

## THE MASTER'S INVITATION Lk. 14:16-24

We are in the home of a very self-righteous and self-important leader of the Pharisees who belonged to a group searching for opportunities to criticise and condemn Jesus, Lk. 14:1 *And it came to pass, as he [Jesus] went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.* ... However, Jesus was fully aware of what they were up to! They had 'planted' a man with an extremely painful disease affecting either the kidney or the heart, and they were using him to catch Jesus out. A heartless lot! ... They wanted to see if Jesus would heal him on the Sabbath so that they could accuse Him of breaking the fourth commandment, Ex. 20:8 *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy ...* <sup>10</sup> *... in it thou shalt not do any work.* On the other hand, if He didn't heal the man they would have accused Jesus of lacking compassion. They reckoned they were in a 'win-win' situation. But Jesus was too clever for them for He asked them a question they couldn't answer (v.5,6), "Which one of you, if your animal fell into a ditch, wouldn't go and not help him out *on the Sabbath?*" ... *Silence!*

There was also another group of people at the table, - specially-invited guests in the top seats (v.7) ... and after Jesus had told them, <sup>11</sup> *whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted,* He turned again to His host and accused him of inviting all these rich influential people so they would ask him along to their best seat at their 'parties'. Jesus told the Pharisee that if he would have done the right thing, he would have invited the poor people to his table (v.12-14).

... One old fool was sitting at the table, - the type who wakens up every now and again, and usually says something irrelevant to everyone's conversation, - but this man heard Jesus mention the resurrection, <sup>14</sup> *thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.* Immediately, he perked up because this was his 'pet subject', *the resurrection of the just.* It suited his ego, and he 'rattled off', <sup>15</sup> *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.* The subject of the Kingdom of God emphasised the Messiah who they believed would be an ordinary man who would come from the tribe of Judah and set up His Kingdom. When the Messiah would come, they - the Pharisees, - would all be sitting at the top table along with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Patriarchs, and all the great characters of the Old Testament. ... Instead of feeding the man's ego, Jesus told them a parable about **The Master's Invitation** (vv.15-24).

**THE MASTER'S SUPPER** The master was a wealthy person. Everything he had was the very best because he had worked for it, and he decided to invite other leading people for a special meal. Back in those times, you were invited but you weren't given any further details, - you simply had to let the master know you would attend. When everything was prepared he would *then* send his servant to call you to the meal. ...

So, the servant went around all the folk with the invitation, they all nodded in acceptance (v.16,17), and the master started preparing for the meal. However, when it came to the time, - after the master had killed and prepared the beasts, cooked the bread, cleaned the vegetables, seats were set, the table laid and everything else, - ... when it came to the time, the servant again called round to everyone, **17 Come; for all things are now ready** ... and they were expected to be there. Good manners and etiquette!

**THE MASTER'S SERVANT** The servant had gone out with *the master's invitation* ... This was a big occasion and a privilege. These were farmers and newly-weds, and surely, they would welcome a special meal ... and the master was so good doing this for them all ... They could never have afforded a 'spread' like the master had prepared.

They were all familiar with the reputation of the master for he was no stranger to them. They had heard of him, and his kindness. They would have heard about his generosity. However, after everything had been prepared and the servant sent to tell them all was now ready, - cooked and prepared, - **the master's servant** began to hear one excuse after another. It was obvious they had no intention of attending ... and they had *never* intended taking the master up on his gracious offer.

How foolish! For all the master had prepared for them, and they didn't want it ... and they did not want to be in his company. *They* could not have on *their* tables what the master had prepared for them on *his* table, and yet, they rejected **the master's invitation!**

*How do you think the servant felt?* He must have been hurt for his master. The excuses 'tripped off' their tongues, "Oh, I can't attend for I've bought a piece of land and I've got to go and see it". ... The master's servant could have replied, "How can you see it in the dark ... *at supper time!* ... Another one said, "I've bought a new herd of oxen ... and I've got to try them out". Again, the servant could have said, "You're going to

plough a field when it's dark?" ... But the servant did not say a word. ... It wasn't him they were rejecting, it was his **master's invitation**.

Another one answered, "Oh, I've just recently got married, and I've got to stay at home with the wife." ... Excuses! ... They simply couldn't be bothered. ... The master's preparation was nothing to them!

Notice the servant did not change his master's invitation, or use any of his skills to coerce the people, or arrange another time which *might* suit them ... No, the master's message was not his to change ... he simply told the people what his master had sent him to say, **17 Come; for all things are now ready** ... How we need to remember that, - the message is not ours to change, but it is simply ours to tell ... One of the last instructions Jesus gave before He ascended into Heaven was this, **Mk. 16:15 Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.** ... Paul instructed Timothy, **II Tim 4:2 Preach the word** ... To the Corinthians he wrote, **I Cor. 9:16 woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!** ... That's *our* message, and we must not change it! ... And the only message the servant came with was the message of his master. ... Finally ...

**THE MASTER'S STEADFASTNESS** When the servant returned home, laden with the various excuses, understandably the master was not happy (v.21). He sent the servant out again, only this time into the less affluent areas of the town. ... By the way, this parable was originally for the Jews, and illustrates how they refused to accept Jesus as Messiah, and consequently, the message of the Gospel would be sent to the Gentiles, **Rom. 11:25 ... until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.** ... The master's preparations were not going to waste!

The obedient servant went out again and he brought in all the poor people to his master's table. The poor only had their own provisions which were insufficient, and so they gladly received the master's invitation.

Obviously, the Master refers to Jesus Who has made all the preparations for salvation, - He came into this world from Heaven's glory, He died on the cross to cleanse from their sin all those who will believe, and He continues to issue the invitation, "Come unto Me ... **Jn. 6:37 him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out** ... You're hungry, - come and eat. ... You're thirsty, - come and drink." ... Come unto Me.

Many flatly refuse. Many make excuses ... but there is a greater multitude who will receive Him ... and there will not be an empty seat at the table, and there will be nobody left hungry for Jesus said, **Jn. 6:35** *he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.* ... That is an invitation to trust in Christ as Saviour. Any of those who came to Him, He never drove away for He accepted them all. Any of those who came to Him, they never regretted. Every person who comes to Jesus for salvation, He will receive. ... What a Gospel! ... Great news!

And what about the servant? He was *beaming* from 'ear to ear' ... seeing all those people whom he had the privilege of inviting, sitting round his master's table. ... They were hungry before he went out and issued his master's invitation. People like them never thought they would be granted such a privilege. The servant didn't prepare the table, - the master did. The banquet was at no cost to the servant for his master paid for it all. Everything was at the behest of his lord, and he was the servant privileged to serve and invite others.

At first, his invitations were rejected ... but he was sent out again, - he persevered as he called with every poor family in that area ... and they came in, but *still* there was room ... and the master sent the servant out again, and he was thrilled to bring his master's message ... and even more came in until every seat at the table was filled. ... No seats empty ... What a feast those other foolish people missed! They had the opportunity but squandered it. ... **Mk. 8:36** *what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

It cuts you to the heart when you give a Gospel invitation to someone and they refuse it ... but you don't give up. You have no authority to rewrite it, - to make it somehow more appealing, - ... you simply have to keep on telling it as it is, - that is how the servant served his master.

And what an invitation! ... If you are not saved, you will never get a better offer, - not one that satisfies and is guaranteed to last as long as eternity, and you can be sure of it this very instant. It is the privilege and testimony of many of us that Jesus saves and keeps, and He even uses us to tell others. ... The servant knew his master, - his generosity and graciousness, - and he longed for others to know it too. ... He discovered how difficult it was to get people in, but he never gave up until his work for the master was complete. How easy he could have been satisfied with

the first crowd of people he brought in, - a great job he did ... but the master sent him out again until all the seats the master had prepared were filled ... That is the *service* of every believer ... to do the Master's bidding, to tell others what He has prepared, and invite them to meet Him and to know Him. ... All the preparation necessary for salvation was completed at Calvary, where our Lord Jesus Christ gave His life for every person whose seat is reserved at that table in Glory ...

Jesus has a table spread  
Where the saints of God are fed,  
He invites His chosen people, "Come and dine";  
With His manna He doth feed  
And supplies our every need ...  
"Come and dine," the Master calleth, "Come and dine".