Luke 14:15-24
King James Version
July 29, 2018

The International Bible Lesson (Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series) for Sunday, July 29, 2018, is from Luke 14:15-24. Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse International Bible Lesson Commentary. Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the International Bible Lessons Commentary website along with the International Bible Lesson that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the International Bible Lesson Forum.

(Luke 14:15) And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

One of the dinner guests (perhaps a disciple, perhaps not) entered into a table discussion with Jesus by affirming what Jesus taught and the hope of the Jewish people. Anyone who eats at the marriage supper of the Lamb or at the great messianic feast in the kingdom of God (and there will be many such feasts in heaven and later on earth) will be honored and happy. This person may have expressed this truth with some self-satisfaction, because he assumed that he would be so blessed for some reason, perhaps because he was a Jew, one of God's chosen people.

Therefore, Jesus told a parable that indicated people were being invited to feast in the kingdom of God by Him whenever and wherever He shared the good news or taught (and later whenever and wherever His followers
shared the good news and taught). But many would refuse His invitation to the heavenly feast, because they preferred the things of this world and what their culture offered them to the things of God and the truths of and from God that Jesus taught and demonstrated. Those who prefer the things of this world to the things of God will not experience the things of God, come to know God, or enjoy the messianic feast in the kingdom of God. The privileged may think they are special and because of their special status will always have an open invitation into the kingdom of God or don’t even need an invitation to the heavenly feast. Some may think they don’t need to change their thinking, repent of their sins, or believe in Jesus at all to go to heaven, but Jesus’ sober teaching serves as a warning to the worldly-minded who refuse His invitation when they hear it extended to them.

(Luke 14:16) Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

The comment of the dinner guest opened the door for Jesus to teach another parable. In the parable, the “someone” may ultimately represent God the Father, and the “servant” may represent Jesus the Messiah Who God sent into the world to invite people into the kingdom of God. Or, Jesus may be the Host who was inviting people to follow Him into the kingdom of God, so He would be the Host of the great feast. The feast is the expected feast in the kingdom of God that the Jews looked forward to with eager anticipation. Jesus applied His parable to the statement that the guest made at the dinner they were attending. During His public ministry, Jesus was also planning and preparing for the great messianic banquet in the kingdom of God. Through His teaching and preaching, He was inviting many people to His messianic feast. When the messianic feast was finally ready, His invited guests would be told when to come into the kingdom of God to eat of the feast. The most important invitation anyone will ever receive in this life is the invitation to eat with Jesus and His followers forever, but too many people refuse Jesus’ invitation and make worldly excuses for not trusting Him with their lives and their future. Those who made excuses in Jesus’ parable fit that description.
(Luke 14:17) And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

When Jesus the Messiah came into the world according to the Old Testament Prophets “everything was now ready” for Him to preach and teach and eat with religious people and sinners. Many were invited to hear Him teach, but not everyone took advantage of the invitation or the opportunity to be with Jesus. Many who heard Him teach refused His invitation to follow Him, and to follow Jesus was the way into the kingdom of God. Even worse, when some heard Him teach, they listened only to find a way to entrap Him and find an excuse to murder Him. In Jesus’ parable, the servant or slave could represent Jesus the Messiah, the One sent by God and Who came into the world as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. Jesus wanted His hearers to know that the day of salvation had come to them, and He, the Messiah, was with them leading the way to salvation. When people ate with Jesus they were eating at a banquet with their heavenly King in human flesh, and if they believed in Him they would someday eat with Him in the kingdom of God. Throughout eternity there will be many such banquets with Jesus. 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; then, if you do receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, you can eat the messianic dinner in the kingdom of God whenever it is served. Jesus warned against making excuses to not follow Him to the feast.

(Luke 14:18) And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

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 believed the prophets, practiced the Judaism of Jesus’ day, and looked forward to the Messiah’s coming. 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 be applied today. Those invited were only
waiting to learn the time when the feast was ready (or for our day, when Jesus would come again), but they did not have a loving, friendly, important relationship with the Host, God the Father or Jesus Christ. 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. Their love of the world was more important to them than honoring God’s (the Host’s) priorities and making His priorities, their priorities. Likewise, a person may say they believe in God and want to go to heaven someday, but they let 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 were concerned primarily about the things of this world and not the things of God. 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) And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

Did the first person purchase land unseen? Did the second person purchase oxen unseen and untried, so he did not know how they would behave under a yoke? They were certainly unwise to put their possessions or their work in a place of more importance than spending time with God, Who invites us to spend time with Him and allow Him to meet all our needs.

(Luke 14:20) And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

The third person could probably have brought his wife to the feast. The host would have gladly welcomed her. 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. The third invited guest could spend time with his wife,
his new wife, after the feast or take her to the feast. To reject Jesus’ invitation to spend time with Him, and put others in a place of more importance than God, may lead to a time when you will never receive another invitation or be called when the feast in the kingdom is ready.

(Luke 14:21) So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. 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 hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

The owner of the house had every right to expect his invited guests to accept and honor his invitation and come when he told them the feast was ready. As noted above, these guests apparently had previously agreed to come, and at the last moment chose not to come and gave selfish, worldly excuses that dishonored their host (God is more important than a field, an ox, or any other person). Representing God, the Master had ultimate authority and justifiable anger. So, having invited the wealthy and the religious people who had rejected Him, He invited the neediest people of the town; who probably felt so unworthy to enter the master’s house that the slave had to “bring” them in. Because they were “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame,” they would need extra help to get to the feast, and the feast would have been of all surpassing value to them. They probably never dreamed of such a blessing! God does not disregard the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame, but wants them to enter the kingdom of God too. As an example, remember the poor sick beggar, Lazarus, who angels took to be with Abraham when he died.

(Luke 14:22) And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is 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. We must be careful not to spurn
God’s invitation to act and obey Him, because sometimes we only get one invitation, only one chance to do something for God and others before the opportunity passes us by. We may never receive a second chance or opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. If our worldly pursuits are always more important to us than pursuing God, someday we may find it is too late for us to try to enter the kingdom of God.

(Luke 14:23) And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Having invited both the worldly people and the neediest people all around him and closest to him in the town (the Jews), and having brought the neediest into his house (Jesus’ followers), the master will fill his house with those outside the town (the Gentiles). The master had sufficient authority over everyone to compel them to come to his feast, but he did not compel those to come who had rejected him and preferred their worldly pursuits to being with him. Those in the roads and lanes may have felt compelled to go because of the authority of the person who invited them. Or, they may have felt so unworthy to come to the feast because the one who invited them was a famous king; so, they had to be compelled by the king’s servant to have the confidence to go and the assurance of acceptance by the king. They knew the master was worthy to be honored by them and everyone, and they felt humbly amazed at the invitation to go to his feast when others may have seemed so much more worthy than themselves. God has room in the kingdom of heaven for the least and last to be invited, and no matter what some may say and do His kingdom will be full. The last to be invited may be those living and learning about Jesus today, who need to accept His invitation today before it is too late.

(Luke 14:24) For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Jesus came and invited people to follow Him because the kingdom of God was at hand or in their midst where He was. To eat dinner with Jesus anywhere was to eat at a messianic dinner with the Messiah, the King of the
Jews. If a person refused to eat with and listen to Jesus, he would miss the spiritual food Jesus offered; he would not hear God’s good news; he would not learn that Jesus was the way of salvation, Who came into the world to save sinners. To remain away from Jesus, the King over all creation, will result in eternal consequences and great sadness for those who reject His invitation to enter the kingdom of God and feast with Him.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What kind of people will eat the messianic banquet in the kingdom of God?

2. What seemed of most importance to those who made excuses when they were called to come to the banquet? What did that communicate to the host?

3. What kind of people went to the banquet and what does that mean to you?

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 rather than live with God and those who love Him after they die, even while they are suffering torment because they have rejected God’s rule and the Kingdom of God?

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