

**A follower of Jesus accepts his invitation, placing the Kingdom before anything else.  
Parable of the Banquet, Luke 14: 15 - 24.**

***Introduction:***

When Jesus was on earth, a disciple was a student and follower of a Rabbi (a Jewish teacher of the Law of God) who wanted to learn everything taught by his mentor, in order to be able to teach the same when equipped and qualified. He therefore signed up with a specific rabbi, in order to learn everything the scholar knew. He followed him and eventually would have the knowledge and be capable of teaching others in the same way that his mentor taught him.

A big crowd followed Jesus and many intended to become his disciples - his students. Jesus warned them to calculate the cost (Luke 14: 25 and further). He was on his way to Jerusalem, to Golgotha. Eventually the cost of following him would be too high for many in the crowd.

The cost of being a disciple of Jesus is much higher than many will find acceptable! If we are not willing to abandon loved ones, even ourselves, for the sake of the Kingdom, we cannot be disciples of Jesus. (Luke 14: 25, 26).

Today we reflect on the truth that a disciple of Jesus is an invited guest and places the Kingdom feast before everything else in his life.

**1. The double invitation!**

When Jesus was on earth the practice of the double invitation to any feast was well known. The first invitation gave notice that a great banquet was to be held. Guests should be alert and ready for the final invitation that will be extended the moment that the food was prepared and the tables ready for the guest. Then, because they were forewarned, they should come in haste, before the food became stale - even bad - in order to have the benefit of the lovely, freshly prepared feast.

God is the host that the parable speaks about. Israel was over centuries invited to the Kingdom feast of the Messiah. They were aware that he would come to set free and to forgive. Now Jesus came to them personally to give the last and final invitation.

All of a sudden the guests had many superficial reasons not to attend. The Pharisees and teachers of the Law did not want to come to Jesus, accept him and joyfully become part of the feast of following him. Because the invited guests (the church leaders) did not come, outcasts were not only invited but even made to come in.

The oriental person, to whom symbolic action means more than it does to us, would immediately understand the acceptance of the outcasts to the table of Jesus, as an offer of salvation and forgiveness of sins. Christ is the final invitation of God. He is the One who indicates the place and time of the banquet.

**2. Reactions to the Invitation:**

The first reaction of those in the parable who were invited, was to accept the invitation. But when the second invitations come they are too busy with good things to come and have fellowship with the host. Now is not a good time. Perhaps later! (Bought land and oxen or got married.) This was considered an insult to the host, showing that other priorities were higher than his feast.

As a result of the insult given to God by Israel for not accepting Jesus as their Messiah, he extends his invitation to the outcasts. While there is still room and the tables are not fully occupied, his servants must make people coming in. Jesus wants his feast to be filled with hungry and thirsty people, experiencing the great joy of a feast, much as a beggar would "eat his heart out" when given the opportunity to partake of the banquet of a wealthy person who prepared only the best - and in abundance.

**The parable ends with a warning:** Not one of those initially invited, will get a taste of the banquet. The requirement of total surrender to Jesus if we are to be his disciples is emphasized. If we are not

able to do so, we will not be part of his feast - neither now in this life, nor at the feast of the Lamb when he returns.

### **3. What is the deepest meaning of this parable?**

First of all it was a warning to the religious Jews of the day, to reconsider that position to reject Jesus, because in doing so, they rejected the long promised Messiah.

It certainly also is a warning to all religious and pious people that the despised and the humble may enter into the kingdom, before they will. Simply because Jesus is not their main priority. He does not come first in their lives. They have many reasons to attend to other things rather than forsaking all others, because he now is their only Lord. They could be so busy with good things, that they miss out on the joy of the final invitation.

God's grace is for all people. You cannot be too poor, too bad, too dirty or too sinful to receive and to accept his invitation.

*The Lord's Supper certainly is a shadow, a sermon about our invitation to the Kingdom's banquet.* Communion relates to our celebration of our deliverance from bondage, in the same way that the Passover meal related to the physical, economical and spiritual bondage of Israel in Egypt. Only after the people of Israel were saved from Egypt and in the desert, could they fully receive God's promise and in response fulfil their responsibilities with regard to the covenant of grace, following God's commandments, decrees and institutions. In the same way we celebrate our deliverance and salvation at the Lord's Table and accept anew the invitation to the eternal banquet of the Lamb, the promise of salvation and thus we are equipped for our responsibilities in his work, kingdom and church.

The invitation to the Kingdom banquet crosses out our excuses. It makes us come in and have fellowship with Jesus.

Christ's invitation and our joyful accepting to feast on his grace and kindness, creates missionary zeal. It insists that we invite the outcasts, the lost and the destitute. It therefore asks everything from us. As people living after Pentecost, Christ's invitation to be with him forever, drives us out onto the roads and into the lanes and equips us to bring in the lost. To make them come in.

#### ***Appeal:***

**A disciple is an invited guest of Christ and places the Kingdom feast before everything else.**

Have you accepted both invitations? Being brought up in a Christian home, you were forewarned that a day of commitment to Jesus was eminent. When the final invitation came, did you follow?

When you experience the everlasting joy at the Lord's Table, will you become a "missionary"? Will it ignite a true disciple's passion for the lost all over the world, in your heart?

Shall we not stop making excuses for our slackness and our lack of commitment for the Kingdom of Christ and the plight of a lost world?

Will the loving invitation of the Lord fuel the flame of his disciples today?

Amen.

*If you have any comments regarding this sermon outline, please mail it to [andries@centurionwest.co.za](mailto:andries@centurionwest.co.za).*