

## Stories of Celebration

### The Great Banquet

*Then 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..." Luke 14:12*

*"...if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." Luke 14:12-14*

*When 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." Luke 14:15*

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

*"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.' "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' Luke 14:16-20*

*'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'*

#### **-Material Possession**

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

#### **-Work and Responsibility**

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

#### **-Priority**

*"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.' Luke 14:21*

**Jesus was intentional to engage the very people the religious community avoided. That should get our attention as well.**

*“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ ‘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...’” Luke 14:22-23*

As you read through the New Testament one of the greatest threats to the church and one of the greatest challenges of the culture at that time was **racism**.

*“People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.” Luke 13:29*

**Continued denial of racism is, in fact, racism.**

*“Talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people.” Acts 10:27*

*He said to them: “You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.” Acts 10:28*

*“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right.” Acts 10:34*

**“The bloodline of Jesus is thicker, deeper, stronger than the bloodline of race, ethnicity and of family.” John Piper**