



❖ Who Will Be There? “Blessed Are Those Who Are In” (14:15)

- The context: Jesus is attending a feast at a prestigious Pharisee’s home (1).
 - Jesus heals a man in front of the host and guests on the Sabbath (1-6).
 - Jesus promotes humility, warning against picking the seats of honor (7-11).
 - Jesus warns against only inviting those who can invite you back (12-14).
- At that moment a man says: “*Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God*” (15).
 - Is this said to dispel the awkward tension after Jesus’ correcting the host?
 - Or did he recognize the parallel between that meal and the Messianic meal?
 - Did he say this meaning, “We’re all going to be at an even bigger more important feast someday?”
 - Regardless, the assumption is inclusion: “Won’t we be blessed to be at the messianic feast.”
- The future Messianic Feast.
 - The Pharisees anticipated the Messiah’s future feast.
 - It was believed only Jews, not Gentiles, would be there.
 - And perhaps only the Pharisees and not Sadducees.
 - And certainly not Gentiles, sinners, the lame or sell outs (tax collectors).
- What is the Kingdom of God?
 - The coming Messianic realm where God rules and all is made right.
 - Jesus pronounced that in himself the kingdom had drawn near.
 - One day it will be 100% on earth “as it is in heaven.”
- The common thread in all these events and conversations is INCLUSION.

❖ The Assumed Guests, Considered to be In (16-17)

- This is the way big barbeques happened in villages at that time.
 - Invitations were sent out days and even weeks in advance.
 - When the feast was ready, the 2nd call was sent to all those who’d RSVP’d.
 - *Esther 6:14* *While they were still talking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.*
 - To not come having said you would be unthinkable offensive.
- *Those who had been invited*—meaning they’d been invited and had RSVP’d.
- The invitation ignites our will, our heart our choice.

❖ The Expected Guests Don’t Want to Come (18-20)

- Notice the three excuses mentioned here. They are hyperbolic or ridiculous so that their excuses are unacceptable.
 - *I just bought a field.* Property is inspected before a person buys it.
 - *I just bought five yoke of oxen.* Animals are inspected before the purchase.
 - A wedding was not a spontaneous event. It was on the calendar.
- No matter who you are or new plans you’ve made, you still must come.

- In the end, everyone received what they wanted and what they chose.

❖ The Unexpected Guests (21)

- Here the unexpected happens. Guests who are on the bottom rung of society are invited. People who would not impress other guests and who could not reciprocate.
 - It was uncommon to eat with someone of lower social status.
 - As blemished animals could not be sacrificed (Lev 22:19-22), so blind, lame, or crippled priests could not fully serve in the temple (Lev 21:17-23).
 - Qumran writings are clear that the “lame, blind, deaf, dumb or defiled in the flesh” are excluded from the future messianic banquet.
- This category of people is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture as the concern of the Messiah (Isa 35:6; Jer 31:8; Mat 11:5; 15:31; 21:14).
- Maybe the “king of the mountain” pyramid that our social world is built on is upside down from heaven. The people we walk past are noticed by God.

❖ Final Call and the Door Closes (22-24)

- The Gospel is Inclusive: Last call, to the *roads and country lanes...and compel*—try to convince everyone. God’s choice is inclusion.
 - We and the church as a whole must be outward and inclusive.
- Those that are not included chose to not be there. We are free to choose to exclude God.
- In the end, those at the banquet will largely not be the people of influence. Not the people expected but humble, wanting the messiah and including others.
- Those who believe, are grateful, and responsive toward Jesus will be there, regardless of social or religious qualifications.

❖ Taking It Home

- Think of a time when you were excluded from something or someone. How did that feel.?
- Who do you unwittingly exclude in conversations, meals, invitations? Think of your schools, neighborhoods, place of work, athletic events, or parties.
- In this parable, who is excluding whom? Is God portrayed as inclusive or exclusive? Could it be we exclude God from our lives, rather than God excluding us?
- Respond to his grace and invitation and take time to thank him for inviting you!