

JOY — Vision For The Kingdom

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We haven't scratched the surface of the Joy that Jesus has for his community, so we're taking a deep dive into Romans to discern how we learn Joy in relational community.

Future Now & Not Yet

The Kingdom of God has come now as a result of Jesus' work on earth, but the kingdom is not fully here yet. This introduces so many tensions because we're called to live as God's people, joyful in the midst of wars and famines, political unrest, (and Barbenheimer).



How are we to be a joyful people, living as if the kingdom were here in the middle of all of the Not Yet of trauma and grief and brokenness?

The vision for this Kingdom community of joy starts in Luke 14:

(The context of this passage is that Jesus is invited to a prominent Pharisee's house to dinner, and he begins to critique their practices.)

Luke 14:15-24

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.’

“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.’

“ ‘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. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’ ”

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Lk 14:15–24.

The Future



Our future is a feast, it’s a wedding supper, it’s joy. It’s celebrating differences uniting together. We are meant to long for this day to come.

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.

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

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.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Is 25:6–9.

“I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until
that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.”

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Mt 26:29.

People will come from east and west and north and south, and will
take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Lk 13:29.

Then the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are
invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!” And he added, “These
are the true words of God.”

The Now



Feasting and meals should be central to the life of the church, not peripheral.

We can't wait until we get to the new creation to act like that people. Evil has been defeated at the cross, and our shame is gone and we have new identities now, so what are we waiting for?

We should be a people of celebration and joy?

What if we became this people in the next 3 - 5 years? We'll be known for feasting, celebrating, and enjoying one another.

We already had a picture of this from the past:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Ac 2:42–47.

This sounds like the future happening now. The people who were gathered there were from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Judea, Galilee, Turkey, Egypt, Libya, Arabia, Greece, and Italy. They were all mixed Jews from these nations.

And they were unified: God's people in God's places under God's rule.

They devoted themselves to feasting, prayer, and fellowship. Seattle could use some of that.



The church is not a program, but a a lifestyle.

Just like the first church, we get to practice now the lifestyle of God's kingdom of the future now. And because the first church practiced that lifestyle, the Lord added to that church.



If we live now like he will be then, we will be known for radical hospitality toward the outside.

Everybody gets an invite. Let's read the passage again:

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The New International Version (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Lk 14:15–24.

The King’s decree is that everyone on the outside, the rejects, they are to be invited. This is Jesus’ picture of the future.

There’s much that can be said, but our focus for today is on the feast. Jesus was at a feast thrown by professionals, and his critique is that their invitation is too small. He wants them to expand their circles.

Jesus doesn’t tell the Pharisees to invite people to the temple, but to their meals.



As our corollary for today, you don't have to wait on the pastors to begin building this culture. Jesus already commissioned us to do so.

We want to be known for radical love and hospitality for those who aren't like us, and the way we get there is by opening up our homes to one another AND to those who aren't like us.

We want to be a, "hey there you are!" kind of people, not a "hey here I am!" kind of people.