

BIBLE DISCOVERY

Get more out of the message



LUKE: Cost of Discipleship

Luke 14:12-24

We're diving back into the Gospel of Luke. After nine chapters introducing us to Jesus and His call, Luke now takes us with Him on the road to Jerusalem (Luke 9-19). Along the way, we'll hear some of Jesus' most famous teachings and stories, as He shows us what it truly costs to follow Him and why following Him is worth everything.

The Big Idea

(What is the author's point?)

Jesus says that all are welcome and wanted at the Great Feast as long as we accept and keep His invitation.

Why It Matters

(Why is this relevant to us?)

Imagine a great ball or banquet (I'm picturing *Princess Diaries* to be specific). The men are in tailcoats and the women in stunning gowns. The host greets their guests as a string quartet plays. Wine is sipped and people mingle as they wait for dinner to be served. Finally, the butler opens the dining room doors, rings a bell and announces, "Dinner is served." Now imagine at this point, guests look down, check their phones, glance at their partners and begin to hurry out the door. They scoot past the host, offering rushed excuses and no apologies.

Now, this is not a perfect analogy, but hopefully you can grasp some of the emotions at play. The host would have been left embarrassed and rightfully hurt and angry. But in today's parable, Jesus shows us God's response to His invitation being declined: grace. Instead of cancelling the banquet altogether, God has invited all the outcasts (the Gentiles, the poor, the sinners) to join in His feast forever. That's us! While we are invited to the banquet of salvation, this parable teaches us that full commitment is required. Kenneth Bailey gives this response in *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes*: "Those who hear the Good News must accept and enter the banquet hall or reject and stand aloof. Participation is not possible at a distance. Let's keep the feast!"

Good to Know

(What are some helpful insights into this passage?)

Here we see Jesus shift from speaking to those who were invited to the banquet (vv. 7-11) to the host. This continues to be an authentically Middle Eastern setting. It was super common for a traveling rabbi (teacher) to be invited to dinners in town knowing the locals intended to test them.

V. 12-14 – Jesus changes gears and moves from the guest’s behavior to the host’s motivation. Jesus continues to hone in on the value of radical generosity toward the needy and teaches that the Kingdom is not based on obligation the way that normal society is.

Next, Jesus moves into a parable packed with meaning and allegory. We know that Jesus was talking not only about banquets for His current audience but He also pointed to the Messianic Banquet to come (see Is. 25:6-9).

Buckle up, there’s a lot of important context to understand:

Through the parable, we see multiple invitations. The first invitation is like an rsvp. The host asks for a headcount so he can prepare the right amount of food and have everything ready. The second is when the servant goes to tell each guest that the banquet is ready. This would have been common practice in their culture.

In Middle Eastern culture, canceling last minute on a host would have been a major insult. A cancellation would lead to empty seats, leading to dishonor and shame on the host, and even the cancellation of the banquet.

We see three guests making excuses, that while on the surface may sound reasonable to us, they are subpar foreseen circumstances:

1. Buying a field was a lengthy process that took months, maybe even years. It would have been nearly impossible for someone in Jesus’s culture to suddenly buy a field, let alone not having seen it. Imagine if someone cancelled attending dinner because they bought a house in town over the phone, and now they wanted to see it. So lame!
2. A similar excuse, a farmer would not buy an ox without first testing them. This would have been seen as a subpar excuse and rude to the host.
3. The third excuse is downright rude and offensive. The guest speaks with no dignity towards his wife; he basically says, “I’ve got a wife in my house so I’m busy.” The disrespectful tone and attitude he shows would have been culturally unacceptable and shameful.

The servant returns and reports to their master. He witnesses: instead of a master vengefully angry, anger is turned to grace. The servant is commanded to then go and invite the poor, crippled and lame. After doing so, there is a second command to invite those from the “highways and hedges,” meaning those outside of their community.

This parable is full of allegory as Jesus points to the Messianic Banquet. The host can be seen as the Lord. The guests initially invited would have been the Jews and religious leaders. The outsiders were the tax collectors, poor and needy, the sick and lame, anyone who was deemed an outcast of society. And finally, the invitation to those beyond the highways would have been the Gentiles.

Verse 23 has often been misunderstood and horribly misused in history (ex. The Spanish Inquisition). The master urges his servant to “compel” the invited to come—not in force because they didn’t want to attend, but knowing that this invitation would have seemed too good to be true. Up to this point, Gentiles were seen as outsiders in the Kingdom of God. Now Jesus is showing that Gentiles are not only invited, but they are welcome and wanted.



**THIS WEEK'S
Bible Discovery Author**
Lavi Lazarus

Group Guide

Following the series with your group?

- Start with some [icebreaker questions](#).
- Read the passage together before you dive in.
- Share any insights from the message. Use the questions below to get your conversation started.

Conversation Starters

1. The guests who made excuses had previously RSVP'd that they would attend. Why do you think they changed their minds?
2. How can we be like the servant, inviting the needy to the feast of salvation? Do any names come to mind specifically?
3. There is no indication that any of the poor, crippled, blind or lame rejected their invitation. Why do you think that is?
4. The master sends the servant out two times to invite more to come to his banquet. What does that show us about God's heart?

Prayer

Jesus thank you for inviting us to your Great Feast. May we remember what a joy and honor it is to be welcomed by you and live in grateful humility in response. Amen.