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## Parable of the Banquet

*Luke 14:12-24*

Jesus was much too wise a teacher to think that His hearers would fully understand, accept, remember, and follow any new truth after only one presentation. He had to give the same teaching many times in many ways. So in His parables He repeatedly sounded a single grand theme - divine grace linked with divine judgement. God's grace provides what is not deserved, cannot be paid for, and cannot be paid back. God's judgement appears when rebellious men reject His grace and He acknowledges their decision as final. They must go forever without the benefit He offered and longed to present.

Variations on the theme appear in two similar stories Jesus told (this one and Matthew 22:1-10) on two different occasions. In both, He spoke of banquets to which the gracious hosts invited many guests, only to have the invitations spurned at the last minute. In each instance, the host declared that the rejecters would have to live and die with their rejection. This lesson presents one of the two stories, as told at a dinner in the home of a Pharisee several months before the Lord's crucifixion. In it, the emphasis is on God's grace, and the idea of judgement appears only in the final statement.

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1. How does it feel to give a gift to someone who doesn't expect it? How does it feel to prepare an elaborate event and have it poorly attended?

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2. Read v. 12-14. Does Jesus mean that we should never invite a friend or relative over for dinner? How do you account for the “absolute” sounding words of verse 12? Why is it a blessing to invite those who cannot repay? What wrong motive did He have in mind when he said not to invite rich neighbors?

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3. What did the man in verse 15 mean by his words, “*Blessed is everyone who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!*”?

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4. Who did the “*many*” invited in verse 16 represent? Did they accept the invitation? (See v. 17) Who is the “*certain man*”? Who would the “*slave*” represent?

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5. Read v. 18-20. Examine the three excuses mentioned. Do they look like valid reasons or lame excuses? Why or why not? What might Jesus be trying to convey with this? Were these invited guests really occupied with important issues, or were they really indicating their lack of desire to attend? Are such excuses ever heard today?

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6. Read v. 21. Who do the “*poor and crippled and blind and lame*” represent? Why would the man giving the dinner turn to such people?

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7. Read v. 22-23. Who would the people out on the “*highways and along the hedges*” be? How would the character of the banquet change, given the “new” guest list?

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8. Read v. 24. What is the implication to the man to whom this parable was addressed? (see v. 15). Do you think that the statement in verse 24 was final or might it have been open for reconsideration? What is the warning for us here?

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9. What dinner invitation has gone out today? In what ways are people responding? Does the anger of the “*certain man*” in this parable have a parallel in today’s world?