

gospel in life

Generosity: Generosity & Hospitality

¹²Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. ¹³But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

¹⁵When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

¹⁶Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

¹⁸"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

¹⁹"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

²⁰"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

²¹"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

²²"'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

²³"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'" Luke 14:12-24 (NIV)

Goal of This Study:

To understand our position as unworthy guests welcomed into God's kingdom and to likewise extend hospitality to others without expecting repayment.

Background Information:

In Jesus' time there was no organized welfare system. Wealthy people in the community were expected to help neighbors who had economic problems. But this system was not in any way rooted in compassion for the poor or marginalized; rather, it was based on a system of self-interest. When the wealthy aided the poor, it was done with great fanfare as a sign of their status in the community. In the same way, when those with resources showed generosity and hospitality, the acts were done with the expectation that the favor would be returned in the form of political preference, economic breaks, and public acknowledgement.

Jesus' teaching was radically different. When he told the parable of a man who planned a great banquet, he was portraying a typical way a wealthy man sought to sustain and create new relationships with those who received his patronage. In the parable, the host discovered that the expected guests turned down his invitation. Instead, his invitation was accepted by those who couldn't begin to repay it.

Jesus is revealing the tendency of the religious and self-sufficient to resist the gospel, while the needy tend to embrace it. In doing so, he calls his followers to extend hospitality in a way that defines the patronage system of the day and provides for those who have nothing to offer in return.

The Text:

1. Who are the people you are most likely to invite to a party?
2. In verses 15-24, two different groups of people are invited to a great banquet at two different times. How would you describe the first group that was invited to the banquet?
3. How would you describe the second group that was invited to the banquet?
Jesus' contemporaries would have been reminded of the future kingdom banquet of Isaiah 25:6-9

⁶ On this mountain the Lord Almighty
will prepare
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine—
the best of meats and the finest of
wines.

⁷ On this mountain he will destroy
the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
the sheet that covers all nations;

⁸ he will swallow up death forever.
The Sovereign Lord will wipe away the

tears from all faces;
he will remove his people's disgrace
from all the earth.

The Lord has spoken.

⁹ In that day they will say,
"Surely this is our God;
we trusted in him, and he saved us.
This is the Lord, we trusted in him;
let us rejoice and be glad in his
salvation."

4. How would you describe the Isaiah feast, and what does this tell you about God and his kingdom?

Jesus Completing the Story:

5. What do you learn from the parable about the heart and intention of God?

Living Out the Story:

6. Who are the people on the margins of the Luke banquet? And who are the people on the margins of our invitation lists?
7. The Greek word for hospitality is *philoxenia*, which literally means "love of strangers." What are some ways that we can make room for those who are not typical "party invitees," those who are unwelcomed and excluded in our society?