

Of Invitations and Dinner Parties

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 14:1-14



Big Idea

We often make invitations and dinner parties all about us. We accept those invitations that suit us. We extend invitations to people we like or extract some benefit from. But Jesus says that we rob ourselves when we live this way. We miss the very heart and blessing of God.

(1) Accepting Invitations

Those of us familiar with the gospels and Jesus' ministry have probably grown accustomed to the idea that He is regularly hanging out with and accepting the invitations of some of the more questionable characters in Jewish society at the time. He is often found with the outcast and the poor and even the notorious sinner. But, here in our text, we see plainly that these are not the only sorts of people that Jesus has come to keep company with. The tax collectors and sinners, the outcast and broken, the blind and lame, even these cannot fully exhaust the love of God in Christ. No, it extends beyond them, to the Pharisee and the scribes and the religious. They are a different kind of sick, a different kind of sinner, a different kind of outcast, and Jesus has concern and compassion for them as well. Jesus moves towards these men anyways. He accepts their invitation, however malicious their intent.

(2) Extending Invitations

He is not saying that you are in sin if you invite friends and family to your dinner parties or whatever. But He is saying that your heart ought to be so full and free in God that it no longer matters to you who sits around your table and whether they pay you back, or add anything to your self-image, or not. In fact, He is saying, I think, that when you really taste the grace of God for you in Jesus, there will be a sort of propulsion outward to the broken and the forgotten and the poor and the lame. You will want to make friend and family of those you before would've avoided and ignored. You will invite them in regardless of what they give or take from you.

(3) Learning the Way of Jesus

Suggestion #1: Remember Where We're Headed—If we really believe that all things unfold under the watchful and compassionate eye of our loving Father, then we can know that He will right every wrong in the end, fill every emptiness, and satisfy every longing. Such a truth sustains our giving and giving.

Suggestion #2: Remember Where We've Come from—What will move us outward toward enemy and outcast is first recognizing that Jesus has done this very thing for us.

Suggestion #3: Remember Where Jesus Still Is—These are the tables He still sits around. These are the tracks He still runs on. If we won't follow Him here, then we shouldn't be surprised when we miss Him, when we feel like He is distant, when we are discontent and dissatisfied with life. We won't go with Him where He is.

Reflection Questions



- Consider these words again from Tim Chester: "Meals can be a visual representation of our hearts. If our hearts are concerned for position, honor, status, or approval, then that will be reflected in our dining etiquette. Consider how your meals express your vision for life. Think about who's invited, how they're served, what you hope to achieve, and the layout of your home. Do they express the vision of the kingdom of God?" (*A Meal with Jesus*, p. 81). What do you make of this? Is your home and heart open? Is there space around your table? If so, for who? What's the criteria? Is it driven with concern for the mission and values of God's kingdom or with concern for those of your own?
- Are you living your life in such a way that it can only be made sense of in light of the "resurrection of the just"? Why or why not? What needs to change?
- Think of one person—maybe it's an enemy that you've been nursing bitterness against, maybe it's a needy person that you've been trying to avoid because they just feel like a burden—and ask God to help you move towards him/her in love. What might this look like?