

A Banquet of Food for the Soul - Part 3

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[0 : 00] Well, the dessert that we're going to be learning about here, of course, this morning is something to say amen to.

It is the dessert of salvation. And so we'll be getting to that here in just a minute, but I want to go ahead and read the passage. It is the larger passage, rather, is verses 1 through 24, but I've already read that now.

This will be the third time if I read the whole thing. But this time I've decided to just read the portion of this larger text that I will be preaching from here this morning.

And so start, look there at verse 15, and I'll read verses 15 through 24. Now, when one of those who sat at the table with him heard these things, and, of course, if you've not been with us the last couple of weeks, you don't know what that is, so you're going to have to go back and read about it. Heard these things, he said to him, Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then he said to him, of course, this is Jesus now speaking, A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, Come, for all things are now ready.

[1 : 36] But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused. Still another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city.

Bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. And the servant said, Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room. Then the master said to the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper. All right. Now, again, if you've been with us the last three Sundays, counting this one, then you are somewhat familiar with the story here.

[2 : 49] Jesus had been invited to a dinner by a prominent Pharisee. The Bible calls him a ruler of the Pharisees. And so it's on the Sabbath, as is the case with many of the stories that we read about involving Jesus and healing and controversy.

It's always on the Sabbath. And this is by design, actually. First, by design, according to the Pharisees, because they were always looking for a way to trap Jesus.

And they kind of staged this event, by the way. But I say it's by design, though, primarily because of Jesus. Jesus designed it this way because he wanted to dispel and completely obliterate this false, the false set of doctrines and practices that the Pharisees had developed over the years concerning the Sabbath.

And so it's one of those times. It's a setup. It's staged. And they placed this man with dropsy right before Jesus as bait.

And, of course, Jesus did heal the man, turned the tables, though, so to speak, because he addressed an issue with these Pharisees about compassion or their lack of it.

[4 : 10] And then he addressed the issue of pride. And they had plenty of that. And so then we have this man standing and doing what he did.

And we'll get to what all that is about here in just a moment. But the point I want to make is, here at the beginning, is it's clear that Jesus has faced off with about everyone in the room.

He's the invited guest, and he has made everybody angry with him. I guess we could say that the only guy who left that day happy was the guy who got healed. But everybody else left that dinner

party either disappointed because their little, you know, their little bait, their little trap didn't work, or they left that day offended because Jesus unmasked the sin of their hearts, unmasked their pride and self-centeredness, or they left insulted because how dare he say these things to us, you know. And all because Jesus served up a few dishes of his own at this dinner party. And that's really what it's all about. It's not about what the host served. We don't even know anything about that. It's all about what Jesus served that day. And these Pharisees could not stomach it. They didn't get what they wanted at this dinner party. But they certainly got what they deserved.

[5 : 34] And if they had eyes to see it and hearts open to receive it, they got what they needed. And hopefully we'll get what we need from what Jesus has to offer here at this dinner party.

And kind of as a reminder of what I see in the text, I see Jesus serving up a three-course meal. We've already looked at the first two courses. The appetizer of compassion was the first one because he was addressing the issue, the clear issue that these Pharisees cared absolutely nothing about this poor man, this man with dropsy.

They cared more about their oxen than they did about this man who was created in the image of God. And then he served up the main course. I called it the main course of humiliation because it was clear that these Pharisees cared only about their place of honor, about themselves.

They were completely self-consumed. You know, they're pushing and shoving and trying to get the best seats around the table. And so their problem was pride. Jesus served up a course on humiliation.

And then finally, the desert of salvation. The desert of salvation. And so we're going to wrap up this morning our looking at this passage. And looking at, we'll be looking at the third course of this three-course meal.

[6 : 57] My favorite part, the dessert. The dessert. So the desert of salvation. That's third. And finally, what Jesus serves up to these people.

It's interesting, I think, that Jesus saves the best for last. Now, I don't know if it's always been the tradition to have dessert last. I've heard that in some other cultures, dessert comes first.

And I wouldn't be opposed to that. You know, I wouldn't mind that one bit. But, in fact, I might start out at the dessert table when we get in there. You know, and then when everybody moves through the other part, then I'll go for that.

But Jesus saves the best for last. And that really is the way Jesus operates. I don't know if you've noticed that Satan always promises the best first and then the worst last.

And Jesus promises the worst first and then the best last. But Jesus saves the dessert for last. And it's also interesting, I think, even more interesting, that Jesus sets the dessert of salvation before these Jews.

[8 : 02] And then he declares that none of them will be allowed to eat it. In fact, they're not even going to be allowed to taste it. That's interesting. We'll get to that here in a moment. And more interesting still is the fact that these Jews, and this is an important point to note here in the passage, the Jews thought the dessert of salvation was theirs by divine right.

At the very least, by national right. Simply because they were Jews. And they were deserving of it. They were God's chosen people, by the way. And so it was a lock-in for them, this salvation.

And that's what they thought. And also, I think we could even add to that that these particular Jews, these Pharisees, these leaders and rulers and people who were, you know, the high society among the Jews, that they in particular thought that salvation was especially assured them because of who they were.

And they deserved it because they were, you know, after all, the keepers of the law. And they were the ones who were self-appointed to help everybody else keep the law and so forth.

So they thought they were righteous. Of course, righteous in their own eyes. And so they certainly thought they were deserving of this salvation. And that's why, by the way, that this guy stood up at this dinner party and said what he said in verse 15.

[9 : 31] He said, Blessed is the one, or he, who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. And, you know, you can almost see the wine glass in his hand or goblet, whatever they used.

He's offering up a toast. That's kind of what we have here. But it is a toast to himself. It's a toast to himself and to his fellow Pharisees here.

He is saying, really, essentially, blessed be us. Blessed be us because we shall eat the bread at the kingdom of God. And so this is yet another example of their self-confidence and their pious

self-righteousness and their kind of pharisaical pride.

It's just an example of that. And Jesus essentially responds, Is that what you think? Is that what you believe? And then he tells a parable.

All right, so this is really the first thing that I want us to consider here this morning. Not what Jesus said. We'll get to that. But what this Pharisee said in his, again, kind of sort of toast to himself.

[10:52] So before we get to the dessert, we have to see the deception. The deception. It's the deception of Satan. That's the first thing that we need to see here.

That's very subtle. It's not, you know, just right on the front, front there for you to see. It's somewhat implied. But you add to that what we know about the Pharisees and what has already transpired in the story.

Then we understand what is behind this statement by this Pharisee, this toast. He's deceived. It's the deception of Satan.

And so verse 15, I think, represents that. It represents how the deception of Satan is manifested. And it's manifested in a number of ways, in a number of false beliefs and false assurances.

Actually, there are four ways, I think, we could probably identify. And certainly a couple of these clearly apply to the Pharisees of Jesus' day, but they still apply today.

[11:54] And then a few others, we might add, that we can see in the world today. And the first one I would call favoritism. This is the deception of Satan when it comes to salvation.

It's kind of a favoritism, you know, and the idea that some people think that they are in with God because they are special people. You know, they are God's favorites in a sense.

That is, they have the favor of God simply by virtue of who they are. And that certainly was the position of the Jews in Jesus' day.

Clearly, the position of this man who stood and made a toast to that great banquet in eternity. It's favoritism. The Pharisees were completely deceived that they had salvation simply by virtue of their descendancy.

That is, they're Abrahamic ancestry. They are God's chosen people. But we also ought to consider that there are people today who have the same idea.

[13:08] Now, not just Jews, but in particular those who live in this country. In America. I mean, there are people in America who think they're Christians because this is a Christian nation.

They think their salvation rests upon their citizenship. That they are born Americans. You know, they say that, you know, that America is a Christian nation and I was born a citizen of this nation and therefore I am a Christian.

That's their, kind of their line of reasoning and their logic. And it's ridiculous, isn't it? I mean, when you put it that way, it just sounds so ridiculous. And yet, there are a lot of people who believe that or are counting on that.

And they think because they are part of this good nation, this, quote, Christian nation, end quote. And they think that that means they're saved.

I've said this before, but I heard Adrian Rogers say a number of times, I heard about some kittens who were born in a bread basket, but that didn't make them biscuits, you know. And being born in America is not going to make you a Christian.

[14:10] But there are a lot of people who think that they have the favor of God because they're part of this great nation. And that's what they think. Now, I would have to add that I think that this view is kind of dissolving in our day because this kind of cultural Christianity that has been so true of this country is vaporizing, dissolving right before us, you know.

We're not part of a nation now that is dominated by biblical Christianity. I'm sorry, but it's just not the case anymore, if it ever was, okay. And so the idea of being a Christian, being a Christian does not even really enter into the minds and thinking of a lot of people in our country today.

And yet the view does still exist. And it's kind of this idea of favoritism, that we're special people because we're part of this blessed nation. And so I'm not worried about eternity because I'm a Christian.

I'm an American. And so we're talking about the deceptions of Satan. First, favoritism. Some might even apply that to the fact that they were born and live in a Christian family.

So there's favoritism. Second, though, we might call what we might call religionism. You know, any time you have a word with ISM on the end of it, you know there's something wrong with it.

[15 : 35] Whether it's favoritism or religionism, And this, of course, is the belief that mere religious affiliation or religious devotion or even religious activity is the basis of salvation.

That would be religionism. And the Pharisees were all in for this, for religionism. And this guy toasted, again toasted himself and his cronies around him, toasted himself for his salvation because of his devotion to religious traditions.

And his devotion to pious regulations and ceremonial rituals and all of the kind of religious activities of his life. And so he was, in his own estimation, saved.

Because he was a rigid keeper of God's law and he identified with the Jews. But, you know, in a similar way, a similar thing happens in our country as well.

And you could just kind of do a survey if you wanted to. And you could ask people, are you a Christian? I mean, just the person out there on the street, are you a Christian? And especially if you were to ask someone who lives here in the Bible Belt of our country.

[16 : 51] And you just kind of go out and just anybody and everybody and say, are you a Christian? And many of them will point to their denominational affiliation. Or their church affiliation.

They say, well, yeah, I'm a Baptist. Really? Or I'm a Methodist. Or I'm a Lutheran. Or I'm a Catholic. And sometimes Catholics, usually Catholics will say, I'm a good Catholic.

Yeah, that makes them, you know, that makes them in with God. Just because of a religious affiliation and kind of a brand, people think that they're Christian.

Others will point not just to their affiliation, but their activity. Kind of their, you know, spiritual activity and religious activity. Like, for example, many people, I've heard people say this.

You know, I'm a Christian. I was baptized. Baptized by old so-and-so. I don't remember his name, but he baptized me. Down there at that church somewhere, but I forgot the name of that church.

And so they, you know, I'm saved, yeah, because I was baptized.

[17 : 52] And it's good to be baptized. But baptism's not going to save you. But it's a religious kind of religious duty, a religious activity. Something that you go through and do.

And some people will point to that activity and base their salvation upon that. Or maybe it's just simply attendance. I attend the church, you know.

Again, you know, sometimes I'll ask, oh, yeah, yeah, I heard that. Who's your pastor? Oh, I can't remember his name. Well, you know, it's crazy, isn't it?

But just because of attendance, some people will think they are in with God. Or maybe even a place of leadership and service in the church. Or maybe it's just simply an activity of reading the Bible.

Yeah, I read my Bible all the time. And it's all right to read your Bible. It's good to read your Bible.

Good to attend church. And I think every born-again believer should be baptized according to Scripture.

[18 : 48] But baptism, attendance, reading your Bible, even praying. People say, I pray all the time. That is not the proof of your salvation. And so that is, in essence, just simply religionism.

So salvation based upon favoritism, religionism. These are the deceptions of Satan. And I might add a third one here. Moralism. This is a big one.

And what is moralism? Well, by the way, it is not the conviction to live a moral life according to your understanding of Scripture.

I think every born-again believer should strive to live a life of morality and pureness before God according to the precepts of God's Word. So we're not talking about moralism.

That's not moralism. Moralism is something quite different. And as you could probably guess, it is just simply the belief that salvation is, first of all, obtained by, and it is defined by, and even secured by, a successful life of morality.

[19 : 58] That's moralism. You know, just to be a good man. Or to be a virtuous woman. Or to be a person of integrity. Now, it's good to be good, and you ought to be a person of integrity, and every woman should be virtuous, and many, many other things.

That's not the idea. The idea is saying that those things secure for me my salvation. Those things were the way, are the way to obtain salvation with God.

It's kind of the old weighing scales philosophy, you know. Where, you know, on one side of the scale, you put all of your good deeds, good things, good works, religious activity.

On the other side, you put all of the bad things, your sins, and all of that. And it's just the hope that the good things will outweigh the bad, and the scales will tip in your favor, and you'll be right with God.

And it's a lie. It's a deception of Satan. And so there's favoritism, and religionism, and moralism, and let me add a fourth one. Pluralism.

[21 : 06] What I might call pluralism. Which is just really a form of universalism. It's kind of saying, you know, we're all going to the same place anyway. You ever heard anybody say that?

Or all roads lead to heaven. That's a pretty favorite phrase. Or it doesn't really matter what you believe in as long as you're committed to it. You know, you're dedicated to it.

And it all sounds very wonderful. And certainly in our day, it sounds graciously tolerant. Which is what we're, you know, demanded to be, you know, politically correct.

And it all sounds very good. The only problem is, it's not true. That's a big, big problem, isn't it? It's a lie of Satan.

Jesus said in Matthew 7, 14, narrow is the way that leads to life. Narrow. It's not broad. You know, all roads lead in the same place. Only one road, and it's very narrow.

[22 : 09] And Jesus said there are few that find it. Few that find it. Later, he said in John 14, 6, this famous statement. He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by me.

That's pretty narrow, isn't it? And so you can't be a good Muslim and be saved. You can't be a good Jehovah's Witness and be saved, or a good Mormon and be saved.

Or you can't just be a good moral person and expect to secure your salvation. Jesus is the one and only way. And so the deception, you see, the deception of Satan.

But now, next, and here we come to the dessert. We have what we could call, and clearly is, the invitation of the sovereign.

The invitation of the sovereign. And it's really very clear. In response to this Pharisee's Satan-deceived and self-deceived beliefs and assurances, Jesus tells another parable.

[23 : 16] He's already told a few in this larger passage, and Jesus tells one here. And it's a very interesting one. It would have been one that would have seemed so silly to these Pharisees when they heard it.

Verse 16, look at it. A certain man gave a great supper, which would have been a very wonderful thing in their eyes. He gave a supper, great supper, and invited many.

So we're talking about a very huge banquet here. And he sent his servant at suppertime to say to those who were invited, Come, for all things are now ready.

All right, so understand this is a big, big deal. The Pharisees would have identified with this. In fact, they would have been salivated to think about being invited by some very wealthy man, obviously, to a great banquet.

So this would be a big deal to them. Their attention would have been perked up real quickly. It's a grand banquet. And for those who are invited, quite likely, it would be one of these once-in-a-lifetime kinds of events.

[24 : 25] And so first, as was the tradition of the day, a formal invitation would have been delivered to the privileged guests. They would have received a formal invitation, but there would be no date on it, no time on it.

The place and who is hosting the banquet certainly would have been a part of it. But the matters of date and time, that would have come later, in the second part of what would be traditionally a two-part invitation.

And so then, when everything was ready for the banquet, all the food prepared and the table set and all of that, when it's all ready, then the second part of this two-part invitation would have been issued to the guests.

And it would have been very similar to what Jesus has right here in the parable. Come, for all things are now ready. So they received the first invitation, the official invitation.

They know they are invited guests, but they don't know when it is. They don't know what day, what time. Probably soon, but they don't really know. And then they get the long-expected invitation, come right now because the table is set, the food is there, and it's time to eat.

[25 : 39] And they would come to the banquet. So this would be something that would have really been, that these Pharisees would have identified with. Now, in the parable, I think we should understand that God is the one hosting the banquet.

God is the one hosting the banquet. Eternal life, the kingdom of God is the subject here. God is the one hosting the banquet. The banquet then, of course, would represent salvation, eternal life.

The servant that is sent out to invite the guests, to deliver the invitations, the servant really would represent all the Old Testament prophets.

All the Old Testament prophets that spoke for God and prophesied of the future and prophesied, really, his plan of redemption for his people.

They would go and proclaim the gospel and, really, by extension, would involve every one of us that are born-again believers. We are also his servants who are bringing the invitation out and proclaiming that invitation.

[26 : 54] Now, the invited guests, the first invitees, those are the most important ones in the parable because of who Jesus is speaking to.

The invited guests in the parable are the Jews. In particular, these religious Jews, these Pharisees that are seated at the table around Jesus as he's telling this parable.

Now, we'll get back to those guys in a moment and also the others who are invited, but think for a moment about this invitation. That's a pretty important part of the parable.

Think about this invitation. In the first place, think about how simple it is. I mean, this is a very simple invitation. Come.

That's it. Come. Come. That's the invitation. Think of the simplicity of this invitation. Now, if we're to understand that the parable, the point of the parable is about, the subject of the parable is salvation, eternal life, the kingdom of God.

[28 : 07] That great banquet where we'll sit down with Jesus at his table. If that's the subject of the parable, then the invitation is the gospel.

Right? Come. For all things are now ready. But here's the simplicity of it. Come. Come. And you might think about the many times we have examples of this simple invitation in the New Testament. And I'm reminded of Zacchaeus, one of my favorite characters in the New Testament. One of my favorite stories, I guess because it's been told so often.

And as a father, I've told the story to our sons. And we've read, you know, little children's Bible story books. And Zacchaeus is a favorite one.

And of course, you know, the little Sunday school song that we all learn. Zacchaeus was a wee little man. A wee little man was he. And I'm not going to sing the rest of it. But you know it.

[29 : 06] And you know the story of Zacchaeus. And he's up in the sycamore tree. That kind of thing, you know. But, you know, what doesn't necessarily come out in the Sunday school songs was that Zacchaeus was a hated man.

Hated man. He was a wicked man. He was a dishonest tax collector. A publican. A thief. A liar. As they all were in this day. They were in league with the Romans. But they were Jews. And so, therefore, they cheated their own countrymen.

That's Zacchaeus. A sinner. And, but Jesus, you know, he's walking along, you know. He sees Zacchaeus up there in that sycamore tree.

And he issues an invitation to him. And it's a simple invitation. Zacchaeus, come. Come. And the Bible says that he made haste.

[30 : 10] Zacchaeus made haste. And came. And he received Jesus joyfully. That's what the Bible says. So it's a simple invitation. All Zacchaeus did was come.

He come. Now there's obedience involved. Obviously. There is repentance implied. Obviously. You can't come without leaving.

But it's a simple invitation. Come. And all Zacchaeus did was respond obediently to Jesus' command. And Jesus radically transformed his life.

That's what salvation is and does. So the simplicity of it. It's really very clear. And here's another example. After the resurrection of Jesus. See, the disciples had not yet fully received the gospel yet.

They'd walk with Jesus and they, you know, and they'd been called by him. And so after the resurrection and before Pentecost, the disciples were discouraged.

[31 : 16] They were depressed. They were disillusioned. They were defeated. They really were. They didn't understand what was going on. And so they decided to do something highly spiritual.

They went fishing. They went fishing. Another amen. Thank you, Al. And from their fishing boat, you remember the story, from their fishing boat, they looked and they saw the resurrected Jesus standing there on the shoreline.

And when they came to, came ashore to meet with him, he had prepared something for them, a supper. Banquet. A supper.

There was, you know, fried fish there and fresh baked bread. I don't know where he got that, but probably took rocks and turned them into bread.

I remember Adrian Rogers. I always liked to quote him. He said, you know, it's almost like Jesus said, I won't do it when the devil tempts me to do it. I'll do it on my own now.

[32 : 24] And so, and what did he say to them? Come and dine. A simple, simple invitation. And so, the invitation is so clear, so simple.

It's come. Jesus said, come all you who are weary. I tell you, apart from Christ, apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, salvation is a weary life.

Most believers don't know it, but they're weary. Jesus says, come all you who are weary. weary and heavy laden. By what?

By sin. The guilt of sin. He said, come all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

It's a simple invitation. All you have to do is come. The simplicity of it. But also, you should notice the availability of it. The availability.

[33 : 26] All things are now ready. All things are ready. And again, the customs of Jesus' day are really quite strange compared to ours. You know, you wouldn't invite friends over for dinner and not tell them when.

And then when it's all set on the table, you wouldn't call them up and say, hey, it's ready. You need to come. You know, just come. Drop everything. Come for dinner. We wouldn't do that in our culture. But in Jesus' day, that's the way they did it.

And so a specific invitation would be then given after everything was prepared and the table was set. Then the invitation would go out.

Come, for all things are ready. That's strange for us today, but it's a picture of salvation. A picture of salvation.

See, when it comes to salvation, when the invitation is extended to the sinner, everything is ready.

[34 : 35] Everything is now ready. God has set everything on the table for this feast. It's not potluck. You don't bring a little bit to add to it. God has provided everything you need for salvation.

Everything is now ready. Come. And yet some will say, you know, well, I need to do something first. Or I need to change something first in my life.

Or I'm not quite ready. Or, you know, I don't have what it takes to be a Christian right now. But wait a minute. Are you expected to set this table, this table of salvation?

Are you expected to provide some element of the dinner? No. No. Come.

The invitation is come. And to come empty-handed, by the way. And really, when you think about it, the absolute readiness of this salvation, the absolute readiness of it, that's the reason why you should come.

[35 : 45] It's all ready. Jesus has done it all. Everything has been finished. Everything is accomplished. You come. So the invitation of the Savior, the simplicity of it, come.

The availability of it. All things are now ready. But we should add the urgency of it. all things are now ready. What was true in days of old is true in the sense of salvation as well in the gospel invitation.

There's no guarantee that the invitation will be extended beyond this moment. No guarantee of that. Isaiah 1.18 says, come now and let us reason together.

That's what Jesus said. Come now and let us reason together. Says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Come now. 2 Corinthians 6.2 Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation.

[36 : 58] Hebrews 4.7 Today, if you will hear his voice, if you will hear that invitation. Do not harden your heart. Now, you know, you would think that all would respond to a gracious invitation like that.

And getting back to the parable itself, it would be unthinkable for anyone to refuse such an invitation to such a grand banquet by such a generous host.

You would think everyone would respond to it, but sadly, no. Notice the third thing here in the text, the deception of Satan, the invitation of the sovereign, and then finally the rejection of the sinner.

The rejection of the sinner. Let me just ask you, how are most people today responding to the gracious invitation of the Savior? How are they responding today?

Most people. Well, they're rejecting it. Refusing it. Like the first group of people in the parable. Verse 18, but they all with one accord began to make excuses.

[38 : 13] And this is where, by the way, the Pharisees would have started chuckling and laughing and at the very least their eyebrows would have been raised because this would just be ridiculous. This just would not happen. No one would ever refuse such an invitation to such a grand banquet.

They just wouldn't do it. And so as they begin to hear Jesus go on with the parable, they're thinking, this is silly. Because Jesus goes on, but they all with one accord began to make excuses.

The first said to him, I have bought a piece of ground and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excuse. Are you kidding me? What?

That ground going to sprout wings and fly away? The ground won't be there the day after the banquet? This is silly. It's ridiculous. No one would ever do that.

But the idea, of course, is, I think, behind that is that some will allow possessions to keep them from obedience to the gospel. Their personal possessions, material things, the things of life, the desire to keep what they have and get more that they don't have, even to the point of depriving someone else of it.

[39 : 27] Possessions will keep many people from responding to the simple invitation of the gospel. And some, by the way, will let vocation, their vocation keep them from responding to the gospel.

Verse 19, and another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused. And I can just hear the Pharisees snicker at this.

This would be absurd. It would be ridiculous. I mean, do you really think that this man is going to refuse this once-in-a-lifetime invitation to a banquet so that he can go out and plow his field?

And at night? It's meant to be absurd, you see. people have for years though, and today people are allowing their preoccupation with their occupation to keep them from God, keep them from the gospel.

But then there's a third excuse. Verse 20, still another said, I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come. This is the most absurd one of all. Just take your wife with you.

[40 : 45] Wait, you say she's not invited? Well, leave her at home. She'll understand. By the way, in this culture, they wouldn't even have thought about it.

I mean, women were way down here, you know, in that society, and, you know, I've been invited to a banquet. Sorry, honey, stay home and keep the kids. Just the way it is.

It's just ridiculous. They would have thought this is stupid. But the idea is that some will allow human relations to keep them from obedience to the gospel. You know, he's got a wife.

Can't go. Now, this was all so ridiculous to these Pharisees, these excuses that were offered. Unthinkable, ridiculous, laughable.

No one in their right minds would have refused a banquet, an invitation to a banquet like this for any reason. And that, of course, is exactly the point that Jesus is making.

[41 : 50] Because we're not talking, he's not talking about an earthly banquet, he's talking about the great banquet. He's talking about salvation. And he is saying to these Pharisees, you, every one of you, have received the invitation and every one of you have rejected it.

That's what he's saying. You think it's absurd for anyone to refuse a banquet of this great, wealthy man who has invited so many and you think that would be absolutely unthinkable, absurd?

Well, you have refused the banquet of the king. I mean, he sent the prophets, the Old Testament prophets, to issue a special invitation to his banquet.

He sent them to you, you Jews. Jews. And he sent John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets, to tell you in essence, come for, he's come, Jesus has come, come for all things are now ready.

He said, behold the Lamb of God which takes away the sin of the world. But Jesus is saying, you would not come. Do you see? The parable is speaking directly to these Jews at the dinner party, these pharisaical Jews, these self-righteous and self-consumed and hypocritical Jews.

[43 : 17] He's speaking to them. And it's interesting that when in verse 20 the servant came and reported these things to his master, the master of the house became angry. Rightfully so.

He might as well say, God's angry with you. and his wrath is now upon you. The master of the house was angry and he said to his servant, this is interesting, go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.

These represent the common Jews of the day. I think that's the idea here. First, the invitation was given to these leaders of the Jews and they rejected it without even a thought.

And so the gospel went to the Jews, the common Jews, represented by the man with the dropsy earlier in the story, common people, and many Jews, when the gospel was presented after Pentecost, many Jews were saved.

That's the idea here, the servant going to the city and offering it to the general population and many of them were saved and some came in because the servant said, Master, it is done as you commanded and still there is room.

[44 : 42] So many responded to the invitation. So many Jews came to Christ initially in the early days of the church. And then he said in verse 22, the servant said, Master, it's done, there's still room.

Then the master said to the servant, go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. Who are them? The Gentiles.

That's us. The highways and hedges, that's outside of the walls of Jerusalem, the boundaries of Israel. the Gentiles represents you and me.

But the point here is that it's a dangerous thing to refuse the gospel invitation of God.

Dangerous thing. Jesus said in verse 24, and this by the way is not part of the parable, this is not the hypothetical or imaginary story, this is the reality.

[45 : 44] Look at it, he said there, for I say to you, and to whom is he speaking here? To these Pharisees, these leaders of the Jews.

For I say to you that none of those men who were invited, those guys in the parable, who represent you, not you, the Pharisees, the Pharisees, leaders of the Jews, he said, for I say to you, none of those men, none of you, he's saying, who were invited shall taste my supper.

You're not going to have this salvation. The supper is the Lord's supper, not the Lord's supper we observe, but the great supper, talk about salvation. He's saying that none of them would taste of his salvation.

To them had come the gospel. To them had been entrusted the gospel of Jesus Christ. To them the Messiah came and they refused him and not a single one of these self-righteous Jews there at this dinner would even taste of the dessert of salvation.

Not a single one of them and that has been the condition of Israel at large, the Jewish nation at large, ever since, even into our day for several thousand years that's been the case.

[47 : 14] But in closing, it does not have to be the case with you. Any of you. Or anyone living today.

Because the invitation is still there. Jesus says, and we can pass this invitation on and should, it. But Jesus says to maybe someone here, come, for all things are now ready.

Amen.