

Entering the Kingdom of God

The Lukan Journey Narrative 4

Luke 13:1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And he answered them, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?

3 No, I tell you; but unless you **repent**, you will all likewise perish.

4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?

5 No, I tell you; but unless you **repent**, you will all likewise perish.”

6 And he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.

7 And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’

8 And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure.

9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.’ ”

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.

11 And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself.

12 When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, “Woman, you are freed from your disability.”

13 And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.

14 But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.”

- 15 Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?"
- 16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"
- 17 As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.
- 18 He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?"
- 19 It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."
- 20 And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?"
- 21 It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened."
- 22 He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.
- 23 And someone said to him, "Lord, will those who are saved be few?" And he said to them,
- 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.
- 25 When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then he will answer you, 'I do not know where you come from.'
- 26 Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.'
- 27 But he will say, 'I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!'
- 28 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.
- 29 And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.

³⁰ And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”

³¹ At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.”

³² And he said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.

³³ Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.’

³⁴ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!

³⁵ Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ ”

^{14:1} One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.

² And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy.

³ And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?”

⁴ But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away.

⁵ And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?”

⁶ And they could not reply to these things.

⁷ Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them,

⁸ “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him,

⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place.

- ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you.
- ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
- ¹² He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid.
- ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,
- ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."
- ¹⁵ When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"
- ¹⁶ But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many.
- ¹⁷ And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'
- ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.'
- ¹⁹ And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.'
- ²⁰ And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'
- ²¹ So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'
- ²² And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'
- ²³ And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'

- ²⁴ For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’ ”
- ²⁵ Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,
- ²⁶ “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.
- ²⁷ Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.
- ²⁸ For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?
- ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,
- ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’
- ³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?
- ³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.
- ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.
- ³⁴ “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?
- ³⁵ It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

(Luke 13:14:35)

The Hard-to-Hear Demands of Christ and His Kingdom

When people get upset about **the exclusivity of Christ**, what is the source of their anger? Why does it rub people the wrong way when you tell them that he is **the only way** to God? Why do **the demands of Christ** get twisted by people in various ways, sometimes perverted to a works-based salvation; other times coiled up into slithering hissing repulsion that God would ever demand anything of anyone, let alone judge them for anything they've ever done?

Of course, the answers to these questions have taken up entire books. They are diverse and complex. Various people bring different **presuppositions and assumptions and hostilities** to the questions before they are ever asked. Sometimes, they are simply **ignorant** or have been **incorrectly taught** or even **lied to and deceived** about God, his Son, the kingdom of God, and themselves. Yet, together, they can create the uniquely harsh reactions that some people have when they hear the Gospel.

Luke 13-14: The Center of the Journey to Jerusalem

Luke 13-14 contains **70 verses** that become **the center of seven long units** of Jesus' long journey narrative to Jerusa-

lem. My guess is that few have ever attempted what I'm going to do today, looking at all seventy in one sermon. The reason? It's probably that few have even considered that it is something they *should* do. Allow me to remind you how we normally read and study the Bible—by the headings the translators and editors put in your editions.

For example, in these two chapters, the ESV has **eleven units marked off by titles**:

Repent or Perish (13:1-5)

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree (13:6-9)

A Woman with a Disabling Spirit (13:10-17)

The Mustard Seed and the Leaven (13:18-21)

The Narrow Door (13:22-30)

Lament over Jerusalem (13:31-35)

Healing of a Man on the Sabbath (14:1-6)

The Parable of the Wedding Feast (14:7-11)

The Parable of the Great Banquet (14:12-24)

The Cost of Discipleship (14:25-33)

Salt Without Taste Is Worthless (14:34-35)

Even if you were to bother putting all these into a single list and then try to find some commonalities between them, it is difficult to see how most of them would have any-thing to

do with one another. Thus, you **tend to study them alone**, which is certainly not wrong, and we have and will continue to do this after looking at these long units as a whole.

But, of course, it is also difficult to try and get through this much material in a short time. So why even try? I've chosen to look at each of these seven as wholes during our study of this part of Luke, because I think doing so **yields fruitful results** that you would not otherwise get looking at the individual sections in isolation.

This is particularly important today, as it is **the central unit** which itself, as various scholars have looked at it, has **its own central thought(s)**, thus making the center of a center, a truly important teaching to digest. The **literary center** of this entire narrative is usually understood to be somewhere at the end of Luke 13.¹ This means that the most important thing Luke wants to get across about this journey is to be found somewhere nearby. But in the explication that I've chosen to use, Jesus' journey isn't just one big chiasm with a short central point. It's a long seven-part chiasm, each part of which contains its own mini-structure, thereby giving us seven units composed of forty-two episodes, which are all

¹ As we saw when we introduced the Journey in our reading of it together, we had various views such as **13:31–33, 34–35** (Goulder); **13:22–35** (Bailey); **14:7–24** (Blomberg); **13:10; 14:1** (Leifeld); **13:31–33, 34–35** (Farrell; Talbert); **13:33** (Baarlink); **13:23–30** (Borgman).

working off of each other dynamically in complex and fascinating ways.

As we look at Luke 13-14, you will see that this **fourth big unit** is doing this in fascinating ways that you can only notice if you read them together. And when you do this, suddenly you find answers to those initial questions about Jesus and his kingdom that so many find so offensive coming to you in ways you may not have considered. And is there **anything more important** than helping people get rid of their bad assumptions and incorrect judgments about Jesus, especially when salvation itself, eternally happiness and the very purpose and meaning of life is on the line?

Luke 13-14: It's Structure

While it is certainly possible to see something like the ESV's eleven different stories or units, when you read these chapters together, you very quickly observe that they were **deliberately written to be read together**. And when you begin to study the chapters this way, you see that there actually seems to be **eight units** that make up an ABCD-A'B'C'D' pattern.

- A. “At that very time,” Pilate, “Jerusalem,” “perish,” “cut down” (13:1-9)
- B. Healing: Crippled woman on the Sabbath; conflict with a religious authority, two questions (13:10-17)
- C. Two short parables (mustard seed and leaven) on the growth of the kingdom (13:18-21)
- D. Climax: Severity—few are saved, only one way, hard, into the kingdom (13:22-30)
- A’. “At that very hour,” Herod, “Jerusalem,” “perish,” “forsaken” (13:31-35)
- B’. Healing: Man with dropsy on the Sabbath; conflict with a religious authority, two questions (14:1-6)²
- C’. Two long parables (wedding guests and banquet) on who will occupy the kingdom (14:7-24)
- D’. Climax: Severity—discipleship is costly; specific and difficult path to follow (14:25-35)³

To help us see this and the implications it has for who enters the kingdom of God and why, we are going to look at the parallel units together, rather than going consecutively according to chapter and number.

² The healing units (B, A’, and B’) are also part of a larger chiasm of exorcism and healing in the Journey Narrative. At Jesus goes to Jerusalem, we read about the 70 disciples exorcizing demons (Journey Unit 1: 10:17), Jesus exorcizing a mute man with a demon (Journey Unit 2: 11:14); Jesus exorcizing a crippling demon from a woman on the Sabbath (Journey Unit 4: 13:10-17); Jesus telling Herod he will drive out demons and heal people (Journey Unit 4: 13:32); Jesus healing a man with dropsy on the Sabbath (Journey Unit 4: 14:1-6); Jesus healing 10 lepers (Journey Unit 6: 17:11-19); Jesus healing a blind beggar (Journey Unit 7: 18:35-43). See Buckwalter, 79.

³ The D/D’ units also parallel each other in five specific ways: (1) One hard saying (struggle to enter through the narrow door) vs. three hard sayings (hate father/mother; carry own cross; renounce all possessions); (2) Disqualification (“will not be able to,” “is not able to”); (3) One analogy (narrow door) vs. three analogies (tower; war; salt); (4) Jews thrown outside vs. salt thrown outside; (5) Ends with proverbial saying: “Some who are last will be first and some who are first will be last,” and “He who has an ear to hear, let him hear.” See Buckwalter, 78. See also the color-coded and highlighted parallel at the end of the sermon.

A/A' Units: Repenting and Perishing

Unit A: Luke 13:1-9

I'll begin by pointing out the beginning of both A units. The first begins, "There were some present *at that very time ...*" (Luke 13:1). The second begins, "At that very hour ..." (31). Then notice who appears in each. 13:1 talks about *Pilate*, while 31 talks about *Herod*. These are the two monsters that will be responsible for putting Jesus to death. Clearly, this is intentional and shows us that the two stories should be read with each other in mind.

We begin with a story about repentance, something very few churches today want to tell people they must do, because people don't want to hear that. "There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices" (Luke 13:1). This refers to an unknown incident committed by Pontius Pilate (see Luke 3:1), the fifth governor of Roman Judaea under Emperor Tiberius (26-36 AD). However, Josephus does tell us about several incidents when, "Pilate faced protests from the Jews and sometimes resorted to

bloody oppression ... On [one] occasion popular demonstrations broke out when Pilate used money from the temple treasury to build an aqueduct for Jerusalem. Pilate sent soldiers to surround and attack the protestors, killing many [18.3.2 §§60–62; *J.W.* 2.9.4 §§175–77]. Typical of the Romans, Pilate met protest with ruthless and overwhelming force.”⁴ Here, the act was blasphemous, as he mingled the martyr’s blood with their own animal sacrifices at the temple.

But why discuss this here? It comes on the heels of Jesus telling the people that they must make a right *judgment* about him. Who is this Jesus and will they believe him and enter his kingdom by faith? In that discussion, he had told them the present moment is like going with an accuser before *the magistrate* and making every effort to settle the matter lest you be dragged away and imprisoned (12:58). Well, *Pilate is a magistrate*, and apparently, these Galileans were accused of committing crimes against Rome. And of course later, Pilate will himself make a wrong judgment about Jesus.

Let’s think about *Galileans*. For *one* thing, *Jesus* is a Galilean. So, he is at least in that sense one of them. So is someone trying to test Jesus? Is this how they are judging him? If

⁴ Clinton E. Arnold, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 433.

so, not good. **Second** and related, many of the people of Samaria and Judea didn't think highly of Galileans. Not only were these people racists against non-Jews, they also did not think kindly of those who regularly mixed with Gentiles like those up in Galilee. But these do seem to have been Jews, because for Pilate to mingle their blood with sacrifices would certainly have meant they were protesting something *at the temple* in Jerusalem, as some scholars think, probably *on Passover*.⁵

But **Jesus turns their comment** in a very different direction. **Vs. 2**, “**And he answered them, ‘Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?’**” He knows their hearts and uses a very common misconception that we have today, one that has been around as long as humans have, to **reveal that heart**. What is that misconception? It was stated ages ago by Eliphaz, the “friend” of Job, “**Who, being innocent, has ever perished**” (**Job 4:7**)? And thus, these men **must have been guilty** of a horrible crime to have had this kind of punishment leveled against them. Jesus pulls this out with

⁵ **François Bovon**, *Luke 2: A Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 9:51–19:27*, ed. Helmut Koester, trans. Donald S. Deer, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 267.

the word “[suffer](#).” Like so many today who think that someone must have done something bad to suffer like that, he calls out [bad Health & Wealth theology](#) in order to turn the tables. For “[They had in mind other people’s sin; Jesus \[is about to refer\] them back to their own.](#)”⁶

This becomes [the first of two examples](#) of the desperate need for [repentance](#). “[No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish](#)” (3). And again, he tells them of another contemporary story, one that has [parallels in our own culture](#) a little over 20 years ago: “[Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish](#)” (4-5). Do you remember people like Jerry Falwell who said just a few days after 9-11 happened, “[I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, People For the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America. I point the finger in their face and say ‘you helped this happen.’](#)”⁷ In this case, rather than blame

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ On the 700 Club, as “reported” by CNN, “[Falwell Apologizes to Gays, Feminists, Lesbians](#)” (Sept 14, 2001).

the people who died, he blamed others, but the idea is still the same. **Someone made God mad, so God is punishing.**

It is important, I think, to remember that the previous chapter began and ended with **hypocrisy**. The heart of hypocrisy is the **refusal to look inward**, but only outward to others, on the issues of sin. It is a spirit of judgmentalism that does not *first* judge its own heart. And this is what Jesus is getting at. Jesus is preaching **repentance**, that is **turning around and doing the opposite thing**.

If they refuse, the result is **they will perish**. “Perish” (*apollymi*) is a brutal word, fitting as a parallel to **Gehenna** from the previous chapter. It means things like *destroy utterly, kill, demolish, lay waste, be ruined, be lost, die, slay, and perish*. The god **Apollyon/Apollo** comes from it. While he is a complicated god, part of his aspect is that he was **the author of evil and the god of destruction**. He appears in Revelation as the King of the Abyss (**Rev 9:11**), and in the OT he is the personification of Sheol/Hades (cf. **Job 26:6; Prov 15:11; 27:20**) and Death (**Job 28:22**). Do you get a better understanding of what it means to perish? This is not something you want to have happen to you when you die. What horrible end awaits those who refuse to repent?

But it is at this moment in our passage that we find a very interesting shift, one that you can actually discern in what we've just seen if you read the Greek. For while it is clear that each *individual* must repent of their sins and this is a needed application of these words, Jesus is actually using the *plural pronoun*. Obviously, a collection of individuals is a plural, so that is why it is important that you each know that you individually must repent of your sins. However, what follows makes it clear that something else is also going on here.

We will continue first with what comes next in our **A Unit**. Jesus tells a parable of a *fig tree*. “A man had *a fig tree* planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. And he said to the vinedresser, ‘Look, *for three years* now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?’ And he answered him, ‘Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down’” (**Luke 13:6-9**). This is a not-so-subtle parable about **the last three years of Jesus' life**—his ministry to Israel.

Yet, the way Jesus puts this, he almost certainly wanted his hearers to **think of Isaiah 5**, where the prophet “**compares the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the people of Judah with a**

vineyard that yields only wild grapes. If this is correct, then the vineyard stands for Israel, and the fig tree represents Israel's barren leadership.”⁸ In other words, Jesus' parable is not first about our need of personal repentance in 2023, so much as Israel's need—and especially her leaders—because Messiah had come into their midst. How interesting that he was telling these leaders to repent when he knew they wouldn't. Was he lying about their need? No.

Unit A': Luke 13:31-35

This corporate aspect is brought out more clearly when we look at the A' Unit parallel. This passage begins curiously enough, with those very leaders. “At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, ‘Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you’” (Luke 13:31). At first glance, this seems quite innocent, even a kind act. But pardon me if I'm skeptical of a Pharisee.

Herod ruled over Galilee and Perea, and Jesus has left Galilee, but is most likely still in Perea, south across the Trans-Jordan. While the warning seems like the Pharisee is trying to save Jesus, it is more probable that he is using

⁸ David W. Pao and Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Luke,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 333.

Herod as an excuse to get Jesus to move closer to Jerusalem where he and his hypocritical brothers have more power via the Sanhedrin.

Clearly, the Pharisee claims to have received special knowledge about Herod, so Jesus responds, “Go and tell that fox...” (32). A fox is a cunning creature, and Jesus is saying that this Pharisee is close enough to Herod that he can go and tell him himself. In other words, this isn’t as innocent as it seems. This Pharisee knows Herod!

“Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem” (32-33). Some have seen this as the very center of the Journey to Jerusalem, and in fact it is a center of the healing of Jesus’ Journey ministry, as Jesus has cast out three demons and will then heal three people who are not demon possessed and here he combines those two as being summation of his ministry.

The focus is even more on the timing of it, though—“today, tomorrow, the following (or third) day.” Jesus is not going to be intimidated by sly Herod or by a crowing Pharisee. The Father has sent him on a mission and he will not

leave here or that mission until he has completed his task or finished his course. In this, I think it is reasonable to see “the third day” as a prophecy of what will happen to him in Jerusalem, also seems to be a foreshadowing of his death and resurrection, when his messianic task will be finished.⁹ That is **the reason why this is the center of the story**.

What comes next confirms what we were talking about in the previous Unit. Even though he is not in **Jerusalem** or even close to it, **he suddenly laments it**, even as he will when he gets closer to the city of David (cf. **Luke 19:41-42; Matt 23:37-39**). “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’” (**34-35**). **Jerusalem** is, in fact, **the parallel to the fig tree** the way Luke has written this. Therefore, the repentance is in fact first and foremost for Israel. Yet, here we learn that the center of all Jewish life was still cut from the same cloth as it had been for centuries. They killed the prophets, and they are about to kill their Messiah.

⁹ **Clinton E. Arnold**, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 439.

Here, however, in the midst of this great delusion and evil, we see **the heart of the Lord**. He would have gathered all these people like a hen to her chicks, showing a great love and concern for them, but they were *not willing*. Humans do in fact have **real wills**. But those wills are hardened to the Lord through our sin nature. And though Jesus and his Father had the power to overcome those rebellious cold wills, and often did, it would not be this time. God's sovereign plan was that Jesus must die in Jerusalem. Yet, even though God would not give them a change of heart through his grace, **the responsibility for this rebellion is not on him**. Too many people think that if God *could* show grace that *he must*, otherwise, he is evil. But the evil lies in men's hearts, not his. And **he is under no obligation to soften the hearts of wicked people or nations**. All we can do is entreat him to mercy. Their culpability, and our own, resides in our own sin and depravity. However, others think that if God doesn't do this, he must not care about those who remain hardened. But this lamentation by Jesus will be followed up by a parallel where he weeps over this city, over the very people he knows will kill him. **Do not confuse sovereignty with sociopathy**. God is not a monster and he does not delight in the death of the wicked.

These “A” Units introduce to us the **need for repentance and the hardened state** of Israel and us who will perish if they do not heed this warning. In this way, we begin to get at the heart of Jesus’ Journey to Jerusalem and the reason he came to us. We are sinful hypocrites by nature who think others bad and ourselves good. There is no one who is without sin and all sin is an act of defiance and rebellion against God. This is why we must repent. And the consequences if we do not are horrific.

B/B’ Units: The Kingdom is Here, but Who Sees?

Unit B: Luke 13:10-17

The “B” Unit introduces **the kingdom** part of our passage with **a great miracle of exorcism**. It is parallel with **a second miracle of healing**. In both, there is a **confrontation** with a religious leader whose self-righteousness dares to question God in human flesh. The God-man counters this brazenness in both passages with **two questions**.

Both miracles take place **on the Sabbath** (**Luke 13:10; 14:1**). In the first, Jesus is teaching as he often does in one of the **synagogues**. As we have seen before, suddenly someone

has a problem. “Behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself” (13:11). Luke, who is a physician but no materialist is clear that *a spirit* is the cause. How interesting that a demon can cause a person’s body to bend and twist like a gnarly old tree.

The fact that it is **a woman** who becomes the object of the miracle makes this doubly interesting. For Jesus had compassion on her, on the Sabbath, in a synagogue where he was teaching the Law of Moses. What do you suppose a Pharisee would think about that?

Jesus knew, and wanted to bring it to the surface. So, “When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, ‘Woman, you are freed from your disability’” (12). At first, it is just **the word**. He tells her she is freed. This is clearly a nod to those who are **in bondage to Satan** (see **vs. 16**). But then, “He laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and *she glorified God*” (13). How often Luke tells us when someone praises God for what he has done for them. Too often, the only ones who do are the truly broken of society. She is and she does. And what a magnificent moment it must have been. **Eighteen years of suffering, relieved in a single moment.**

“But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, ‘There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day’” (14). This is remarkable. The priest in charge of this local assembly stares at the miracle, smirks his face, turns the people, and, because it is a Sabbath, gives them a classical legalistic scolding on proper behavior on the Sabbath. The insanity of it. He can’t even spend one second praising God with her. He must go directly to what she and Jesus had so clearly done wrong, and even worse, he uses Moses to prove it. For Moses had clearly forbade work on the Sabbath (Ex 20:9; Deut 5:13).

I suspect Jesus was indignant. He must be growing tired of these people. He asks the first question. “Then the Lord answered him, ‘You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?’” (15). Jesus can be just as cunning as any of these serpents. His response is brilliant. He first implies that the Sabbath also pertains to oxen (cf. Deut 5:14). So why are they allowing their own oxen walk over to a trough to get water? But even more, *they* must *untie* their oxen in order for it to do this. Why are they working on the Sabbath by untying their oxen and donkeys!

He then uses an argument from the lesser to the greater by asking **the second question**. “**And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?**” (16). He implies that **it is fine to water an ox on the Sabbath**, but that they are utter hypocrites for doing this for a donkey, but not allowing this woman to be healed by him, even though she is a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound. Which one is more important to God, the ox or the woman?

The response is classic and wonderful. “**As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him**” (17). But, of course, as wonderful as it was, it only made the Pharisees and priests more **indignant** at Jesus. Everything they tried failed and all Jesus was doing was making them look like fools in front of the people. This had to stop.

Unit B’: Luke 14:1-6

It is into this that we come **to the parallel healing**. Again, it takes place “**one Sabbath**” (14:1). This time, Jesus “**went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were**

watching him carefully.” What a paradox, for Jesus surely knows that the Pharisees are watching him, yet here is the loving Lord continuing to befriend the very people who will put him to death. Yes, he truly would have gathered them, but they were not willing.

We see a similar thing to the previous story unfold, this time with a man, but without the demon. Demon stories will suddenly move into the background and pure healing stories will come to the fore. “And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy” (2). Dropsy is commonly known today as edema, excessive accumulation of fluid that causes excessive swelling. It can range from painful and irritating to crippling to deadly, especially if you develop it high up on a mountain climb in your lungs or brain.

Because he is in the Pharisee’s house, we do not know if he was an invited guest or a plant to trap Jesus. But either way, Jesus, continuing his ministry because his time there was not finished, did what he does. But this time, he confronts the lawyers and Pharisees with a question first.” Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?’” (3). They had already been humiliated with the woman, so they know the answer and,

“They remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away” (4).

Then **the second question** flies like an arrow at the target. “And he said to them, ‘Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?’” (5). Notice the ox in both stories. This question is even more brilliant than the former. For now, we are left to wonder, **why is the oxen falling into a well on the Sabbath?** Why wasn’t it tied up so that it wouldn’t “work?” Or was it “working” when it happened? Why didn’t they cover the well to protect this from happening? As before, “**They could not reply to these things**” (6). In these two healing stories, we are thus **seeing the kingdom of God continue to draw near** to men. But who can see it? And what is getting in the way for those who can’t?

C/C’ Units: Two Short Parables about the Kingdom

Unit C: Luke 13:18-21

The “C” Units now **expand on this kingdom** that Jesus is displaying through his miracles—his power over Satan and disease from the Fall. The shorter is the first (“C”),

where Jesus gives two brief parables, both describing the kingdom, for because you can't see it with your eyes, it is difficult to understand what it even is.

He has just healed the woman and humiliated that Pharisees before the crowds. He then teaches them, “**What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree [*dendron*, also shrub or bush], and the birds of the air made nests in its branches” (Luke 13:18-19).**

The question that is hardly ever asked is, **what does this have to do with the healing of the woman and the humiliation of the Pharisees?** Anything? Or is it starting a completely different thought? Usually, the interpretation of this parable is that the smallest of all seeds, the mustard seed,¹⁰ grows into the largest of plants, and thus the kingdom of God which starts out small grows to become the greatest of all kingdoms. It is difficult to know what this could have to do with what we just saw.

¹⁰ In reality, the orchid and cypress have even smaller seeds. **K. R. Snodgrass**, *Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 220.

Matthew 13:31-32	Mark 4:30-32	Luke 13:18-19
He put another parable before them, saying,	And he said,	He said therefore,
“The kingdom of heaven	“With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it?	“What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?
is like a grain of mustard seed	It is like a grain of mustard seed,	It is like a grain of mustard seed
that a man took and sowed	which, when sown	that a man took and sowed
in his field (<i>agrō</i>).	on the ground (<i>gēs</i>),	in his garden (<i>kēpos</i>),
It is the smallest of all seeds,	is the smallest of all the seeds on earth,	
but when it has grown it is larger	yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger	and it grew
than all the garden plants	than all the garden plants	
and becomes a tree,	and puts out large branches,	and became a tree,
so that the birds of the air come	so that the birds of the air	and the birds of the air
and make nests in its branches.”	can make nests in its shade.”	made nests in its branches.”

But notice how **vs. 18** begins, “*He said therefore...*” In other words, Luke somehow wants us to **see these two parables as related to what has just happened**. It is into this that we need to look at a couple of things about Luke’s parable. First, even though the ESV translates the word *dendron* as

“tree,” the mustard seed almost certainly refers to the **mustard plant** that can grow up to ten feet tall and not the small evergreen tree sometimes called the mustard tree that rises nearly 30 feet, because he is planting it in his *garden*.¹¹ Second, besides tasting like mustard, this plant had various **medicinal uses**, including pain in the body and dropsy, which makes it related to both our healings.¹² Third, it is a **highly invasive plant**, which was also considered a mixed kind by the rabbis and was thus **forbidden as a plant in a Jewish garden**.¹³ Fourth, because it was invasive, even the Greeks who did not have the “unclean” attachment, it was considered a

¹¹ “A *dendron* can be translated as a shrub or plant or bush or bramble (LSJ, Louw-Nida, GELNT, LALS, ANLEX). Van Eck says, In antiquity, however, the term *dendron* was sometimes used to refer to tall plants, but that does not make the mustard plant a tree (Hultgren 2000:396). Y. Pe’ah 7.4 and b. Ketubot iiib indeed describe the mustard plant as a tree, but they are exaggerations in an attempt to describe the fertility of Israel prior to the destruction of the temple (see Snodgrass 2008:220, n 205).” Ernest van Eck, “[When Kingdoms are Kingdoms No More: A Social-Scientific Reading of the Mustard Seed \(Lk 13:18-19\)](#),” *Acta Theologica* 33.2 (Dec 2012): 238 n. 29. 226-54.

¹² The mustard herb, when pounded with vinegar, can be used a **liniment for the stings** of serpents and scorpions, and it effectually **neutralizes the poisonous** properties of fungi. It can be used to **cure an immoderate secretion of phlegm**, and mixed with hydromel, it can be used as a **gargle**. Mustard can be chewed for **toothache** and is very beneficial for all **maladies of the stomach**. taken with the food, it facilitates **expectoration from the lungs**, and, in combination with cucumber seed, helps for **asthma and epileptic fits**. It has the effect of quickening the senses, effectually clears the head by sneezing, relaxes the stomach, and **promotes menstrual discharge and urinary secretions**. When beaten up with figs and cumin, it is used as an external application for **dropsy**. Mixed with vinegar, mustard resuscitates persons who have swooned in fits of **epilepsy or lethargy**, as well as **females suffering from hysterical suffocations**. It is also a **cure for lethargy**, inveterate **pains of the chest, loins, hips, shoulders**, and, in general, for all deep-seated pains in any part of the body, as well as **blisters and indurations of the skin**. combined with red-earth, it helps for alopecia, **itch-scabs, leprosy, phthiriasis, tetanus, and opisthotony**. (Pliny, *Natural History* 20.87).

¹³ m. Kil 1.5; m. Kil. 3.2;34. See B. B. Scott, *Re-imagine the World: An Introduction to the Parables of Jesus* (Santa Rosa: Polebridge Press, 2001). 35-46.

dangerous and deadly plant because it is scarlessly possible to get rid of it (Pliny, *Natural History*, 29.54).¹⁴



Mustard Tree (*salvadora persica*)

Mustard Plant (*sinapis alba*). Bird nest in branches of a cousin plant.

Next, notice that Luke does not have any smaller/larger comparison. Matthew and Mark do, so that kind of interpretation is possible. But not so much in Luke. If that isn't what Jesus has in mind, then what might it be? One suggestion that has a lot of merit is that Jesus is comparing the kingdoms of the temple and of Rome to the kingdom of God. **Men think that their kingdoms are a wonderful garden.** They think of the kingdom of God as an invasive dangerous troublemaker. So, a man (Jesus?) plants this mustard seed in the garden, thus polluting it—a symbol also of chaos and disorder that Jesus is bringing. This mixed seed (think about Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors and unclean people) then grows into a healing medicinal plant that will heal some, but a huge,

¹⁴ Van Eck citing Crossan 1991: 278.

invasive, impossible to get rid of bush that takes over everything and that the birds nest and perch on. Those birds then look over all garden with greedy eyes and start to plunder it. This sounds an awful lot like what Jesus is doing in healing these people. It also sounds a lot like the gates of hell not prevailing over the onslaught of the church.¹⁵

“And again he said, ‘To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened’ (20-21). Previously, we were told to beware the leaven of the Pharisees. While leaven is not an inherently bad thing, if we read this the way we just read the first parable, what if Jesus is using it ironically. In this case, the kingdom of God is also full of leaven, so that **whatever it touches, is infiltrated with its power**. The Pharisees would think this is bad. The people would think it is good. Who can see these things rightly? Only those who understand the upside-down.

Unit C’: Luke 14:7-24

The **parallel unit** is the longest of our text today, nearly 20 verses. In it, Jesus tells **two more parables**. These answer

¹⁵ This is the conclusion of van Eck and others.

who in fact can enter this kingdom. The first is the parable of a wedding feast. If they are really a pair with the first shorter two parables, then we might expect their meaning to be similar.

The context is that he is **in the Pharisees' house**, presumably as an invited guest (**Luke 14:7**). But of course, there are others there, such as this man with dropsy and the servants and so on. And the other invitees are “**choosing the places of honor**,” because after all, *they* are the *important* ones! So he speaks to them.

“**When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place**” (8-9). As much as they would hate to admit it, in the **power-structures of the world's kingdoms**, there's always a bigger dog than you.

“**But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you**” (10). He then seals it with a short **chiastic proverb**: “**For everyone who *exalts***

himself will be *humbled*, and he who *humbles* himself will be *exalted*” (11). Again, we have **the backwards nature** of God’s kingdom, but it is put here in a way that seems like it would be common sense, even though to those who crave power, common sense is often completely missing.

But Jesus **isn’t done** with his parable. He turns to the man who had invited him, “**When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid**” (12). The kingdom of God isn’t a game of one-up-manship. I wonder if he had ever even thought of that?

“**But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just**” (13-14). Amazingly, this is also common sense, and yet it goes **against every fiber of our being**, because we don’t think naturally about eternal rewards, but only immediate ones. But the kingdom is about eternity! Who in the world thinks the way Jesus does? That’s why he’s the Son of God.

The second parable now appears. “**When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, ‘Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom**

of God!’” (15). How true, and perhaps this man was one of the few whose mind actually went to heavenly things?

“But he said to him...” (16a). Even if he did, Jesus was not going to waste a good opportunity. He tells a related parable, this one of a banquet. “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet’” (16b-24).

Notice that we have a [wedding feast and a banquet](#). Clearly, they are meant to be read together. Many are invited. This is parallel to this very occasion, where Jesus and others had been invited to this Pharisees' house. This could not have been missed on anyone.

But unlike these many guests, in Jesus' parable, even though the man has sent his servant, a very clear reference to [God the Father sending his Son Jesus](#), everyone starts to [make excuses](#) for why they won't show up. One man is too busy in his field. Other is too busy buying tools (oxen) for his farm. Another just got married. Have you ever been invited to a party that you just didn't want to attend? Maybe there would be someone there you just couldn't stand. Maybe that party would offend you for some reason. Maybe you had to finish a deadline or it was too far away. You've made excuses like these. Don't sing the song some learned in grammar school:

I cannot come to the banquet, don't trouble me now;
I have married a wife; I have bought me a cow.
I have fields and dominions that cost a tidy sum;
Don't trouble me now—I cannot come.¹⁶

¹⁶ [Philip Graham Ryken](#), *Luke*, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, vol. 2, Reformed Expository Commentary (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 82.

When that song is sung from the heart, **the Master grows angry**. He has just invited all these, his friends, and none of them wanted to come to his banquet. Now, banquets are special occasions, not just spur-of-the-moment decisions. There is a wedding banquet that God is throwing for his Son and his Bride. But who wants to come to that?

Incredibly, the Master then invites everyone who is an **outcast, unclean, and pariah of society**: the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame. It's the upside-down again. These are the very people Jesus has been healing! These are related, because coming to this banquet brings healing! But to a Scribe, this makes things even worse.

The invitation began in the “**streets and lanes of the city**” (21). These are the **small roads and back alleys** near the banquet hall. But because there was still room, the master decided to invite people on the highways and hedges. These are the roads going into the city and perhaps the town square or even protected meeting places outside. But I should also point out, via the Good Samaritan parable, this is where robbers, thieves, and bad guys also lurked. And so did Gentiles. God is inviting all—the rambler, the gambler, the backbiter, because the “good people” are too busy.

It is important to say that God is *inviting* people, *persuading* them through the words of the servant. He is *not forcing* anyone to come. This is not coming to a party at gunpoint. This is not coercion through assimilation of militaristic Christendom. I cannot force any one of you to believe me and Jesus would not want me to. But I can show you the beauty of the kingdom and trust in the power of God's word to compel you through love. For what a truly glorious banquet this is.

D/D' Units: The Difficult Path of Entering the Kingdom

Unit D: Luke 13:22-30

The D Units bring us to *a conclusion* of this central section of the Journey Narrative. And as a conclusion, they are also *a climax*. They deal with that question I just raised and have raised throughout about how you hear and respond to this message. So far, people have needed to repent, but won't; have seen amazing miracles but got angry, and have heard extremely disruptive parables about their own comfortable kingdoms. Thus, what we will see now makes good sense in light of these things.

The first begins, “He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem” (22). Jesus is in fact still going to Jerusalem. He is not diddle-dally-ingly in Perea and Samaria forever. Suddenly, “someone said to him, ‘Lord, will those who are saved be few?’” (23). Ah, now this is one of those questions that can really upset a lot of people. But have you seen where we’ve already been?

So Jesus answered, “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able” (24). Why is the door narrow? Because we do not like what Jesus is bringing. He confronts our sin, our pride, our hypocrisy. The problem here is us, not God. The door is narrow because we are too fat with pride. To make matters worse, in John, Jesus is the Door (John 10:7). Many people want to be their own door and they don’t like that they must enter through someone else on his terms.

Today is still the day when I can proclaim that you may enter through the door. It is not yet too late, for you are not yet dead and Jesus has not yet returned. But at some inevitable soon-to-come future things will change. “When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know

where you come from’” (25). This is the problem of not wanting to come to the banquet but then seeing how great it is once you are outside eating slop from the trash bin while others are inside dining on steak and caviar and fine wine.

Jesus continues, “Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets’” (26). Jesus is specifically talking to these Jews at this moment. And for them, the time would pass quickly. He’s here right now and he’s telling them right now that it is not too late. But on that day “he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’” (27). For good measure, he adds one of those **stunning statements** about the torments of the other side, “In that place there will be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out” (28). They are going to miss the very thing they thought they were already in. The weeping and gnashing it seems to me is **out of anger**, for you gnash your teeth not because you are in pain, but because you are furious.

But it need not be this way and Jesus concludes, “**And people will come from east and west, and from north and**

south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last” (29-30).

Unit D’: Luke 14:25-35

The parallel unit gets at **the severity of not heeding Jesus’ warnings** and parables and falling down and worshiping him now for his power and mercy. We now contrast the torment of being left on the outside with the incredible cost of being a disciple of Jesus. “**Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, ‘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’**” (25-26). This is the first of **three difficult sayings**.

Is Jesus contradicting the fact that we are called, as Christians, to love even our enemies, let alone other Christians, and of course our father and mother? Of course not. He is using “**hatred**” as **hyperbole** to make a point. If you are not willing to follow me to the point of being disowned by family, hated by siblings, or even dying for your faith, then you are not worthy. He simply puts this in its opposite to

make the point stronger. Love for Christ must be so great that it is as if you hate all others, even yourself, in comparison. There's no other way you can possibly understand all that we've been looking at unless this is so, for you will have too much attachment and love of the world to break away from its kingdoms and power and protection. But do not use this as an excuse to violate the law of love found throughout Scripture and Jesus' other teachings.

Second, “Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (27). Like the “third day,” this is a foreshadowing, of what Jesus will do for us, for he loves us that much, yet not more than he loves his own Father who sent him on this mission. Carrying a cross is a symbol for great suffering. Contrary to much modern Christianity, Jesus' message is the opposite of your best life now. It is the opposite of health and wealth and prosperity. The expectation of the NT is that if you follow Christ, you will be persecuted. Are you willing to do this for him?

Before getting to the third saying (vs. 33), Jesus gives three analogies to reinforce what he's just said. The first is building a tower. “For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and

is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish’” (28-30). Clearly, he is not talking to peasants in this one.

Second, he talks about a war. “Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace” (31-32). He tells you the point of these. “So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (33).

The third analogy then comes. “So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (34). Can you hear the cost of following Jesus? These are things that make people quite upset, for many reasons. But he isn’t finished. He explains this as well. “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (34-35). The point here is that Jesus needs disciples who will actually be disciples, not good-for-nothing free-loaders who take and never give. His kingdom must expand. His kingdom must conquer. And his disciples must become princes themselves.

The message of Jesus was **never easy-believism**. In fact, he often said things, deliberately, to cause the crowds to leave and disperse. His kingdom works the opposite of ours. Not by power or might but by the Spirit.

The door is narrow. The cost is high. God is inviting all to come and what he is inviting you to is a **banquet, a wedding**, a kingdom powerful and beautiful and wonderful beyond imagining. Yet, it is the only one of its kind. Those who long for other kingdoms can take those roads. But those roads lead to the City of Destruction, not to Eternal Life. You've seen the reasons why it is so difficult to get there, and yet know that Jesus took those difficulties in his own person, taking the hard road to his own death via Herod and Pilate, so that you might have life abundant. Greater love knows no one than this, that Jesus laid down his life so that you might not perish, but have everlasting life in the kingdom of God. These are the joys and riches to be found to all who will come. Do not choose to stay outside and starve.

<p>Luke 13:1 There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.</p> <p>2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?"</p> <p>3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.</p> <p>4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?"</p> <p>5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."</p> <p>6 And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.</p> <p>7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?'</p> <p>8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure.</p> <p>9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'</p>	<p>31 At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you."</p> <p>32 And he said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish my course.</p> <p>33 Nevertheless, I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem.'</p> <p>34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!</p> <p>35 Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"</p>
<p>10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath.</p> <p>11 And behold, there was a woman who had had a disabling spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself.</p> <p>12 When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your disability."</p> <p>13 And he laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and she glorified God.</p> <p>14 But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day."</p> <p>15 Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger and lead it away to water it?"</p> <p>16 And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?"</p> <p>17 As he said these things, all his adversaries were put to shame, and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.</p>	<p>14:1 One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.</p> <p>2 And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy.</p> <p>3 And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?"</p> <p>4 But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away.</p> <p>5 And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?"</p> <p>6 And they could not reply to these things.</p>
<p>18 He said therefore, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it?"</p> <p>19 It is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches."</p> <p>20 And again he said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God?"</p> <p>21 It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened."</p>	<p>7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them,</p> <p>8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him,</p> <p>9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place.</p> <p>10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you.</p> <p>11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."</p> <p>12 He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid.</p> <p>13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,</p>

	<p>14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”</p> <p>15 When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”</p> <p>16 But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many.</p> <p>17 And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’</p> <p>18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’</p> <p>19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’</p> <p>20 And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’</p> <p>21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’</p> <p>22 And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’</p> <p>23 And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.’</p> <p>24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’ ”</p>
<p>22 He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching and journeying toward Jerusalem.</p> <p>23 And someone said to him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And he said to them,</p> <p>24 “Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”</p> <p>25 When once the master of the house has risen and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us,’ then he will answer you, ‘I do not know where you come from.’</p> <p>26 Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’</p> <p>27 But he will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of evil!’</p> <p>28 In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God but you yourselves cast out.”</p> <p>29 And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and recline at table in the kingdom of God.</p> <p>30 And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.”</p>	<p>25 Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them,</p> <p>26 “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.”</p> <p>27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.”</p> <p>28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?</p> <p>29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,</p> <p>30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’</p> <p>31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?</p> <p>32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.</p> <p>33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”</p> <p>34 “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?</p> <p>35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”</p>

Luke	Matthew	Mark
13:1-9	Matt 21:18-19	11:12-13
13:10-17		
13:18-19	13:31-32	4:30-32
13:20-21	13:33	
13:22-30	7:13-14; 7:22-23; 8:11-12; 19:30;	
14: 1-6		
14:7-14		
14:15-24	22:1-14	
14:25-33	10:37-38	

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