

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 14: 15-24

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. We'll continue to read Luke Chapter 14 and today we will read verses 15 to 24.

Earlier we saw that Jesus was invited by a ruler of the Pharisees to dine at his house. As He observed the interactions between the guests and the host, He gave teachings about how to be a guest and how to be a host. As a guest, one should not compete eagerly for the place of honor; and as a host, one should invite those who are unable to repay.

Jesus' words faithfully reflected the real situation among both the guests and the host in the Pharisee's house. The guests were each striving for status and advantage, while the host invited others with the expectation of being repaid. The reason Jesus agreed to dine in the Pharisee's house was that He was still willing to bring the gospel of the kingdom of God to the Pharisees. Therefore, after hearing His remarks, some among them actually agreed strongly with what He said.

Verse 15: "Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, 'Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!'"

If we had been there, we probably would have expressed the same thought. How we would long to dine among a group of humble-hearted friends. The one who invites does not seek repayment, and those who are invited feel no pressure to return the invitation—simply being together and enjoying fellowship with one another. How beautiful this is. This person truly saw something, and so he said, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

Verse 16-17: “Then He said to him, ‘A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, Come, for all things are now ready.’”

When Jesus heard his remark, He immediately spoke to him a parable, saying: “In fact, you have already been invited.” God has prepared a great banquet, and the One who set this banquet has already invited many guests. In the Old Testament times, God sent various prophets to the house of Israel to invite them in advance to the great banquet of salvation.

When the time came for the feast, He sent His servant to say to those who were invited, “Come, for all things are now ready.” When the time of fulfillment had come, God sent His own Son to the earth. At that time, He sent His servants—including John the Baptist, the disciples of Jesus, and the first generation of Christians—to those who had been invited, those who had already received God’s promises through the prophets in the Old Testament, this group of God’s people, saying, “Come, for all things are now ready.” God’s salvation has already been prepared for you—come and partake of this great banquet of salvation.

Jesus, in His wisdom, responded directly to the one who longed for the banquet in the kingdom of God, saying in effect: you have long already been invited, and now the banquet is ready. God has sent His servants once again to remind you—it is time to come to the feast.

Verse 18-20: “But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.’ Still another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’”

What is striking is that, for such a great banquet in the kingdom of God, those who were invited all began to make excuses with one accord. On the surface, their reasons seemed different, but in reality, they were all the same—mere excuses.

Their reasons were illogical and unreasonable: The first said, “I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it.” No one buys land before seeing it; one always examines it first and then buys it. So this was clearly an excuse. Another said, “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them.” The same principle applies—people always examine the oxen before buying them; they would not buy them first and then go test them. This too was an excuse. Another said, “I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.” But why could he not bring his wife along? Again, this was simply an excuse. All these words were excuses. These people valued other matters more than the banquet. The invitation to the banquet of God’s salvation had already been sent out, and everything was ready—they should have come.

The first excuse, about buying land, speaks of possessions and inheritance. The second, about buying oxen, speaks of personal business and occupation. The third, about marriage, speaks of personal emotional attachments. Through these three examples, Jesus encompassed all the reasons why people refuse to come to the banquet of the kingdom of heaven. Some value earthly possessions more than what they can receive in heaven, and therefore cannot come. Some value their earthly careers and means of livelihood more than their own salvation, and therefore cannot come. Others are entangled in earthly relationships and emotions—their thoughts and time completely occupied—so they cannot come to the banquet of salvation.

If we reflect on our own experience of sharing the gospel with friends, are not their reasons for being unable to attend church gatherings often rooted in these same three areas? Some are entirely occupied by the daily fluctuations of the stock market. Some are consumed by striving for daily living, with all their time devoted to work. Others are constantly wandering in their emotions, searching and unsettled, unable to attend to their personal salvation. Yet from another perspective, all of these are simply excuses.

Verse 21: “So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.’”

What Jesus said was actually directed at these Pharisees: some of you are occupied with acquiring property, some are engaged in personal business, and some are entangled in personal relationships—you simply have no time to come to the banquet of God’s salvation. Since you are unwilling to come, though you have already been invited, I will go into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, the maimed, the blind, and the lame—those who seemed unqualified to be invited—and now invite them all to come into the house and dine.

Verse 22: “And the servant said, ‘Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’”

The banquet of the kingdom of God is truly a great banquet: those who were invited did not come, so the invitation went out into the streets and lanes of the city, bringing in all those who outwardly seemed unqualified. Yet even then, there was still room.

Verse 23: “Then the master said to the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.’”

The banquet is ready and about to begin, yet there is still room. So go out beyond—to the roads and along the hedges, perhaps no longer within the same city. Go and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. Because the Israelites rejected this salvation, it was then extended to the Gentiles. Those by the roadside and those along the hedges were invited to come and partake of the banquet of the kingdom of God.

Verse 24: “For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.”

This banquet of salvation in the kingdom of God is truly a banquet of grace. When a person is striving to acquire possessions for himself, busy with his own business, or seeking fulfillment in his personal relationships, such a person is unable to come to the banquet—though invited, he makes excuses.

In the end, those who come to the banquet are the poor—the ones who are inwardly empty and know their lack; the maimed—those who realize they have no ability to accomplish anything; the blind—those who feel their future is dark and cannot see the way ahead; and the lame—those who simply have no strength to do what they desire.

These are the ones who consider themselves without hope, yet are willing to receive God’s grace and come to the great banquet of salvation in His kingdom. Especially at the end of the age, because there is still room at the banquet, those on the roads and outside the hedges—those who seemed to have no relation to the kingdom of God—are all invited to come and partake of it. Meanwhile, those who were originally God’s chosen people—such as the prominent figures in Jewish society, the scribes, Pharisees, and rabbis—remain occupied with what they consider important, neglecting God’s salvation and refusing the invitation.

In response to the Pharisee who said, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God,” Jesus immediately spoke this parable, making it very clear: you have already been invited to the banquet, but you yourselves refuse to come. The door is still open now—hurry, humble yourselves, receive salvation, and come to the feast. Otherwise, one day when the door of grace is shut, none of you will be able to taste the banquet of the kingdom of God.

Let us pray together: Lord, we thank You. We are truly filled with gratitude to have a share in the banquet of Your kingdom. Thank You—this is entirely by grace. Though we were poor, blind, maimed, and lame, You did not reject us. Instead, You gave us grace and the wisdom unto salvation, allowing us to partake in Your salvation. We especially pray for the salvation of our relatives and friends around

us. Lord, just as You have drawn us, we ask that through our lives and our contact with them, You would soften their hearts, that they may be willing to receive the grace we have received and come with us to partake of the banquet of salvation in Your kingdom. Help me, that my life may emit a sweet fragrance. In my interactions with others, may it not be because I am good, but because the salvation of Jesus Christ is within me, that there naturally flows out a fragrant aroma. Help me, that my life may become a beautiful testimony. Thank You. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen!