

Luke 14

Charles Dailey © 2015
Revision of 7/4/2021 NLT
Printed 7/15/2021 CPS

Introduction:

Luke the writer is a man well-educated in Greek and Roman cultures who is writing to an office holder in the Roman Government. The man, Theophilus, was probably a believer in Christ already.

Lesson Content:

Healing a Man Who Was Swollen

Parable Of The Ambitious Guest

The Guest List That God Honors

Parable Of The Excuses.

The Cost Of True Discipleship

HEALING A MAN WHO WAS SWOLLEN

(14:1.) One Sabbath day Jesus went to eat dinner in the home of a leader of the Pharisees, and the people were watching Him closely. (2) There was a man there whose arms and legs were swollen.

- This is the third invitation to the home of a **Pharisee**. His host and others wanted to **watch him closely**. They wanted some ground on which to accuse Him.
- Dinner was always cold to avoid the **work** of heating it on the **Sabbath**. Hear Moses:

He told them, "This is what the LORD commanded: Tomorrow will be a day of complete rest, a holy Sabbath day set apart for the LORD. So bake or boil as

much as you want today, and set aside what is left for tomorrow. Exodus 16:23 NLT

- This man may have been a “plant” just to trap **Jesus** into performing some work on the **Sabbath**. It is clear that he was not a guest at dinner because of verse 4 below.
- The leaders had not spoken but Jesus knew their thoughts, so He ask a loaded question:

(3.) Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in religious law, "Is it permitted in the law to heal people on the Sabbath day, or not?"

(4) When they refused to answer, Jesus touched the sick man and healed him and sent him away.

- Jesus puts His critics on the defensive by asking them if it was lawful **to heal on the Sabbath**.
- **J.W. McGarvey** writes:
If they declared it lawful, they defeated their plot, and if they said otherwise, they involved themselves in an argument with him in which, as experience taught them, they would be humiliated before the people.
- Their non-answer was revealing. **They refused to answer**. Remember, these men had the answer to all questions. Since no one objected, **Jesus healed the man** and **sent him away**.

(5.) Then He turned to them and said, "Which of you doesn't work on the Sabbath? If your son or your cow falls into a pit, don't you rush to get him out?" (6) Again they could not answer.

- Now Jesus turns up the heat with another question. Jesus affirmed that they would retrieve a **son** or even a **cow** from a **pit** on the **Sabbath**. These all-knowing teachers were silent again. They were unwilling to admit they were wrong.
- **William Barclay** makes some astute observations about Jesus in this encounter:

(i) It shows us the serenity with which Jesus met life. There is nothing more trying than to be under constant and critical scrutiny. When that happens to most people they lose their nerve and, even more often, lose their temper. They become irritable; and while there may be greater sins than irritability there is none that causes more pain and heartbreak. But even in things which would have broken most men's spirit, Jesus remained serene. If we live with him, he can make us like himself.

(ii) It is to be noted that Jesus never refused any man's invitation of hospitality. To the end he never abandoned hope of men. To hope to change them or even to appeal to them, might be the forlornest of forlorn hopes, but he would never let a chance go. He would not refuse even an enemy's invitation. It is as clear as daylight that we will never make our enemies our friends if we refuse to meet them and talk with them.

(iii) The most amazing thing about the scribes and Pharisees is their staggering lack of a sense of proportion. They would go to endless trouble to formulate and to obey their petty rules and regulations; and yet they counted it a sin to ease a sufferer's pain on the Sabbath day.

If a man had only one prayer to pray he might well ask to be given a sense of proportion. The things which disturb the peace of congregations are often trifles. The things which divide men from men and which destroy friendships are often little things to which no sensible man, in his saner moments, would allow any importance. The little things can bulk so large that they can fill the whole horizon. Only if we put first things first will all things take their proper

place--and love comes first. (End of William Barclay quotation.)

PARABLE OF THE AMBITIOUS GUEST

(7.) When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honor near the head of the table, He gave them this advice: (8) "When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? (9) The host will come and say, 'Give this person your seat.' Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

- Since the leaders had nothing to say, **Jesus** told a story illustrating proper behaviour. The **seats of honor** were probably at the bottom of the U in their U-shaped tables, to the right and the left of the bride and groom at the **wedding feast**.
- Jesus taught that a guest should not take a **seat of honor** because someone **more distinguished** may appear and you will be given the last place.

(10.) "Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. (11) For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

- Jesus advised a guest to take the **lowest place** at the banquet. If the host so chooses, this person may be **honored** by being ushered to a more prestigious seat.
- God can do nothing with proud people (vs. 11). In the end, the proud shall be cut down to size. But those who have **humbled** themselves before God and their fellow man shall be given great honor.

THE GUEST LIST GOD HONORS

(12.) Then He turned to His host. "When you put on a luncheon or a banquet," He said, "don't invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. (13) Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. (14) Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you."

- Jesus does not forbid normal social life, but He is encouraging people to do good things without any expectation of repayment so it will have eternal value.
- **God** will repay such hospitality at the second coming when the righteous are raised from their graves. **James Smith** says it this way: "Christ emphasized humility

often in his teaching. God can do nothing with proud people. In the end, the proud shall be cut down to size. But those who have humbled themselves before God and their fellow man shall be given great honor."

(15.) Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed, "What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet in the Kingdom of God!"

- One guest at dinner spoke a **blessing** on those who **attend a banquet in the kingdom of God**. We take it that he was extolling those who made it successfully to the great feast that is heaven.
- While he did not have a clear understanding of the **kingdom**, yet he knew it was desirable for everyone.



- This triggered another story based on a banquet and directed to the man who had just spoken. The story points out the importance of accepting the invitation to dinner in the **kingdom** when it is offered.

PARABLE OF THE EXCUSES

(16.) Jesus replied with this story: "A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations. (17) When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, the banquet is ready.' (18) But they all began making excuses. One said, 'I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.'

- So the kingdom of God is like a banquet (vs. 15). What is really important is that one has accepted the invitation to attend that great feast.
- The **man** in the parable represents God. The Jews issued two **invitations** to formal dinners. The first announced the date and the second urged the guests to **come** now. So here, when the **feast** was actually ready, the second invitation was issued.
- The **excuses** began when the second **invitation** was delivered. The **excuse** that the guest had **just bought a field** and had to inspect it rather than attend the dinner made little sense. He would have **inspected** the **field** before buying it. This was a major insult to the host. It set little value on the preparations by the host or friendship with him.

(19.) Another said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.' (20) Another said, 'I now have a wife, so I can't come.'

- This guest had bought 10 **oxen** and wanted **to try them out**. He would **have tried them** before he **bought them**. Anyway, he could have tried them out the day after the dinner. This was another major insult to the host.

- This third refusal doesn't come with an explanation. What is there about being just married that keeps one from attending a dinner? It was another resounding insult to the host who had prepared the meal.
- Each excuse contains an element of newness— new field, new oxen and new wife. Those invited are not to be hindered with love of possession, the affairs of life or social ties.

(21.) "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'

- The reports made the **master furious**. The banquet was not called off, but he sent his **servant** to the **streets** and the **alleys**. Those invited were not a part of the social world of the **master**. They were the **poor, crippled, blind and lame**.
- Someone has observed that the **poor** cannot buy fields, the **crippled** may not marry and the **blind** cannot examine oxen.
- **T.R. Appleberry** describes this scene:

The Jews were God's chosen people, but, by the time Jesus came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they had assumed an attitude of utter indifference to God that exactly fits the description of the excuse-makers of this parable. Their excuses were insulting to the one who had invited them and wholly without justification.

They were not the kind to buy a piece of land or a team of oxen without knowing something about them. The excuses were ridiculous. The one who said he couldn't come because he had just married a wife was disregarding the Law of Moses (Deut. 24:5) . During the first year of marriage a man was excused from military duty so that he might have time for just such occasions as described in the parables.

While the Jews in general rejected Christ, the publicans and sinners did turn to Him for forgiveness and help. This is the second invitation which was extended by Jesus.

(22.) After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.' (23) So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. (24) For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.'"

- The **servant** was told to dig deeper into the ranks of the disenfranchised because the **Master** wanted his **house filled**.
- One point of the story is that those who had originally been invited are permanently off of the **invitation** list. This was directed at the Jewish nation and particularly at their leaders, some of who were listening. Now the invitation will be directed to those looked down on by the national leaders. **Barclay** says it clearly: "In Palestine, when a man made a feast, the day was announced long beforehand and the invitations were sent out and accepted; but the hour was not announced; and when the day came and all things were ready, servants were sent out to summon the already invited guests. To accept the invitation beforehand and then to refuse it when the day came was a grave insult.

In the parable the master stands for God. The originally invited guests stand for the Jews. Throughout all their history they had looked forward to the day when God would break in; and when he did, they tragically refused his invitation.

The poor people from the streets and lanes stand for the tax-gatherers and sinners who welcomed Jesus in a way in which the orthodox never did. Those gathered in from the roads and the hedges stand for the gentiles for whom there was still ample room at the feast of God. As Bengel, the great commentator, put it, "both nature and grace abhor a vacuum,"

and when the Jews refused God's invitation and left his table empty, the invitation went out to the gentiles.”

THE COST OF TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

(25.) A large crowd was following Jesus. He turned around and said to them, (26) "If you want to be My disciple, you must hate everyone else by comparison-- your father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters--yes, even your own life. Otherwise, you cannot be My disciple. (27) And if you do not carry your own cross and follow Me, you cannot be My disciple.

- We are seeing a different scene. Jesus was popular with the **crowds** while he was increasingly unpopular with the religious leaders. Rather than point how easy it was to follow Him, Jesus stressed how hard it was. The word **hate** is only in a comparative sense. Jesus must have priority over all other relationships.
- The only thing He was handing out was their own personal **cross**. They must be willing to die for Him in order to be His **disciple**.

(28.) "But don't begin until you count the cost. For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? (29) Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you. (30) They would say, 'There's the person who started that building and couldn't afford to finish it!'

- The builder would first **calculate the cost to see** if he had the **money to finish it**. The builder would be ridiculed for running out of **construction** money before **finishing**. The lesson is that those who decide to become a disciple of Jesus will need the kind of spiritual commitment to remain faithful until death. They need to **calculate the cost** before following Jesus.

(31.) "Or what king would go to war against another king without first sitting down with his counselors to discuss whether his army of 10,000 could defeat the 20,000 soldiers marching against him? (32) And if he can't, he will send a delegation to discuss terms of peace while the enemy is still far away. (33) So you cannot become My disciple without giving up everything you own.

- A **king** is responsible for his men and he must consider if he can win against an invader with twice as many men. If not, he must ask for **terms of peace** and do it soon while the invader **is still far away**. If counting the cost leads to asking for **terms of peace** which include, of course, giving up possessions, so the disciples of Jesus must be willing to surrender possessions.
- **McGarvey** writes of both stories:

The tower can not be built by him who spends his time or squanders his money on other enterprises, nor can the peace be maintained by one who does not fully renounce his rebellion.
- **Henry Drummond** commented,

The entrance fee into the kingdom of heaven is nothing: the annual subscription is everything.

(34.) "Salt is good for seasoning. But if it loses its flavor, how do you make it salty again? (35) Flavorless salt is good neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown away. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!"

- **Salt** is for imparting flavor to food. If it becomes tasteless, it is useless. Disciples following Jesus must retain their saltiness. To do otherwise makes them useless.
- **Anyone with ears to hear. . .** this was Jesus' way of warning people to listen.