

“Come, for everything is now ready.” Luke 14:15-24

On one occasion Jesus was invited to the home of a prominent Pharisee, and as usual Jesus had a keen eye on everything that was being done, said and omitted. He never forfeited any opportunity to drive a good point home. After carefully observing how people at the Pharisee’s house were all trying to grab the best seat in the house, Jesus uses the incident as a springboard to teach them a good lesson on humility. Jesus follows it up with a discourse on the importance of entertaining the less privileged, as they will not be able to reciprocate in any manner; which in turn would force the host to be gracious for the right reason. Through the teachings of Christ we can easily understand that God gives much value to the real motives behind every good deed we might undertake. The mention of the rewards at the resurrection of the righteous prompted one of the anonymous guests to express his desire to be at the feast in the Kingdom of God. Immediately using this occasion Jesus shares a parable which sheds light into the danger of being too self confident.

In this parable that Jesus narrated he focused on excuse making. How often we find ourselves and the people around us making excuses as God graciously offers heaven’s choicest of blessings. Can you imagine turning down a great offer by making unreal excuses? Jesus is speaking about heaven, about salvation, about eternal things- of matters of the greatest possible significance. Yet people respond by saying “sorry, don’t have time now”. On one side we read about the servants of the Master who are spurred by the urgency of the command to go and herald the invitation to all, and on the other side we see the three who turned down an invitation by making excuses. They were distracted by their possessions, vocations and their affections. The three who had sent their regrets had probably told themselves these excuses so many times that they finally deemed them to be valid reasons. There are times we may make the same excuses so many times that deceive ourselves into thinking that they are indeed true. But never forget that a lie is a lie, and an excuse, no matter how it is shrouded, remains an excuse.

The invitation from God is a spiritual invitation but the excuses are quite often based on the material. There is nothing wrong in acquiring real estate, purchasing

farming equipment or for that reason getting married, but it is absolutely wrong to place any of these things above the invitation of God. In light of such a gracious invitation the excuses looks so trivial, yet they are no more foolish than all the excuses we hear all the time. What are some of the excuses we hear all the time?

- I am very busy
- It's very complicated
- I cannot comprehend these teachings
- I got to finish my projects
- I am not ready to make a commitment
- Church is boring
- Services are too long.

The list can go on and on, but looking into these men who really made the excuse we see that they are not uncommon. They took the Master's invitation so lightly, yet the Master considered their response to be of the utmost importance. It is noteworthy that those who made the excuses and rejected the invitation of the Master would never ever have another opportunity to come to that banquet.

The message of this parable applies to all of mankind who are lost in sin. The message and the invitation are still sound and resound. The master is saying "All things are now ready. Come". We don't need to add anything to be saved for Jesus took our sins on the cross, died and rose again the third day. Jesus Christ finished the work on Calvary. The banquet is set and the invitation is free and we all are invited to come. How can we make any excuses? Don't delay your decision for you know that tomorrow is not guaranteed for anyone.

Don't ever forget that to say "no" to Jesus is a very dangerous thing; for God's impending wrath hangs over the lost, and man's heart gets hardened each time he says "no" to the invitation. May God help us to respond to this invitation positively! Have you responded to his invitation and if so HOW?