

### Luke 14B

- When we last met, Jesus was in the middle of a very interesting meal
  - He had been invited into the home of a leader of the Pharisees
  - With Him are the disciples, we said
    - Jesus has already managed to embarrass the Pharisees by healing on the Sabbath
    - He corrected the disciples for desiring honor in the eyes of men when they should have been focused on remaining humble and seeking honor for their heavenly father
    - Finally, Jesus taught his host to expect reward from God only when he shows favor upon the least deserving
      - Rather than currying favor with those who possess the means to pay you back
  - No ordinary dinner party here
    - And Jesus is no ordinary guest, of course
- As we pick up again at this intriguing dinner party, let's take a moment to consider where Luke is going in this chapter
  - We've said already that Luke alone captures much of what's written in this chapter, so why did He present it to his readers?
  - We began to answer that last week when we took note of how Jesus has embarked on a new focus for the remaining months of His ministry
    - First, He is no longer offering the kingdom to Israel by its leaders, so His message to the leaders has become one of challenging their authority and speaking in parables to conceal his meaning from His adversaries
    - Secondly, to the crowds His message has become very black and white – a dividing line of belief verses judgment
      - He will increasingly emphasize that Jesus Himself represents a demarcation between those who enter the kingdom and those who don't

- Finally, Jesus's teaching to the disciples grows in urgency, stirring them in ever greater ways to be ready for the challenges they lay ahead
- Chap 14 of Luke is a great overview of these three areas of emphasis for Jesus in His remaining time before reaching Jerusalem
  - Let's pick up again in verse 15 as we finish the chapter today and try to put it all together

[Luke 14:15](#) ¶ 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!"

- I'll pause here just briefly to remind us of the circumstances that led to this spontaneous statement by the guest
  - First, remember what Jesus had just done
    - In verse 12-14, Jesus gave his host some advice
    - And without repeating the meaning of Jesus message, let's just say that it probably wasn't seen as a compliment
    - In other words, if you had been sitting around the table in that moment and heard Jesus' words to the host, this is what you might have heard
      - The Host was wrong to invite the privileged
      - He should have invited the least of the world
  - It's hard to avoid the conclusion that Jesus has subtly insulted his host, which was a huge faux pax in that culture
    - A host's honor came from who he hosted, and the guests in turn were expected to honor the host's efforts
      - So here Jesus has just managed to say something that not only insulted the host, but He also maligned the guests, which further insulted the host
- Have you ever been in a social setting where someone said something embarrassing or created an uncomfortable moment
  - That's what Jesus just did

- And I imagine there is a pregnant pause, with everyone waiting for someone to say something to break the silence and propel the meal past this awkward moment
- Then some brave individual decides to seize on something Jesus said
  - In verse 14, Jesus had said the host will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous
  - This is a phrase that every Jew would have understood to mean a time when the Kingdom of God would be established and the Jewish nation would reign with Christ
- So the guest says the first thing that comes to mind in response to Jesus
  - He says, Blessed is every man who eats bread in the kingdom
    - It's something of a throw away line...a passing comment intended to illicit universal agreement
    - When the moment is awkward and there's tension, you want to say something to get past the moment
    - And the best thing to say is something that everyone can agree upon
  - Surely, all the good Jews seated around that Passover table could look forward to spending eternity sitting around God's table eating in the kingdom
- But this poor guy can't win
  - Jesus responds by launching into a parable to counter this guy's comment

[Luke 14:16](#) But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; [Luke 14:17](#) and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.'

[Luke 14:18](#) "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.'

[Luke 14:19](#) "Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.'

[Luke 14:20](#) "Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.'

[Luke 14:21](#) "And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

[Luke 14:22](#) “And the slave said, ‘Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’

[Luke 14:23](#) “And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled.

[Luke 14:24](#) ‘For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.’”

- The example Jesus gives here illustrates how many in this dinner crowd were going to miss the very meal they were assuming was to be theirs
- To start, Jesus’ parable shows a man giving a big dinner
  - This is a special meal, a real event
  - So big, in fact, that he sends out invitations long before the meal is actually ready
    - There is a delay – a rather long one based on the kinds of excuses he hears
    - But even as the meal is being prepared, the guests have already been identified
      - The ones the master expected to attend the dinner were told well in advance that the meal was coming and the meal was intended for them
      - But meanwhile, the guests go about their lives
- Then the day comes for the master to hold his feast
  - In considering the real feast to be held in God’s messianic Kingdom, the millennial kingdom, the Jews had been told of the coming feast in the kingdom
  - As one example, consider Isaiah’s prophecy of that moment:

[Is. 25:6](#) ¶ The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain;

A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow,  
*And refined, aged wine.*

[Is. 25:7](#) And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples,

Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.

[Is. 25:8](#) He will swallow up death for all time,  
 And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces,  
 And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth;  
 For the LORD has spoken.

[Is. 25:9](#) And it will be said in that day,  
 “Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us.  
 This is the LORD for whom we have waited;  
 Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.”

- This is the kind of promise that the nation of Israel had been looking forward to for centuries
  - They’ve been waiting along time
  - And the invitation had been extended to the entire nation
  - And among the self-righteous like the Pharisee and other corrupt leaders, the assumption was that they were going to be the first at the table
  - And Jesus had just chastised the crowd – Pharisees and disciples – for seeking honor for themselves
    - But honor would come to those who humbled themselves and served the Father in humility
- And then the appointed day arrives for those guests to be received at the meal
  - And the host sends a representative to invite the guests
  - It’s important to note that the host himself doesn’t leave his home to gather the guests
  - But his representative goes out for him
    - Obviously, we can begin to draw some obvious parallels from the parable

- The host here is God the Father, the one who promised the kingdom to Israel,
- The slave or servant here is Jesus, the one who was appointed to offer the kingdom banquet to the nation of Israel
- But when the time comes to make assembled the dinner party, look at the responses the slave receives
  - Each guest tries to use excuses he hopes will sound reasonable
    - Sort of a polite way to be rude
    - Because it would have been very rude for these guests to have agreed to attend at one point, and then made excuses for not attending once the time arrived
    - In the example of a big dinner, it would have been rude to refuse because of the tremendous expenses and effort required to prepared such a lavish meal
    - In kingdom terms, refusals are ultimate a rejection of God Himself
  - One guest says I have bought land and I need to inspect it
    - To the savvy Jew, this was an obviously pathetic excuse
      - When someone purchased land in that day – much as it would be today – there was always a careful inspection before the price was paid
        - No sensible man with the financial means to purchase land would have done so without first checking it over carefully
        - Knowing if it was fit for his purpose, whether to find water or farm or as pasture for livestock, etc.
    - So when the man says he can't attend the banquet because he must inspect land he has already purchased, it's clear that he's searching for any excuse to avoid the banquet
- The second man says he just bought five oxen and wants to try them out
  - Here again the reason is obviously just an excuse

- Like the land, the man would have inspected his oxen before making the purchase
  - But there's an additional crack in the façade in this case
    - Five oxen in Jesus day would have been a very substantial purchase
    - A common Jew could afford one or maybe two oxen for the purpose of working his land
    - Think of them as work trucks, pick ups
    - Most families were one-ox families
      - Some might have a pair of oxen, since it would make the work go more quickly
  - But for a man to buy 5 oxen at once would be like someone saying he bought a fleet of trucks to work his land
    - This is a rich individual, a man with a lot of resources at his disposal
    - And any man with that kind of wealth isn't going to try out his oxen
    - He isn't going to work his own land
    - He would have slaves and hired men working the land
  - So an excuse that he couldn't make the banquet because he needed to try out his oxen was pathetic and obviously disingenuous
- In addition to the fact that these first two examples are obviously pathetic excuses, there is another common quality to them
    - They both emphasize a love for the world and its riches
    - A love for what these men possessed combined with a disregard for the grace and provision being offered by the host
      - The world was the trap that kept them from joining the meal
      - And their own lusts and desires were the catalyst for their rude behavior

- Most importantly, these are excuses
  - These men don't want to attend, so they are using pathetically weak excuses in an attempt to gain some legitimacy for themselves
    - They hope that they will remain in the favor of the host even though they are being rude
    - They hope that their reasons will allow them have their way without paying the penalty of incurring the Host's wrath
- Then there is the final excuse
  - A man with a wife can't come
    - This is interesting because it's not immediately clear why having a wife would prevent the man from attending
    - Unless you assume that his point was in reference to the law
    - There was a law in Deut that provided for a newly married man to be excused from war for one year

[Deut. 24:5](#) ¶ “When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

- So perhaps the man is hiding behind to this rule of the law as his excuse
  - Obviously the law has nothing to say about attending a banquet
  - In fact, if the man had wanted to attend the banquet, no one would have quoted him Deut 24:5 as a reason why he couldn't attend
  - In other words, the man was free to attend, but he was trying to suggest he's would have been violating the law had he left his wife to attend
    - Again, it's an excuse
  - But this final excuse introduces a new issue in that it adds the issue of the law
    - These men in the parable were absorbed by the world's burdens and by their possessions

- But they were also unavailable to attend the meal because they were wedded to another – to the law and they liked it
  - They were not interested in leaving behind the one they married
  - Like we heard in Luke 5:37

[Luke 5:37](#) “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.

- You can’t combine the old and the new – you can’t add them together – Christ brought a new covenant to replace the old
- But these men wouldn’t leave the old behind in order to join the new
- In the end they rejected the Host’s feast because they preferred the arrangement they already had under the law
- Now consider the host’s response
  - Despite their attempts to avoid his anger, the host sees through the guests’ pathetic excuses
    - Just like the Pharisees hearing this parable would have also seen the excuses as unreasonable
  - The Host instructs his servant to gather those who were not originally expected to attend the banquet
    - They were the ones in the streets of the same city
    - But they were not the ones the city expected should be invited to such an elaborate celebration
    - These were the unlikely guests
  - And within the nation of Israel, they represented the lowly who had come to Jesus in faith and believed that He was bringing the kingdom
    - They accepted the invitation and they would be welcomed in place of the nation’s leaders who refused the offer
- But then the servant tells the Host that there is still room at the table

- So the Host tells the servant to reach beyond the city and look for men along the highways and hedges
  - Again, poor downtrodden people, but more importantly, people outside the original community of invitees
  - The gentiles, in other words
  - Because the original group of invitees refused the invitation and did so on such inconsiderate terms, the Host makes a point to invite an even wider audience
    - The point here is not only that the Host is replacing the bad guests with new ones
    - But it's also the point that Host is going out of his way to illustrate how rude the original guests were by the nature of who He chooses as replacements
- We know that is exactly what the father did to the nation of Israel as a result of their rejection of His son
  - Paul explains it this way

[Rom. 11:7](#) ¶ What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened;

[Rom. 11:8](#) just as it is written,

“GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR,  
EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT,  
DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY.”

[Rom. 11:9](#) And David says,

“LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP,  
AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM.

[Rom. 11:10](#) “LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT,  
AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER.”

[Rom. 11:11](#) ¶ I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.

- What Israel is seeking (e.g., entrance into the promised kingdom) it as a whole has not obtained
  - Some have obtained it, the chosen Paul calls them

- These are the ones in the parable who are found in the city streets and come to banquet after the initial group refuse the invitation
- But the rest are hardened
  - These are the ones mentioned in verse 24
  - The ones who will not share in the banquet no matter what
    - These are the ones who make up the evil generation
    - The generation that rejected Jesus in his day
- And then look at verse 11 in Roman 11
  - Paul says that the transgression of the nation of Israel in rejecting the Messiah is in the end grace and salvation for the Gentiles who are invited in their place
    - These are the ones by the highways who come in to the banquet
    - That's you and me, my friends
    - We have been graciously invited to join in a banquet that was ultimately prepared for the nation of Israel
- And in case you didn't know, that offer of the banquet will once again be extended to the Jewish nation in a future day
  - Paul finishes chapter 11 this way

[Rom. 11:25](#) ¶ For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in;

[Rom. 11:26](#) and so all Israel will be saved; just as it is written,

“THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION,  
HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB.”

[Rom. 11:27](#) “THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM,  
WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS.”

- There is yet a day to come when the nation of Israel receives grace and a new generation will come to know about their Messiah and will receive Him

- And they will join us around that table
- You can see Luke's theme emerging here in Chap 14
  - Jesus used this dinner as a picture to illustrate all that was happening around Him now that His offer of the kingdom had been rejected by the nation
  - First, Jesus taught on the need for personal humility and not seeking honor through false pretense
    - Rather, each man should know that our honor is based on what the Host sees in us – not on what we can fake by our own efforts
    - Furthermore, the Host will gain greater honor by inviting those who are least deserving,
      - So to the extent we try to make ourselves look more worthy, we are risking an embarrassment when the truth about us is revealed
      - And we are actually working to reduce the Host's own glory, since he will receive more glory when we are humble
  - Secondly, Jesus says that those who claim to be looking forward to the honor of an invitation at this dinner are actually destined to be left behind
    - The cares and desires of this world will trap them
    - As will their love for a law that serves their selfish, deceitful purposes
    - And when they reject the banquet offer, they will be insulting their host
      - Which is very ironic when you consider that it was Jesus in this moment who was seen as insulting His host
      - Jesus tells a parable that turns the tables on the men around that table
        - He reveals that it is they who are insulting far greater host

- The parables told so far illustrate the changing circumstances of Jesus ministry
  - He no longer is offering his Kingdom to the privileged within Israel
    - His Master has instructed Him to reach out to a different crowd
      - The lowly in Israel
      - And the Gentiles
  - And here we are today, coming in Jesus' footsteps
    - And I want you to give some thought to how these circumstances repeat themselves today
      - Consider how (and if) you preach the gospel to others
        - Who do you reach out to?
        - The privileged? Those who live in the same zip code?
      - Is it a coincidence that the greatest receptiveness to the gospel comes among the poorest and least privileged?
      - While most of Western Europe, many of the most affluent areas of the United States and the richest countries in Asia and the third world are the least interested in the gospel
      - Could this be a continuation of the pattern Jesus mentions here?
- Well, certainly any man or woman is a legitimate target to receive the gospel and we shouldn't discriminate against any one
  - But are we afraid to reach out to the less fortunate with the gospel out of fear or discomfort because they are not like us
    - I hope not
    - God's glory is greater because of who He has invited, and we are called to bring the message to the four corners of the world
- With the time remaining, I want to push through and finish 14 today if we can

[Luke 14:25](#) ¶ Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,

[Luke 14:26](#) “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

[Luke 14:27](#) “Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

[Luke 14:28](#) “For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?

[Luke 14:29](#) “Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him,

[Luke 14:30](#) saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’

[Luke 14:31](#) “Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand *men* to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand?

[Luke 14:32](#) “Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

- Luke’s narrative moves forward to a new context
  - And he also transitions to the other side of Jesus’ post rejection message
  - While the first part of the chapter presented a series of illustrations of how to enter the kingdom and who shall enter
    - Now the focus turns to those who have accepted the invitation
- Jesus begins by addressing the large crowds that followed Him
  - These crowds were going along with Him
    - Going along with Him meant moving away from home and leaving a regular life behind
    - Because Jesus is moving toward Jerusalem – He has no home
  - And this group is huge, thousands and maybe tens of thousands we were told in an earlier chapter
    - To this group He gives a two-part requirement for discipleship
    - Followed by two illustrations

- First, Jesus says that if one wants to be his disciple, they must hate their immediate family and even their own life
  - This is a phrase widely understood to mean by comparison that discipleship with Christ means placing all earthly relationships second
  - To include our own personal desires
  - Mirrors what Moses said was true about Levi in how he assumed his role as priest for the nation of Israel

[Deut. 33:8](#) ¶ Of Levi he said,

*“Let Your Thummim and Your Urim belong to Your godly man,  
Whom You proved at Massah,  
With whom You contended at the waters of Meribah;*

[Deut. 33:9](#) Who said of his father and his mother,

*‘I did not consider them’;  
And he did not acknowledge his brothers,  
Nor did he regard his own sons,  
For they observed Your word,  
And kept Your covenant.*

- Furthermore, Jesus says that a disciple has to be willing to carry his own cross
  - This is a graphic picture of crucifixion, since the condemned carried their cross beam to the place of execution
  - We might say something like pull on your own noose, or take a seat in your electric chair
  - A graphic depiction of being willing to follow Jesus into death
    - Is Jesus making these things to be tests of salvation?
  - By Disciple, does Jesus mean any believer?
    - Must all believers be willing to see these things happen, or else they can't be a believer?
      - The fairest reading of the text would say clearly no
        - The word disciple can be used to mean any pupil or follower of Jesus
        - But in this context, it means a lot more

- It means someone who would follow after Christ and live a similar life
- Jesus is talking about the person seeking after the honor and rewards he mentioned during that dinner party
- Walter Wiersbe said it this way:

"Salvation is open to all who will come by faith, but discipleship is for believers willing to pay a price. Salvation means coming to the cross and trusting Jesus Christ, while discipleship means carrying the cross and following Jesus."

- As we've said, Luke has narrowed his focus in his presentation of Jesus' teaching
  - He wants to demonstrate how Jesus' teaching reflects two divergent audiences
    - And to each audience, Jesus is delivering a different messages
    - To the Pharisees and other leaders of Israel and to those who follow these corrupt men,
      - Jesus preaches on lost opportunity and awaiting judgment
      - They have lost any opportunity to be included in God's plan, as have any in the crowd who follow after the Pharisees
      - He will continue to preach that they are blind to the truth and cannot please God by their hypocrisy
      - To this crowd, Jesus teaches in parables only
    - Then to the believers around Him, and especially to the disciples
      - Jesus preaches on kingdom lessons designed to prepare these men for what lies ahead
      - He wants them to be prepared for the costs
      - To not shrink back
      - And to appreciate the rewards and honor that await any disciple who would persevere

- Look at the illustrations Jesus uses to make the point of discipleship
  - A man wanted to build a tower (purgos) which is a common farm building
    - Difficult, costly work
    - And if the work is finished, there is a reward
      - The usefulness of the building, and a testimony to the builder's resourcefulness and planning and determination
      - An accomplishment that brings the builder honor
  - But if the person starts without thinking through what it will take to finish, then when the work becomes hard or the costs too great, he abandons it
    - Now in it's partly completely form, it stands as an embarrassment
    - It stands as a witness against him
    - That he didn't have the steadfastness to finish what he began
    - That he hadn't thought it through before he started
  - So make sure you know what you're signing up for before you start something significant
    - It's interesting to me that this is the second lesson in this chapter that seems to emphasize the embarrassment that could come upon a disciple due to poor behavior in this life
- Then he tells the second parable of the man who prepares to battle an enemy
  - Now the stakes are higher
  - If the disciple isn't prepared to consider the costs and plan accordingly, He won't survive the battle
    - In His example Jesus cites how a king must decide in advance if he can defeat an enemy with a small force
    - If he doesn't think he can win, he's a fool to go forward anyway
    - There is a saying that the one who draws a sword, throws away the scabbard

- There's no going back once you make a decision to enter battle,
- Retreat or hesitation means destruction
- So is Jesus suggesting we make peace with the world? Only if we don't think we have the stronger force
  - Remember, the king might have decided that his 10,000 were strong enough to defeat the 20,000
  - If this is what he believes, then he can enter the battle confidently
  - But he goes forward with no looking back – he's all in
- So Jesus' point here is that we need to know that if we want to be a disciple, we need to be prepared to go all the way in the spiritual warfare that lies ahead
  - We came to the cross, but now are we ready to be one of those who will carry it with Jesus
  - And if so, we should understand that there is great honor and reward for those who battle hardest in Jesus name but without giving in to sin
  - And even when the forces against us look strong, remember that God's army will always accomplish what God desires
- Jesus sums up the lessons this way

[Luke 14:34](#) ¶ “Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?”

[Luke 14:35](#) “It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

- Salt is good
  - In ancient times, salt was a critical resource
    - It was needed to sustain life, both humans and animals needed it in small amounts
    - In small amounts, it was used to fertilize land directly

- And it was even used to slow the decay process in manure so manure could be preserved and used as fertilizer
  - Salt came mostly from marsh lands rather than evaporating sea water, so the salt had impurities in it
    - Therefore, if the salt stores weren't protected from moisture, the actually salt itself could leech out leaving behind only the impurities
    - In this way, the salt could lose its saltiness and become useless
    - It was thrown away, and couldn't even be used to salt the ground or manure piles
- What is Jesus' application here?
  - If a believer is to be a disciple, that person must be useful to God as salt is to men
    - Like salt the disciple must bring life and rejuvenation
    - The disciples must be an antidote to decay
    - But it does these things by standing out, by being like Christ in a world so unlike Christ
    - And discipleship comes with a cost, though it brings eternal rewards
  - Matthew says it things way

[Matt. 5:11](#) ¶ “Blessed are you when *people* insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me.

[Matt. 5:12](#) “Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

[Matt. 5:13](#) ¶ “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

[Matt. 5:14](#) ¶ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden;

[Matt. 5:15](#) nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.

[Matt. 5:16](#) “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.