

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Luke 14:7-24

International Bible Lessons
Sunday, January 19, 2014

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, January 19, 2014**, is from **Luke 14:7-24**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary* below. **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, a study guide for teachers, discusses the five questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion; these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website. The weekly *International Bible Lesson* is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

Luke 14:7-24

(Luke 14:7) **When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable.**

Because God is concerned about our daily lives, Jesus expressed His concern about the ordinary and practical aspects of daily living as well as the deeper and more profound truths about God. Learning how to live faithful to God in our ordinary daily relationships with others in the small things (or what appear to be the small things to us or others) will prepare us to know what to do in more crucial situations and in larger things. If we prove responsible in small matters, God and others can trust us to do what is necessary in larger matters.

(Luke 14:8) **“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host;**

Jesus taught that someday in the future He would host the marriage supper of the Lamb. It would never be proper for anyone to push or rush ahead of others to seek the best seats above others in the Kingdom of God or at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If we follow the Golden Rule, we might try to help others without concern for ourselves and without hoping Jesus will give us better seats as a reward for our service.

(Luke 14:9) **and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place.**

Jesus warned against our developing an arrogance or pride that makes us think that we are better than others and deserve better than others. If we seek out the place of honor and take that place in order to be admired by others, we risk the host coming to us and telling us to move to a lower place. This is good practical advice. If we grasp after the highest place, our grasping may reveal something about our spiritual condition.

(Luke 14:10) But when you are invited, go and sit down at 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 the table with you.

Many events and dinners have head tables, and the most honored guests have places reserved for them at these head tables. Today, most people would not knowingly sit at a head table without being invited. It is better for a believer in Jesus Christ to serve Christ and others without thought of reward, but always humbly taking the lower place of service above self. Perhaps Christ will reward you before others, perhaps not, but if you are serving others because you love Jesus Christ, then the honor of serving Him is a great reward in and of itself.

(Luke 14:11) For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

Jesus summarized the main point of His parable. His followers must not exalt themselves before God and others. They were not to seek a place at His left or right hand; places reserved for others. Humble hearts and humble service of others should be the spiritual goal of all Jesus’ followers. Jesus provided an example of this selfless service and His Father exalted Him to His right hand.

(Luke 14:12) He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid.

Jesus’ principle in this verse relates to those who only do good in order to derive some selfish personal benefit or reward; those who expect others to do something good for them in return someday. Jesus does not mean that we should only invite poor people to our dinner parties. Rather, our goal should not always focus on “What’s in it for me?”

(Luke 14:13) But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

A true follower of Jesus Christ will do good things for others whether or not others can do good things for them in return. The economically deprived and the mentally and physically disabled need many things for their real needs to be met, and Jesus’ disciples need open hearts and hands to help them without thought of getting anything in return.

(Luke 14:14) And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Jesus did reassure His followers that they would be rewarded: God would repay them after God raised them from the dead. Believers who give can rest happy and satisfied that God notices and God does keep a record of the good things they do for others, but believers do not usually do good in order to receive heavenly rewards. Believers usually have higher objectives than personal gain when they do good things for others.

(Luke 14:15) One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”

One of the dinner guests (perhaps a disciple, perhaps not) entered into the conversation by trying to affirm what Jesus taught. Anyone who eats at the marriage supper of the Lamb or the great messianic feast in the Kingdom of God will be honored and happy. This person may have expressed this truth with some self-satisfaction because he believed that he would be so blessed for some reason. Therefore, Jesus told a parable that indicated people were being invited to the feast in the Kingdom of God whenever He shared the good news or taught (and later whenever His disciples shared the good news and taught), but many preferred the things of this world to the things of God. Jesus said that those who preferred the things of this world to the things of God would not experience the things of God or enjoy the messianic feast in the Kingdom of God. Those who prefer the things of this world may think that because of their privileged position in this life that they will receive another invitation later and have a second chance to repent, but Jesus’ conclusion is far more sobering and serves as a warning to the worldly.

(Luke 14:16) Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many.

The dinner guest opened the door for Jesus to teach a parable. In the parable, the “someone” ultimately is God the Father or Jesus the Messiah. God is the host of the feast. The feast is the promised feast in the Kingdom of God that the Jews looked forward to with eager anticipation. Jesus is applying His parable to the statement that the guest made at the dinner they were attending.

(Luke 14:17) At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’

When Jesus the Messiah came into the world, everything was ready for Him to preach and teach and eat with the religious and sinners. Many were invited to hear Him, but not everyone took advantage of the invitation or opportunity. In Jesus’ parable, the slave could be one of Jesus’ followers or disciples; they were telling people that today is the day of salvation because the Messiah is here. Today is the day to accept Jesus and follow Him as Lord and Savior. Everything is ready now for you to receive the gift of eternal life so you can eat the messianic dinner in the Kingdom of God when it is served.

(Luke 14:18) But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.’

We have good reason to believe that those invited by the slave had agreed to the invitation to dinner when they first received it sometime earlier. Those invited may represent those who practiced the Judaism of Jesus' day. Most likely, Jesus told this parable to Jews and Jewish leaders who believed that just because they were Jews they would automatically eat bread in the Kingdom of God. The parable can still be applied to people today. Those invited were only waiting to learn the time when the feast was ready; however, when the time came to go to the feast, the time of the feast conflicted with their worldly priorities and their worldly priorities came first (before honoring God's priorities). Likewise, a person may say they believe in God and want to go to heaven someday, but their worldly priorities interfere so they miss the feast and miss heaven too. In Jesus' parable, those invited first began to make excuses: "they all alike" may refer to everyone the host first invited to the feast – the host had "invited many." "They all alike" may mean "they all alike" were concerned primarily about the things of this world. The first excuse shows more concern for the person's possessions in this world than for the host who issued the invitation. The excuse shows more interest in buying things than learning about God and doing what God says. For these guests, their material possessions were more important than God and following Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

(Luke 14:19) Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.'

Did the first person purchase land unseen? Did the second person purchase oxen unseen, so he did not know how they would behave under a yoke? They were certainly unwise to put their possessions in a place of more importance than spending time with God, Who invites us to spend time with Him, not only now but throughout eternity.

(Luke 14:20) Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.'

The third person could probably have brought his wife to the feast. Jesus ate with men and women at the same dinner and taught men and women while they ate together. Our relationship with God is more important than any of the relationships that we have in this life alone. The misled guest could spend time with his wife, his new wife, after the feast. To reject Jesus' invitation may mean you will never receive another invitation.

(Luke 14:21) So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'

The owner of the house had every right to expect his invited guests to accept and honor his invitation. As noted above, these guests apparently had previously agreed to come, and at the last moment chose not to come and gave excuses. Representing God, the Master had ultimate authority and justifiable anger. So, having invited the wealthy and religious people who rejected Him, He invited the neediest people; who probably felt so unworthy to enter the master's house that the slave had to "bring" them in.

(Luke 14:22) And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’

We must be careful not to push the parable to mean more than Jesus intended, though we will discover more and more insights every time we read one of Jesus’ parables. The slave reported to the master that he still had room for more guests, but the master did not extend a second invitation to those he had invited first. Jesus’ message means we must be careful not to spurn God’s invitation to act, because often we only get one chance to do something for God and others. We may never receive a second chance to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior if our worldly pursuits always seem more important until it is too late.

(Luke 14:23) Then the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled.’

Having invited the neediest people all around him and closest to him, and having brought them into his house, the master will fill his house with those who happened to be in the neighborhood and traveling or doing business in the streets. The master has sufficient authority over everyone to compel them to come to his feast, but he did not compel those to come who rejected him and preferred worldly pursuits to being with him. Those in the roads and lanes may have felt compelled to go by the person who invited them because they knew the master was worthy to be honored by them and they felt humbly amazed at the invitation to go to his feast.

(Luke 14:24) For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.’”

Jesus came and invited people to follow Him because the Kingdom of God was at hand or in their midst. To eat dinner with Jesus anywhere was to eat at a messianic dinner with the Messiah, the King. If a person refused to eat with Jesus or listen to Jesus, he would miss the spiritual food and the message and way of salvation that Jesus came into the world to bring. To remain away from Jesus as the King over all will result in eternal consequences for those who reject Him.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Why does Jesus say you should take the lowest seat at a feast?
2. What kind of person does Jesus say will be humbled?
3. How happy do you think a person is who only does things for those who will repay or reward him? How happy do you think a person is who only serves God because he wants God to reward him?
4. What kind of excuses do people give today for not spending time with Jesus Christ

and those who love God and Christ?

5. Why will some people be happier existing away from God and Christ after they die than being with God and those who love Him, even while they are suffering torment because they have rejected God's rule and the Kingdom of God?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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