**THE GREAT SUPPER**

***Luke 14:15-24***

Sunday School Lesson

*Parables of Jesus Christ*

Week 12 – 1/7/2018

**Introduction:** In the parable of the great supper, we see the excuses made by the first set of guests invited and the invitations sent out to additional guests. This parable was given by Jesus in response to a Pharisee commenting to Jesus that “blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” The man expected that he would be a partaker in this feast, but the Lord was quick to rebuke his hasty assumption. Jesus gives this parable to show that few truly care as much about fellowshipping with God as they like to proclaim to others. Instead, when it is finally time to show up for the feast, they always seem to have some type of excuse preventing their attendance. As we study this parable, we ought to examine the sincerity of our Christian walk.

1. WE MUST REALIZE THAT INSINCERITY HAS A COMMON VOICE.
2. **Notice that they all spoke in unison.** Whether it was the Pharisees, Sadducees, or Scribes, they all shared a common voice against Jesus. This is interesting when you consider the differences between these various religious sects. Generally, the Pharisees and the Sadducees did not get along with each other. Yet, when the conversation was about Jesus, they were able to find agreeable ground. Our love for God brings people of various backgrounds and personalities together in service for Him. This is an exciting aspect of serving God. On the other hand, though, insincerity towards serving the Lord usually brings people together as well.
3. **Notice that they all gave excuses.** The common answer from all of them was to give an excuse. Why not just plainly state that they did not want to attend the supper? Why do people use excuses in general? The answer is that we want others to agree with our decision making. We want to protect ourselves and our reputation. We do not want to be ashamed or have to confront a specific truth about ourselves and the way we think or feel. It serves our ego and our pride. In this case, it was a cover for the fact that they just did not care that much for the host. We should listen to ourselves, as Christians, to hear what type of answers we give. Are we the type of Christian who always has an excuse? If the answer is *yes*, then we share the same voice as those who are not sincere in serving God.
4. **Notice that they all gave one consent.** In this parable, we see that all of the original guests consented in unison together. To give consent means to give permission. Essentially, they had all already excused each other. This probably made each one of them feel better about their reasoning. They were not the only ones who had something that just had to be taken care of. One of the reasons that it is easy to get a blind spot as a Christian regarding our spiritual condition is that we have friends that help us excuse our condition. We must remember that our goal is to please the Lord. Having a fellow Christian approve of our excuse does not mean that the Lord would approve of it.
5. **Notice that they all answered with a *no*.** All of their excuses were meant to justify what they couldn’t do. At the end of the day, this was the only answer that mattered to God. They were telling Him *no.* We should be observant enough in our Christian lives to notice what answer we are really giving to the Lord. At the end of the day, the answer is either *yes* or *no.* Will we do what He is asking of us? Will we submit to His will and His guide for our lives? King Saul was a great example of this when he decided to handle the situation different than what the Lord commanded of him.
6. WE MUST REALIZE THAT INSINCERITY IS DIFFICULT TO HIDE.
7. **Notice that their excuses would have been planned.** Notice the timing in the parable. The guests were first bidden on a separate occasion. It is inferred from this that they had made a commitment to attend the supper. The host made all of the arrangements for a specific number of guests, and then he sent his servant out to tell them that it was time to come. They knew that the servant was going to come at some point. The host was not going to forget about his supper. They had to plan in advance what their excuses were going to be when he arrived. This is why the host could see right through their excuses. Each of the reasons given for missing the supper would not have made sense for an event that had been planned out in advance. They treated the supper as though it were a random event brought to them at an inconvenient hour.
8. **Notice that their excuses were not plausible.** Three different excuses were given for missing the great supper. The first one was that the man had just purchased a piece of property and need to go and inspect it. It is very rare to purchase a property without first inspecting that property. Secondly, a man had purchased five oxen and needed to go and train them. Why was this an urgent need? Could he not train them the day following the supper? The oxen were not in any type of immediate danger. Finally, the last man used his wife as his excuse. As a husband, I personally think this might be the most believable of the three excuses! However, it seems like a pretty convenient answer to blame your wife for why you are unable to attend. Would the wife have not been invited to the wedding as well? It seems rather unlikely that the host would have been upset with her attendance. Who knows? Maybe the man felt that his wife would not have been able to get ready in time? Surely, we can see the absurdity of these excuses, and God can certainly see the same when we give these excuses to Him.
9. WE MUST REALIZE THAT INSINCERITY IS BOLSTERED BY A SENSE OF ENTITLEMENT.
10. **Notice that there may have been an expectation of additional invitations or postponement.** The host tells his servant that the originally invited guests would never taste of the supper. Given this statement, it is likely that the guests assumed that the host may postpone the supper for them. After all, they collectively denied the invitation. They may have assumed that the host would not be able to find anyone to attend and would be forced to cancel. The host makes a bold statement. His supper was not going to be dictated by the invited guests.
11. **Notice that their excuses revolved around their material possessions.** It is clear that the original guests were blessed materially. The first one was wealthy enough to buy a portion of land. The second man was able to buy five oxen. Neither of these transactions were frequently made by the common people. The last man had just gotten married. Of course, that is a great financial commitment by itself. The guests had gotten too consumed with their possessions. They had lost their sincerity for the host.
12. **Notice that the host found those who were in great need.** The host sent the servant back out with instruction to find those who were poor and injured. These were people who would not have a great sense of entitlement and self-worth. They would have been extraordinarily sincere in their desire to fellowship with the host due to their unfortunate predicament. The first group represented the nation of Israel. They had long been God’s chosen people. Today, we have been blessed to be born into a time where God’s church has been established for two thousand years. This explains why we have such callousness towards the Gospel and even in our churches. We have forgotten how much we need Him just as Israel had forgotten when Christ arrived among them.
13. **Notice that the host found those who could be compelled.** This insinuates that the first group could not have been compelled to come in. When you develop a sense of entitlement, it is difficult to be compelled to do anything. You just do not care enough to be motivated. This is why Jesus remarked about a rich man being like a camel going through an eye of a needle. Of course, we know that with God all things are possible, so there are wealthy people who put their faith in Jesus Christ. However, those numbers are very small. Additionally, there are plenty of entitled Christians who are nearly impossible to compel to do anything for the Lord.
14. WE MUST REALIZE THAT INSINCERITY PUTS US AT EMNITY WITH GOD.
15. **Notice that the master of the house was angry.** The host did not take kindly to the response from the initial guests. It was very rude and inconsiderate of them to shirk the invitation that they had received. Great effort was made for their attendance at the supper. The host was very sincere in his desire to have guests and provide for those guests. The Lord does not take our insincerity very lightly. For the unsaved, that casual response to salvation will end in judgment before God. For the saved, our casual response to fellowshipping with God will lead to embarrassment when we stand before Him.
16. **Notice that He expects us to count the cost.** In the verses following the parable, Jesus tells the multitude that is following Him that they must count the cost to be His disciple. He gives the illustration of a man that never finishes building a tower, and a king who does not consider the cost before starting a war. He finished by comparing the insincere and un-surrendered to salt that is not even good enough to be used at the dung hill.

**CONCLUSION**: We should strive to keep our sincerity in our service for the Lord. We must examine whether we are guilty of always making excuses for why we cannot serve God like we should. We ought to be grateful that He has invited us to be an ambassador for Him.

The Great Supper – sincerity of our Christian walk

Lowest seat – pride and presumptuousness

Wise & Foolish Builders – trusting in God

Value of the Gift – thankfulness and right perspective

Good Samaritan – sacrificial assistance, fulfilling our job

Prodigal Son – avoiding backsliding

Unmerciful Servant – forgiveness

Sower – responsiveness to the Word of God

Rich Fool – having the right priorities

Pharisee & the Publican – comparing ourselves to others

Shut Door – missing opportunities

Mote & the Beat – judging others