

CAPITOL STUDIES

JANUARY 21, 2026 • WEEK 2



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS SECOND SESSION

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Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



The Great Banquet



IN THIS PASSAGE, JESUS TOLD A STORY—a parable—of a man who extended many invitations to his great banquet. When the time came for the actual banquet, those invited gave flimsy excuses as to why they couldn't come. Jesus used this “made-up” story, or *parable*, to point to God's coming kingdom banquet. The word “parable” comes from two Greek words—*para*, which means “beside,” and *ballo*, which means “to throw” or “to cast.” In essence, it means to “put alongside” or to “compare.” A parable is an earthly story illustrating something of heavenly importance, a heavenly or spiritual truth. It is often used to give clarity. During this legislative session, we will be studying many of Jesus' parables.

Pastor Arin Hess
Chaplain, Capitol Studies



INTRODUCTION

Verses 1-13 of Luke 14 set the stage for this parable. It appears that after the Sabbath service in the synagogue, Jesus was invited to dine at the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees. Others who were invited to the meal immediately sought to sit in the places of honor. Jesus, however, walked to a man with a severe illness. Though Jesus knew the Pharisees would not approve of healing on the Sabbath, He saw the man's need and healed him. Jesus then turned the conversation to helping those in need, humbly preferring others—no matter what the day and waiting for reward until “the resurrection.” The room was undoubtedly somber after that, so one of the guests tried to lighten the atmosphere.

I. PERCEPTION

Luke 14:15

When one of those who were reclining at the table with Him heard this, he said to Him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”¹

This was a verse the Jews used so flippantly, people had ceased to really think about its meaning. What the man saw was the Jewish view of the great Messianic feast God will give when He sets up His kingdom. The Pharisee saw himself, and the Jewish nation, as the only ones at God's great banquet. No outsider, no Gentile or serious sinner, would ever be an invited guest. The Pharisee was correct about God holding a great banquet in His kingdom. He was wrong in thinking that only Jews would be invited. Jesus set out to correct that perception by sharing a parable.

II. INVITATION

Luke 14:16-17

But [Jesus] said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;¹⁷ and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’”

Jesus' Parable: This man sent out invitations to a dinner very similar to the one Jesus and the others were currently attending. His slave was sent to those who had already accepted the invitation to tell them to come, for the day of the banquet had arrived. The dinner was ready!

God's Marriage Banquet: Christ has purchased salvation for every man through His death and resurrection, and thus He extends a salvation invitation to everyone so they may be present at His marriage supper.

Scripture tells this story: “And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). “Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19). “[W]e have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but



also for those of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2). "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready. It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. Then he said to me, 'Write, "Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb'"' (Rev. 19:7-9).

III. DECISION

Luke 14:18-20

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, "I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused." ¹⁹Another one said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused." ²⁰Another one said, "I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come."

Jesus' Parable: The word for *excuse* has several meanings: "to reject," "to refuse," "to beg off," and "to avoid." Three excuses for not coming to the feast were given. All of them were superficial and absurd. Two excuses had to do with *money*. The first man bought property and needed to "look at it." It was highly unlikely that he had not "looked at it" before he purchased it. But he was so concerned about business and his status in society that he did not care about anything else. He could not see the more valuable opportunity. The second man had just purchased a pair of oxen and wanted to try them out, whether for work or pleasure. He was obviously consumed with enjoying his possessions, so the dinner didn't matter.

Jesus warned of these types of attitudes in his famous Sermon on the Mount: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth or rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

God's Marriage Banquet: Do not let the things of "this life" keep you from responding to God's call to repent of sin and come to Him for salvation. Do not sacrifice the eternal on the altar of the temporary. There is nothing of more value than your soul: "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" (Matthew 16:26). "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15-16). "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions" (Luke 14:33).

Jesus' Parable: The third excuse had to do with *marriage* or family. It was true that for the first year of marriage, a Jewish man was to be "free at home, one year, to be happy with his wife" (Deut. 24:5). But this man used family and pleasure as a poor excuse. "But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholly, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control,





brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, *lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*, holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power" (2 Timothy 3:2-5).

God's Marriage Banquet: Even though family is a special blessing from God, our love for God must be first. When love for God is supreme, other love will seem almost like "hate." If God is first, everything else falls into place: "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26). "Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 10:12). "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14).

Jesus' Parable: These men claimed to have accepted the invitation, but they did not. They showed unconcern and contempt toward the one who sent it. Each could have made arrangements that would have allowed him to come to the banquet. All committed a serious breach of etiquette. The host had made preparation based on their acceptance and now would be left with wasted food.

God's Marriage Banquet: There is a difference between a mere profession and a true heart belief. God knows the heart of every person. You cannot fool God. "And He said to them, 'Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: "This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me'"' (Mark. 7:6). "They profess to know God; but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed" (Titus 1:16). "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).

Don't make excuses and deceive yourself into thinking that you are good enough and you don't need God: "...[Y]ou say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing;' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Revelation 3:17). "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all" (James 2:10). "As it is written, 'There is none righteous, not even one' (Romans 3:10).

IV. REACTION

Luke 14:21

And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame."

Jesus' Parable: The Master was angry. He would not allow His plan to be halted. He had planned a feast, and no one would stop it. He wanted the banquet hall filled quickly because everything was ready. His servant



was to go to those who knew and readily admitted that they needed help. He was sent to bring the ones who needed assistance so they could come.

God's Marriage Banquet: There will be no second chance. Judgment will come. Christians must persist in their efforts to share the Gospel, as some people will need extra time and encouragement. “And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15). “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18).

V. COMPULSION

Luke 14:22-23

And the slave said, “Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.”²³ And the master said to the slave, “Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.”

Jesus' Parable: Even then, there was room. Some were too prideful or bitter, too embarrassed or ashamed, too self-centered or self-pitying, to receive help or to accept an invitation that was being rejected by so many. So, the Master told his servant to go beyond. He was to go beyond Israel, into the highways and hedges, to the Gentiles, to whomever would come. The servant was to *compel* them to come.

God's Marriage Banquet: As God's children (His servants), we are to share the Gospel with *everyone*. We cannot give up! There is an urgency as the time of the Marriage Supper draws closer, and we don't know when God will say, “Enough!” Once the guest list is filled, time will be no more; all things will end. The doors to His banquet hall will be closed forever. It is not for us to decide if a person can be saved or not. It is only for us to be obedient. The Holy Spirit must do the compelling. “Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Cor. 5:11). “And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature’” (Mark 16:15, NKJV). “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to *everyone* who believes, to the Jew first and *also to the Greek*” (Romans 1:16).

VI. REJECTION

Luke 14:24

For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.

Jesus' Parable: Not a single one of the guests who rejected the invitation was allowed to taste of the man's banquet.

God's Marriage Banquet: It is the same for God's future Marriage Feast: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God’” (John 3:3). “For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and





God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:5-6).

CONCLUSION

"The real reason the three invitees offered their lame excuses was that they really did not want to go to the feast. Their excuses that, in their minds, made attendance at the feast impossible would have evaporated if they really wanted to be there. In today's terms, if they were offered front-row seats at the NBA Championships, or a box seat to hear 'The Three Tenors' (Pavarotti, Domingo, and Carreras), or a week's fly fishing on the Madison, or a week's shopping in Paris, they would have found someone to tend the field, the oxen, and, yes, even the home. Make no mistake, the real reason people turn away from the eternal feast is that they do not want to be there. They have no appetite for higher things.

"It is easy to make general applications, but this text is talking about us and our preferences. We need to ask ourselves whether we like our car more than we like God. If Christ's banquet and a large worldly estate were spread before us as options, would we rather have the estate?

"Why is it that when Christ offers forgiveness, peace, eternal life, and an eternal feast, so few respond? Why is it that people do not want the kingdom? It is because their thinking is skewed. They do not think rightly about the eternal. In the depths of their hearts they do not want God.

"The religious leaders in Christ's day acted as if they wanted the kingdom, but in fact they did not. What a tragedy! The hardest people to reach are those who say, 'Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God' (v. 15), who bow toward God's Word, but are unwilling to come to the feast."²

"Preach the word; be ready in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patience and instruction" (2 Tim. 4:2). "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matthew 10:7). God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4). "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost" (Rev. 22:17).

Chaplain Arin Hess

FOOTNOTES

1. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.

2. R. K. Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Crossway, 1998, pg. 118.

Personal Study Notes

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WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the 109th Legislature's Second Session

SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.

Wednesdays

Capitol Office #1004

STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.

Wednesdays

*NE State Office Building
Morrill Room*



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