**“Come, For Everything is Now Ready”**

Luke 14:12-24

Key verse 17

 **“**At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’”

**Introduction**

 According to wikipedia, an estimated 1.2 million students drop out of high school every year in the United States. In addition, the U.S. high school graduation rates ranks 19th in the world. Reasons are varied and may include: finding [employment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Employment), avoiding [bullying](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bullying), family emergencies, poor grades, [depression](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Depression_%28mood%29), [mental illnesses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_illnesses), [unexpected pregnanc](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teenage_pregnancy)ies, bad environment, lack of freedom, and [boredom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boredom) due to lessons not being relevant to their desired occupations.Those who drop out of high school are more likely to be [unemployed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unemployment), have [low-paying jobs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Low-paying_job), become incarcerated, have children at an early age and/or become single parents. But there are chances for them to recover if there’s a will. Spiritually speaking, we don’t want to become “dropouts” among those who can enter the kingdom of heaven. In today’s passage Jesus taught the parable of a great banquet to illustrate three kinds of people: the rejected Jews, the humble Jews, and the Gentiles. We can see through Jesus’ compelling love and heart to urge everyone to come in His sheep pen without missing anyone. Praise Jesus and His love!

1. Read verses 12-14. What did Jesus say to his host? Why should we invite those who cannot repay us? (13-14, Mt 25:36-46)

1-1, Read verses 12-14.

 Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. **13** But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

1-2, What did Jesus say to his host?

 ***“When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”***

* Some of the dinner guests were feeling uncomfortable about where they were sitting. Others were glad to be in less important seats.
* In this part, Jesus tells the host of the banquet whom to invite and whom not to invite.
* Jesus gave him the promised heavenly reward if he follows his word. Jesus saw that the members of the dinner were all people who were ranked as VIP’s.
* Jesus turned his attention to his dinner host and taught him in verses 12-14.
* Jesus pointed out something that we often do: we give gifts and invitations, expecting to get something back later.
* We often do things for others, expecting for others to return the favor.
* Jesus told us to invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. These are people who have a lot of needs and most likely cannot pay us back.
* Jesus tells us to help people without expecting any worldly benefit in return.
* Jesus wanted them to invite the needy in order to practice generous serving. An act of generosity is remembered and repaid, as our Lord promised Abraham as well as all the heroes of faith.
* In Genesis 18 Abraham served strangers with delicious food and he happened to serve the angels. God blessed him to become his friend and also to share in God’s future work.

1-3, Why should we invite those who cannot repay us? (13-14, Mt 25:36-46)

 ***But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”***

* Of course, it’s difficult to invite the blind, the lame, and the crippled & easier and more natural for us to invite those who are our friends, relatives, fellowship members, servants of God, and like-minded people.
* Jesus did not say that we should not invite them. We should invite them to have fellowship among Christians because we love them. This is a good thing.
* But He also encourages us to invite needy people who need our love and attention.
* Inviting others who cannot invite us back is not easy in this pragmatic generation.
* “Give and take” is a normal expectation in our lives today. But God gave us wealth to use for his glory.
* We received freely and we give freely as we studied during our thanksgiving passage a couple of weeks ago.
* It’s a great privilege to use our wealth to give generously and to invite others for dinner.
* Giving something to the helpless is the same as giving to our Lord Jesus Christ.

 ***But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”***

* It is because God sees and God will repay. God knows our sacrifices and our tears on behalf of others’ well-being.
* He is keeping a record of it and he will surely repay it. Jesus mentioned the resurrection of the righteous.
* Those who have helped others out of love and prayer will be repaid by the Lord at the resurrection of the righteous.
* That is the time of true reimbursement from God. O Lord, purify our hearts from worldly benefit-seeking.
* Help us to seek your reward and repayment at the resurrection of the righteous.

Matthews 25:34-46 reads,

 “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. **35** For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, **36** I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ **37** “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? **38** When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? **39** When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’ **40** “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ **41** “Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. **42** For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, **43** I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’ **44** “They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’ **45** “He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’ **46** “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

Revelation 22:12 reads,

 "Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.”

2 Thessalonians 1:5-7 reads,

 “All this is evidence that God’s judgment is right, and as a result you will be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are suffering. 6 God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you 7 and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels.”

2. Read verses 15-16. When one of the guests heard what Jesus said, what was he reminded of? (15) What story did Jesus tell to describe this great banquet? Who were the invited guests? (Romans 9:1-5)

2-1, Read verses 15-16.

**15** When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.” **16** Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.

2-2, When one of the guests heard what Jesus said, what was he reminded of? (15)

***15 When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”***

* Jesus was still at the Pharisee’s dinner party, making many people uncomfortable, both guests and the host.
* One of those at the table spoke up, perhaps trying to change the mood. He said, “Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

2-3, What story did Jesus tell to describe this great banquet?

 ***Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.*** 

2-4, Who were the invited guests? (Romans 9:1-5)

 “I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— 2 I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3 For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4 the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5 Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.”

* Clearly, Jesus told this parable to express his plea and prayer and warning to his own people, even those at the dinner party.
* They were the privileged, chosen guests to God’s great banquet. They received the invitation through the prophets.

3. Read verses 17-20. Describe how the owner invited his guests. (17) When the invited guests were summoned, what excuses did each give? (18-20) What is your response to this invitation today?

3-1, Read verses 17-20.

At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ **18** “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ **19** “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ **20** “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

3-2, Describe how the owner invited his guests. (17)

 ***At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’***

* Now the time had come. Jesus came to give the final invite since everything was now ready. The kingdom of God had come in Jesus Christ.

3-3, When the invited guests were summoned, what excuses did each give? (18-20)

***18 “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ 19 “Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ 20 “Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’***

* They made excuses. They were too engrossed in their own worldly lives: their own properties, possessions, careers and marriages.
* Work, business, and family were more important to them. They were like the people of Noah’s time who were focused on eating, drinking and marrying, but who died in the flood.
* In the days of Lot, the people of Sodom were buying and selling, planting and building, but fire from heaven destroyed them all.
* In today’s society, people might skip the banquet due to babysitter fees or trying out a high definition television.
* Sometimes we Christians think, “I hope Jesus comes again, but not yet. I have many dreams yet unfulfilled.”
* This is very similar to those who made excuses not to accept the great banquet invitation. They had more urgent and important things in their schedules.
* They became proud and unthankful, thinking they didn’t need to attend the banquet to be happy. Rather, they felt burdened by it.

3-4, What is your response to this invitation today?

* First our personal application required!
* We are very thankful in that God granted us campus mission and world mission through studying the Bible.
* If we focus on our own demanding situations, our excuses will be endless.
* Rather, let us sacrifice our time and money to accept God’s personal invitation to join in His feast.
* May the Lord help us to seek first His Kingdom purpose with our hearts.

4. Read verses 21-24. Why did the owner of the house become angry? (21a) What did he then order his servant to do? (21b) Who do you think these people represent? What further instructions did the owner give to his servant since there was still room? (22-23) What warning can we heed from this parable? (24)

4-1, Read verses 21-24.

**21** “The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ **22** “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ **23** “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. **24** I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”

4-2, Why did the owner of the house become angry? (21a)

 ***“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant,***

4-3, What did he then order his servant to do? (21b)

***‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’***

* The banquet was not going to be canceled. Rather, other people will be invited to fill the seats.
* God will invite those who accept the invitation thankfully, like the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame.
* They are needy people who met difficulties, sufferings and unfortunate circumstances in life, but they will accept the great banquet invitation with thankfulness and humility.
* The invitation is given freely to them as well. God’s banquet hall is very big and his house has many rooms.
* So the invitations went out beyond the borders, into all the world.
* God really wants to have a full banquet hall in his kingdom with all kinds of thankful people, celebrating together.
* This is God’s heart. This is God’s hope. This is God’s love.
* Have you accepted his invitation to his great banquet?

Luke 13:29 reads,

 “People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

Revelations 5:9, 10 reads,

 “And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. **10** You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth.”

4-4, Who do you think these people represent?

***‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’***

* They were undeserving people. They represent sinners such as the tax collectors. They were humble and poor in spirit.

Matthew 5:3 says,

“Blessed are poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

* When Jesus called Levi, he got up and followed Jesus immediately because he knew he was a sinner who needs God.
* When Jesus called Peter, he left his net and followed Jesus at once.
* When Jesus called the Samaritan woman, she accepted Jesus as her true husband.
* They have something in common. When Jesus called us, we responded with gratitude.
* They accepted the invitation with great joy because they knew they were sinners who did not deserve such a glorious invitation.
* They realized God’s deep love through his invitation.

4-5, What further instructions did the owner give to his servant since there was still room? (22-23)

***22 “‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ 23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.***

* So here notice that God points out that there is still room.
* Now God began to invite the Gentiles. We belong to this (the 3rd) invitation. This reminds us that we are saved by God’s grace alone.
* God is not willing for anyone to perish, but wants everyone to come to Jesus and be saved.

John 3:16 says,

 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

John 17:20-21 reads,

 “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **21** that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”

* When we know the heart of God, we can have universal love for all peoples of all nations.
* When we know the heart of God, we can pray for people in Muslim and other countries, including Iraq, North Korea and China to hear the invitation to the kingdom of God and be saved.
* Los Angeles UBF has been graciously assigned to support the African continent and Philippines ministries.
* May the Lord help us to outstretch our arms of prayer for all nations as a kingdom of priests in consistent with the will of God!

 ***“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ 23 “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.***

* The word “compel” means “force or oblige (someone) to do something.”
* In our culture, nobody wants to force or pressure others with his or her own agenda.
* But we have the heart of God. We have God’s love. We are compelled to urge our our Bible students and our children to come and participate in this heavenly banquet.
* May the Lord richly bless our day and night prayer to increase our one to one Bible studies and to invite 200 students to our Spring Bible conference. Amen!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

4-6, What warning can we heed from this parable? (24)

***I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’”***

* Those who were invited will not get a taste of Jesus’ banquet because they rejected His personal invitation.

**Conclusion**

When Jesus felt that He would finish his redemptive work on the cross by saying, “It is finished,” everything was ready. But the religious leaders and the crowd were not ready to accept his personal invitation. They belonged to the first group who rejected the banquet even though they had promised to attend it. To refuse an invitation at this final stage shows an absence of courtesy, much like being a no-show after already responding to an R.S.V.P. They all regarded God’s invitation optional not mandatory. But God’s invitation is mandatory because we will stay outside the kingdom if we miss the invitation. Fields, oxen, and marriage became their first priority. They made many excuses and missed the banquet. The first invitees refused to come to the banquet. This is a historical fact that the privileged religious leaders rejected Jesus and together with the blind crowd crucified him on the cross and threw him outside Jerusalem. They were excluded from God’s blessings and the eternal banquet prepared for them. Only those having contrite hearts and the Gentiles were invited by God’s grace. May the Lord help us to consider God’s invitation very seriously and to compel all people to get in Jesus’ sheep pen. Amen.

**One word: Now everything is ready!**