of the Great Banquet – Luke 14:13-24**

<sup>13</sup> “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup> and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

<sup>15</sup> When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

**Jesus wants us to know:** When it comes to the kingdom of God, many who you thought will be *in* will actually be *out*. And many who you thought were *out* will actually be invited *in*. The table of God has an open invitation.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. <sup>17</sup> At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, “Come, for everything is now ready.”

<sup>18</sup> “But they all alike began to make excuses.

#### **The excuses:**

**Personal Investments — Personal Time — Personal Commitments**

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

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

<sup>20</sup> “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

<sup>21</sup> “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.’

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

<sup>23</sup> “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. <sup>24</sup> I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.”

#### **Something to consider:**

The servants of the celebration leader were actively inviting the unlikely into the celebration.

## **I choose to actively invite people into the celebration of Jesus because Jesus invited me...**

**Out of isolation into relationship** — For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. – *Ephesians 5:8*

**Out of chaos into celebration** — You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal. – *Isaiah 26:3-4*

**Out of bad news into good news** — And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. – *Luke 2:10-11 (King James Version)*

**Out of stigma into salvation** — Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God?... And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. – *1 Corinthians 6:9-11*

### **What does this open invitation have to do with Christmas?**

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. – *Luke 2:16-18*

### **Who did Jesus invite into “the delivery room?”**

Joseph, the misunderstood

Mary, the maligned

Shepherds, the marginalized

***The God of all Creation has a guest list  
for the celebration of the birth of His son... and you are on it.***

### **Small Group Questions**

- 1) What was the last event you were invited to? Why did or didn't you go?
- 2) Why do you think a personal invitation is so powerful?
- 3) When was the last time you invited anyone to church? How did they respond?
- 4) What did Jesus teach you through his parable about an invitation? What will you do with that lesson?
- 5) Who can you begin praying for before you invite them to one of our Christmas services?
- 6) How can we pray for you right now and throughout the week?