

Series: Parables: Did You Hear That?  
Message Title: **The Parable About Excuses**  
Date: Sunday, September 16, 2018  
Scripture: Luke 14:12-24  
Speaker: David H. McKinley  
Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

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## Introduction

Have you ever made an excuse for something in order to justify yourself?

As I see your hands raised, I realize I am speaking to some first class excuse makers! Yet, if there is one place you don't want to make an excuse, it is with God.

Today we are picking up where we left off last week. Jesus is in the same room, same meal, and with the same crowd.

Last week, we learned that Jesus warned His host about presumption toward themselves and exclusivity toward others—"Us four and no more."

"He said also to the man who had invited Him, 'When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they

also invite you in return and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just'" (Luke 14:12-14 ESV).

It can be easy to create an insider mentality and yet, there are so many "outside." There is a coming kingdom for which we live and serve.

This story is about the attitude pervasive in that room. I pray this is not our attitude—self-absorbed and self-focused in comfort and convenience. Our real purpose should be about something much greater—the commission and calling for God's people to take part in the invitation to His table.

But Jesus was not finished. He carries the conversation further with both personal implications for the Pharisees then and for us as people gathered in this room today.

"When one of those who reclined at table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, 'Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!'" (Luke 14:15 ESV).

This was an awkward interruption and redirection in the conversation. And then, Jesus tells this parable:

But He said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet'" (Luke 14:16-24 ESV).

One of the most important matters for every church to consider is that we must never, ever consent or be content with the “same old, same old.” Our focus must always be toward those who are outside. We exist for people who are not here yet.

I want to provide us with four words that move us forward, focusing on the Kingdom of God: Invitation, Preparation, Persuasion, Exclusion.



## **1. Invitation**

“Save the Date” was common in the ancient world because of the logistics of such an affair. You would get an invitation at the beginning of the celebration planning—a notice of intent for you to come. But then, you would get the “call to come”—a reminder you are on the list at the hour of the celebration.

The God who created you to know Him has invited you to come and see His glory and share His goodness in heaven. He has made a way for you to come to Him when He redeemed you through His Son, Jesus Christ.

God is seeking us to share the knowledge of His love and grace.

Genesis 6:18—Come into the Ark (Noah)

Matthew 11:28-29—Jesus invites us to come!

Revelation 22:17

## **2. Preparation**

See Luke 14:17. This was quite an ordeal and undertaking. There was nothing easy in the preparation of food, etc. All of this began with the initiative—the gracious action of a caring host—who invited others to his home and to his table.

He wanted people to come, to enjoy his provision and share in a celebration. We are not told what they were celebrating, but we know weddings were among the greatest of celebrations.

This host gave notice of the event and made preparations for the guests. Yet, while each had received and been prepared—familiar—they began to make excuses. “I can’t come.”

The audacity of this decline was incredible—a field, oxen, wife?

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible is a witness to the unfolding initiative of God to recall and reclaim a fallen human race. He put our names on a list and He has sent forth an invitation to come to His table—the celebration of His Son, Jesus Christ, in the kingdom yet to come.

The message of the Law and Prophets of the Old Testament were all part of the preparation of these things. On the Emmaus Road, Scripture tells us this: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (Luke 24:27 ESV).

The Jews were the first. They were given the message of the gospel and invitation to God’s table and His Kingdom.

Never let anyone tell you the Old Testament is not part of the unfolding message of the preparation and presentation of Jesus coming into the world. We cannot separate ourselves from the unity and authority of God’s voice in the Old Testament in an effort to better validate the New Testament.

Jesus made it clear. He came to complete the preparations, and we can have confidence when we walk through the dark veil of death.

“Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am you may be also” (John 14:1-3 ESV).

How often do we see and hear these same excuses? “I’m tied up... I’ve got to travel... I’ve got a future plan I am pursuing, but I’ll reconsider some day. I’ve got these ‘oxen,’ this car, this boat, this house. I’ve got a wife, this relationship, etc.”

There are so many excuses then and today for not responding or coming to the Lord.

### **3. Persuasion**

When these dismissed themselves with their excuses, Jesus said there was a move away from the guest list to gather the unlikely and uninvited guests.

Jesus addressed this sort of guest list in Luke 14:12-14. He was speaking of God's work in the world and the final day—the resurrection of the just.

Notice the words, "compel them to come," in Luke 14:23. This is the same message of urgency shared by the Apostle Paul:

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20 ESV).

#### **4. Exclusion**

Opportunity passed—people in a Christ-less eternity. This is a sad consequence of excuse and unbelief. Oh church, let's not miss these days of opportunity we have!

See Matthew 7:21-23 and Revelation 21:8.

"Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others... For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that One has died for all, therefore all have died; and He died for all, that those who live



might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised” (2 Corinthians 5:11a, 14-15 ESV).

God has chosen and commissioned us to take part in the invitation of redemption. Our names are on the guest list and He allows us to share the joy of seeing other guests hear and receive His gracious invitation. We do not deserve it and grace has brought us in.

Church, God has called and commissioned us. Let’s keep moving forward by faith together! No excuses! Did you hear that?

The Bible closes with a great invitation: “The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price” (Revelation 22:17 ESV).