

LUKE 14

THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER

Throughout his Gospel-narrative, Luke pictures our Lord as a Man of human sympathies and social instincts, and not as a severe ascetic. He mingled freely with His fellow men – worshiping with them in their synagogues and eating with them in their homes. Here in this chapter, we have a scene that is sketched in great detail of a Sabbath-feast in the home of a Pharisee (verses 1-24). Jesus is pictured as entering with the guests, noting the ranks of society to which they belong, and taking a leading part in their conversation. Yet He never forgot His great mission, not even for a moment! He seized every opportunity for delivering some needed message. On this occasion, His tones were unusually severe; for He was among persons who were being formally courteous, but whose hearts were hostile to Him. Nevertheless, He still showed His unfailing grace to them all, and His desire for their highest good.

While the guests were assembling, Jesus saw a man who was suffering from a disease called dropsy. The Savior knew that the Pharisees were watching Him, and He also knew that they would object to His working a cure upon the Sabbath Day; so before they even had the opportunity to make such an objection, He turned to ask them whether a cure would be lawful. When they hesitated to reply, He healed the sufferer. Then He rebuked their hypocrisy, and He warned them (and all people) against insincerity in religion. He reminded these formalists that if necessary, they would not hesitate to rescue an animal that they owned – even on the Sabbath Day. Therefore, should they regard it as sinful to mercifully deliver a fellow human being from distress? Jesus never encouraged the breaking of the Sabbath law; but by His words and actions on multiple occasions, He did teach that this law must be interpreted by love.

It was on this occasion that Jesus delivered the parable of the great supper, by which He illustrated the sinful folly of refusing to accept His offer of salvation. In this parable, those who were originally invited to the feast feigned a willingness to come; but when the special evening arrived, their flimsy excuses showed their complete absorption in selfish interests, and their utter disregard for their host. However, their seats at the banquet-table were filled with other guests – some of them poor and helpless, from their own city; and others who were drifters and wanderers from the highways and hedges beyond. Thus Jesus plainly pictured the refusal of His offered salvation by the rulers and Pharisees of His day, and its acceptance by publicans, sinners, and despised Gentiles.

Outline of the chapter:

- ❖ *Christ heals another person on the Sabbath Day – verses 1-6*
- ❖ *He teaches a lesson on humility – verses 7-14*
- ❖ *He gives the parable of the great supper – verses 15-24*
- ❖ *He speaks of the necessity of counting the cost and denying self – verses 25-35*



There was a message for each person who heard this parable from Jesus' lips that day, and there is still a message today for anyone who is rejecting Christ. The Pharisees, by inviting Jesus to dine, pretended to feel some sympathy for Him as a prophet; but in their hearts, they hated Him. And there are many today who show an outward respect for the

truth of Christianity, and who talk sentimentally about the Kingdom of God. But they are so absorbed in selfish interests, and have so little real love for God, that they refuse His offer of salvation; while social outcasts and despised heathens gladly accept the invitation to life, Divine fellowship, and eternal joy.

As Jesus was journeying onward toward Jerusalem, the crowds that followed Him were increasing in size and in excitement. The people mistakenly imagined that He was about to establish a kingdom in pomp and splendor and power; and in these glories, they expected to share. In order to remove this misunderstanding, Jesus turned to address the multitudes and declared to them the true conditions of discipleship (verses 25-35). His followers must expect sacrifice and suffering; they must be willing to part with all they possess, and even with life itself. When He declared that they must hate their kindred and their own lives, He meant, of course, that their love for Him must surpass their love for them, if one has to be chosen over the other. One's family members must only be regarded with aversion insofar as they oppose or stand in the way of our relationship with Christ. To be His disciple, one must be willing to "bear his cross," which is a symbol of suffering and death. One must continually yield his will to the will of Christ, no matter what hardship or loss might be involved.

Jesus did not wish to discourage people from following Him, but He did take care to warn them to count the cost first. He illustrated this by referring to the folly of laying the foundation for a building without first estimating the entire expense and one's ability to meet it. He also stated, as a further illustration, the rashness of entering into a war without first calculating what sacrifices must be made to win it. Jesus was saying that it is not wise to begin the Christian life unless one first realizes that it involves a readiness to renounce everything which His service may demand. "So therefore, whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." Nothing could be more useless than a worldly, selfish, and willful follower of Christ. Such a person is like salt that has lost its savor; he lacks the very essence of discipleship, and so he can be of no possible service to his Lord.

Thank You, Lord Jesus for Your merciful invitation to come and dine at Your glorious Gospel-feast which You have furnished for us at Your own cost, and yet it is free of expense to us – for this feast of wholesome and pleasant dishes is offered without money and without price! Amen.