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Luke

Chapter 14 - An Unprecedented Invitation
An Unwelcoming World (vs. 1-6)

Luke 14:1-6: It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching Him closely. And there in front of Him was a man suffering from dropsy. And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” But they kept silent. And He took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away. And He said to them, “Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?” And they could make no reply to this.

Well, that about says it- The world is more concerned about a dumb ox than they are about people. And you see that throughout. This passage, in particular in Chapter 14, is really dealing with a dinner all the way through the

chapter, an invitation. And what you see is an invitation of both the world and the invitation of Christ. Which is very different, very different, as we come to this. I was thinking about God in the flesh. It's unimaginable, isn't it? That God would present Himself, Emmanuel, Jesus Christ, in the flesh, the living Word, the Word of God, that created all things

You turn to a passage like Psalm 33, and it says, "By the word of the mouth, all these things, He spoke, and it was done." Think about that. What an amazing statement. He just spoke and it was done and all things were created.

You go into the Book of Isaiah, and probably there's no greater book than the Book of Isaiah in which you go into the theology of God. What is God like? And by the time you come to Chapter 44, God goes, "So, who will you liken Me to? Who's like Me?" I mean, go down the list. Can you compare Him with anybody who's existed before time, has always been, never changes, is immutable, all-powerful, omniscient, all-knowing. It's an amazing thing to know God. And so, we see this magnificent picture, in particular, in the Book of Isaiah, of God and His grand

state and His declaration, "All of the nations are like nothing to Me. They're like a drop in the bucket. They're less than nothing. So, who will you compare Me to? I'm the only One that saves." I mean, literally in Him we live and breathe and have our existence. Now, can you imagine Him coming to earth and taking on form and walking among us? The Scripture says, "And we beheld the glory of God, the glory as of the only begotten full of grace and truth, and He walks among us." The disciples actually get to talk with Him and sit with Him and eat with Him and walk with Him.

What is God like? Well, you read the Old Testament and there's a lot of things that cause you to maybe be trepidatious and fearful. Nevertheless, as Hebrews will say, though God revealed Himself in many portions and in many ways in the Old Testament, in this day has spoken to us in His Son. And we see what He's really like. Truth walking among us.

How receptive would you be if in fact God came to earth, came to your house? If you invited Him to dinner, how receptive would you be? John makes reference to the fact

that you need to remember that He's not only full of grace, but He's full of truth. So, He doesn't speak a lie. He tells you the way it is. How receptive would you be to somebody that would tell you the way it is? I mean, the woman at the well was extremely receptive when He began to say, "You know, you had five husbands and the one you're living with is not your husband." She goes, "Wow, what a great guy this is." And she was very receptive. And because of that, Jesus says, "You're the kind of person that we're looking for; the one who will worship in spirit and in truth." And of course, John will reiterate on that in 1 John, and he'll say, "Look, if you won't admit that you're a sinner, we can't have a relationship. So, just admit that you have problems and then I can save you." If you confess your sins, He's faithful and just to forgive you and will cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

What would it be like to have Him for dinner? Well, on a number of occasions Jesus was actually invited, and it is interesting to look at the Gospel of Luke in particular. Luke will record probably more dining out with Jesus than

any other gospel. And probably one of the reasons why is that you have an individual who is not in the inner circle. Luke is not necessarily considered in the inner circle, i.e. not necessarily considered a Jew of sorts, probably of Syrian birth. And so, he comes from maybe an outside perspective and realizing that he was an outsider, but he was taken in. So, because of that, he gives these interesting pictures of eating with a God that is receptive to outsiders, to people that you wouldn't think. And as we have as the title of the Gospel of Luke, "Good News for the Unlikely," because all the way through the Gospel of Luke, you see God opening His arms to the unlikely. Matthew will state, as Jesus will declare in Matthe 11, you can just see Him crying out, "Come to Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I'll give you rest." And the invitation was so broad and so great, who could imagine such a thing? Especially in a world that is so tied up in the fallacy of religion. And most people don't really understand or comprehend that Jesus was not an advocate of religion. Paul will talk about self-made religion, and of course that's what most religion is all about. It's all about self, and it's about those things that

perhaps one particular group maybe excels in, and because of that they elevate themselves. But it has nothing to do with that. God wants to have a relationship with all of us, and He is the only One that declares, "I actually like to be around humble people. I don't want to be around the proud or the arrogant, the ones that are declaring themselves great." So, really, throughout the Gospel of Luke you see that.

When you begin to realize that religion is, I would use the word "esoteric" in the sense of, "Us four, no more." It kind of works in the realm of, "We're more holy than you." It becomes extremely exclusive. And people begin to think, "Well, that's the way God is. And Jesus comes on the scene and goes, "That's not the way God is at all. God's not like that at all." And so, by the very act of God coming in the flesh, we begin to see God in a whole different light, like we never expected. I mean, up to this point, we thought it was all about formality, right? Maybe regiment, maybe it was all about looking good and maybe wearing the right robes or saying the long prayers. Jesus will even state, "You know, don't think by your many

prayers that God's going to hear you. And don't think that because you repeat them that it's of any value."

If you look with me in Isaiah 1, in many respects, the prophet Isaiah, which I just want to remind you that tradition has it that the Jews, his own people, attacked him and sawed him in two. So, here you have a prophet that is coming and telling them the truth about God, and people don't usually like the truth if in fact they're living a lie.

So, if you look in Isaiah 1, as God begins to indict His own people through the prophet Isaiah, He cries out in verse 11,

(Isaiah 1:11) "What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?"
Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of
rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in
the blood of bulls, lambs or goats.

(Isaiah 1:12) When you come to appear before Me, Who
requires of you this trampling of My courts?

(Isaiah 1:13) Bring your worthless offerings no longer..."

"I don't want to see it. I don't want to hear your prayers. It's an abomination." And what you're seeing is, clearly, God is looking for somebody that's just genuine about a relationship with Him.

I mean, if you look in Isaiah 29, you see the same thing. And of course, the passage that we oftentimes quote is verse 13.

(Isaiah 29:13) "Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote."

"They have all this stuff memorized and it's all about tradition. Therefore, I'm going to deal with them in a way that you never would guess."

There is a passage in Isaiah 58, I figure as long as you're in Isaiah, I don't know how you got there, but as long as you're there. Isaiah 58, where God in many respects is kind of mimicking them crying out to Him. You know how people come to God and go, "Why did we do all these things? You know, if You're not going to help us, why

were we so worshipful?" That type of thing. So, they're crying out to God, and God says, "I know what you're saying. You're saying, 'Why have we fasted? Why have we been so religious?'"

And so, it states in Chapter 58, if you look in verse 3, (Isaiah 58:3) "Why have we fasted and You do not see? Why have we humbled ourselves..."

Maybe because you should be humble, but of course, they're thinking there should be benefit in it.

"... Why have we humbled ourselves and You do not notice? ..."

Of course, God says, "Okay, you're doing this superficially. You honor Me with your mouth, but your heart's not with Me. You're not doing this because you want to do it."

"... Behold, on the day of your fast you find your desire, And drive hard all your workers."

And God says, "Well, you want to know why I'm not listening to you? You're being cruel to the people that you're in charge of. You know, you're coming to Me, you're trying to be worshipful and trying to say, you

know, it's all about rote and memorization and about tradition. And I say, no, it's about why don't you just be nice to the people that serve with you?"

He goes on and says,

(Isaiah 58:4) "Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist. You do not fast like you do today to make your voice heard on high."

"If you're beating your people, do you think I'm listening?"

(Isaiah 58:5) "Is it a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself? Is it for bowing one's head like a reed And for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? ..."

In other words, "Is it all about the show? You think that's what I'm looking for?"

Watch verse 6.

(Isaiah 58:6) "Is this not the fast which I choose, To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the bands of the yoke, And to let the oppressed go free And break every yoke?"

(Isaiah 58:7) Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry
And bring the homeless poor into the house..."

"Aren't you supposed to be helping people?" I mean,
none of this is brain surgery, right?

You ultimately come to verse 13, and His statement is,
"This is what the sabbath is about." A lot of times people
get confused, "Well, the sabbath, you have to do this;
don't do that."

He says,

(Isaiah 58:13) "If because of the sabbath, you turn your
foot From doing your own pleasure on My holy day,
And call the sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD
honorable, And honor it, desisting from your own ways,
From seeking your own pleasure And speaking your own
word."

Well, that would be you helping somebody else, wouldn't
it? That's what the sabbath is about. It's about ceasing.
Once again, "*sabbatismos*" makes reference to stopping
something; it's not sabbath rest and not you sleeping but
it's resting from your ways. And what He's saying is, "I

declared this day so that you might start thinking, 'I need to help other people and stop thinking of myself. I need to stop doing everything for me.'" They're not doing it, obviously.

And of course, as it goes into verse 59, "The problem is that your sins have separated us because you're not thinking like Me."

It is to be noted in Isaiah 59 here that God declares because of all this, justice doesn't reign within His people. And He's very upset. And He says, "I looked for somebody to do the right thing and I couldn't find any."

But it says in Isaiah 59:15,

"Yes, truth is lacking; And he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey..."

In other words, if you do the right thing, somebody's going to kill you.

"... Now the LORD saw, And it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice.

(Isaiah 59:16) And He saw that there was no man, And was astonished that there was no one to intercede;

Then His own arm brought salvation to Him, And His righteousness upheld Him.

(Isaiah 59:17) He put on righteousness like a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
And He put on garments of vengeance for clothing And
wrapped Himself with zeal as a mantle.”

(Isaiah 59:20) “A Redeemer will come to Zion...”

What's the point? Man doesn't know what God is like and doesn't seek for the things of God. There is none righteous, no, not one. For the first time, God comes to earth and we see what it looks like. We see what He looks like. We understand what He really wants. And He comes in caring for people. You would think that He's going to be accepted with open arms, but He's hated because He's stepping on the turf of those that have already begun to exploit people through religion. If in fact you feel unwelcome in God's house, it's not Christ's. All the way through the Gospel of Luke, you have these interesting invitations that Luke records. And if you look in particular in Luke 7, there's one that kind of stands out in our minds and our thoughts.

(Luke 7:36) "Now one of the Pharisees was requesting Him to dine with him..."

Why would he do that? Well, he has his reasons, and we'll talk about those as we go.

So, Jesus enters the house. Well, if you remember this particular story, and we've gone through it, so I won't go into great detail, but if you remember, there was a woman from the streets and she comes in and she begins to wipe His feet with her hair and her tears. And she begins to display a great love for Christ. The Pharisee says, "If You were really a prophet, You would know what kind of person this is." And fundamentally what he's saying is, "She doesn't belong in my house. She doesn't belong in this dinner. She's not invited." Jesus says, "Let Me tell you something. This woman has cared for Me more than you. And because she has been forgiven much, she loves much." And He embraces. Now, what's interesting about the scenario is this, that Jesus has been invited into the Pharisee's house. You don't insult people that invite you over to their house. Jesus does. Because Jesus is truth. And He's concerned for those that are humble and those

that are meek and those that actually come to Him with open arms. "And how dare you hinder this woman from loving Me?"

There's another passage in Luke 11 in which a Pharisee invites Jesus to the table of his house.

If you look in Luke 11,

(Luke 11:37) "Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee asked Him to have lunch with him..."

These guys just never learn. I don't know what they're, once again, thinking that they're going to get out of Him, but I can tell you what they are going to get, truth.

"... and He went in, and reclined at the table.

(Luke 11:38) When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

(Luke 11:39) But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and of the platter; but inside of you, you are full of robbery and wickedness."

And by the way, He's a guest in his house.

He goes on to say, "You seem to disregard the love of God and the things that are important and you love the front seats of the synagogue, (verse 43) the respectful greetings." In other words, "You have your priorities mixed up and God's not pleased with you." You would think that they would stop inviting Him.

It goes on and says,

(Luke 11:53) "When He left there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to be very hostile..."

I wonder why.

What's also interesting is, if you go back into Luke 4, where Jesus first begins His ministry, on the Sabbath, He will oftentimes do things just to convey what the sabbath is really all about. Once again, the purpose of the sabbath is to cease from your ways, so that you might think of others; that you might have the heart of God, right? Nevertheless, Luke 4, Jesus comes into the synagogue of the neighborhood. And what do you think He finds?

Well, it says this in verse 31,

(Luke 4:31) "And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath;

(Luke 4:32) and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message was with authority.

(Luke 4:33) In the synagogue there was a man possessed by the spirit of an unclean demon..."

Let me just emphasize this- In a synagogue! I would think outside of a synagogue. No, it was in the synagogue.

What is that telling us about the religion of man? It's not working. All the way through, the criticism continues every time on the Sabbath and Jesus continues to do good on the Sabbath. That's what He's supposed to do.

It says in Luke 6,

(Luke 6:1) "Now it happened that He was passing through some grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands, and eating the grain."

But some of the Pharisees said, "Don't you know what the tradition is of the land?" No, they don't. They're fishermen. They have no idea what's going on. They're

clean slates. Jesus declares in the Gospel of Luke, "Thank You, God, that You gave me babes. Because all these people that seem to know everything are just so hostile and so hateful." So, He begins to correct them on that.

It says in verse 6,

(Luke 6:6) "On another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered."

And they were wondering, "Is He going to heal him?" And He goes, "Of course I'm going to heal him. I'm supposed to do good on the Sabbath."

This particular passage is actually bringing them together. We have a dinner and we have the Sabbath. It's a Sabbath dinner. So, as you come to Luke 14, we have the two combined and it's almost like the perfect storm. As we come to Luke 14, Just a reminder of some historical facts that the Sabbath meals were deeply spiritual to the Jews. And you actually had to prepare days ahead because you were not allowed to light a fire on the Sabbath day. That would be work, right? According to their traditions, according to the Talmud. So, you would have to do it days

ahead, and they would keep burning embers warming it. So, it'd have to keep it warm throughout the days in order for you to have this Sabbath meal so that you wouldn't be cooking on the Sabbath. So, a lot of effort was placed in these particular things, and the meal would actually start off with a kind of a ritual blessing in which it was the head of the house's responsibility to lead in these blessings.

So, actually, as this starts off in Chapter 14,

(Luke 14:1) "It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees..."

That's actually making reference to the fact that he's the one in charge of the blessing and of this particular meal. And these Sabbath banquets were highly stratified. That is to say that you had certain levels that were there. So, certain people sat in certain seats that were all assigned. It was based on social standing, it was based on religious prestige, or it was based on wealth. But they had different places where you sat based on the stratosphere that you lived in this particular thing. And so, you have these interesting exclusivities and esoteric things that are happening within the passage. It's a social event

fundamentally; it's religious, but it's morphed into a social event. Now, what they would do in these events is they would often, as the host would serve and speak and bless; he would open up, and they would invite elite guests. And of course, in this particular text, it seems like Jesus is invited. It doesn't say that He is at first, if you look at Chapter 14.

(Luke 14:1) "It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching Him closely."

Now, it doesn't say that He was invited. However, it does say later on that He had been invited because it says in verse 12,

(Luke 14:12) "And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him..."

So, we know that He had been invited within the passage. He apparently, in this setting, is the elite guest that has been invited. Now, here's the interesting thing. What they would do is they would invite these guests for the very purpose of oftentimes engaging in theological or legal discussions and debates. So, I don't know if you've ever

been to a dinner where it was sort of orchestrated for the purpose of maybe working something out or having a debate about something, "We're going to fix this problem," or whatever. But then, the secondary thing that they would do, and probably is the issue within this particular passage, is from time to time they would actually invite somebody for the purpose of evaluating and testing controversial teachers. And of course, Jesus is the number one controversial teacher. So, that's why it reads the way that it does.

(Luke 14:1) "It happened that when He went into the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, they were watching Him closely."

They were watching Him carefully, everything that He did. They wanted to know what He did because they were going to pick apart everything that He did within the meal.

(Luke 14:2) "And (behold) there in front of Him..."

As the text reads, "behold," this is kind of like a, "Whoa, here's a guy with dropsy." What in the world is that? What we understand is, it's just the swelling of water.

"Edema" is kind of another word that we use in this particular time, but he was all swollen up. And it was obvious that he was having problems and was suffering at this time.

(Luke 14:3) "And Jesus answered and spoke..."

Now, what's interesting is, nobody asked a question. But He's answering. The point is that He can see their faces. Let's put it another way. Everybody is watching to see what He's going to do. So, you have all these eyes looking on you. And He goes, "So, you think I should heal him?"

The passage reads,

(Luke 14:3) "And Jesus answered and spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees..."

Who were there for the purpose of debate and there for the purpose of tearing Him down and examining Him.

"... saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?""

"Okay, you guys that open up the Scripture and you know the Scripture really well, right? Is it okay to heal?"

I mean, of course, you go back to Isaiah 58. What does God say? "You know, you guys are fasting and you're

doing the wrong, you're worshiping the wrong way. You know the fast I look for is the one where you heal and help people. That's the one I look for." Now, they have the same text that Jesus has. So, it's quite an indictment because now they're forced to look at the legitimacy of their ability to read.

So, as you come to the passage,

"... "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?"

(Luke 14:4) But they kept silent..."

There's a kind of feel in the text of arrogance. So, "We'll just let Him farm this one out. We'll let Him work this out. We'll stand here in a high contempt and we'll let it happen."

"... And He took hold of him and healed him, and sent him away."

I would say at this juncture, "Jesus, Jesus, why are you sending him away? These are holy people." And Jesus goes, "No, they're not. Get out of here. Get out of here. These aren't holy people."

(Luke 14:5) "And He said to them, "Which one of you will have a son or an ox fall into a well, and will not immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?""

In other words, "You wouldn't give it a second thought. You wouldn't stop to think and analyze, 'Well, there's a Sabbath day, how many steps should I walk? How much effort should I give?'" Of course, the Talmud has literally volumes of things about that. He said, "But you wouldn't give it one second of thought because you had something valuable and beneficial to you. Funny how you can overlook your laws and your regulations just for yourself."

(Luke 14:6) "And they could make no reply to this."

Throughout this chapter, we're going to be talking about dining. We're going to be talking about coming together and fellowshiping.

Jesus ends Chapter 13 fundamentally with the thought, "There's going to be a table in that final day. Are you invited?"

(Luke 13:29) "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God."

And immediately, you come to Chapter 14, and we come to the table of the Pharisees; which was a very unwelcoming table, not only to Christ, but to anybody who has need. It's almost like they hinder, if you think about it.

If you back up in Luke 11, what is the statement that He makes in this? It seems as if in verse 52, as He declares a "woe" to the lawyers, he says,

(Luke 11:52) "Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge; you yourselves did not enter, and you hindered those who were entering."

"You've been keeping people back from coming in." And unfortunately, that's what oftentimes religion does. It not only isn't involved in the truth, but it seems to literally hinder people that are looking for the truth, for whatever reason.

If you look in Chapter 14, it'll be the invitation.

And strangely enough, verse 12,

(Luke 14:12) "And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite..."

You'll see the word "invitation" all the way through this.

In fact, verse 16, a certain man was given a big dinner. He gives a parable that he invited many. They began to make excuses.

The end of verse 24,

(Luke 14:24) "'For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

Now, we begin to transcend into the realm of, "You shouldn't be worried about the people you invite to your dinner. You should be worried about the people I invite to My dinner. And you're not worried about that." What we understand is that Christ invites the poor and the lowly and the people that are sick. And of course, all the way through, He begins to exploit; He literally begins to expose the hypocrisy in Chapter 12, verse 1, as He says, "Woe to the Pharisees and the Sadducees!" He exposes

their avarice and greed in Chapter 16. He goes through and He exposes their self-righteousness and their contempt for other people in Luke 18.

And if you look in Chapter 19 in particular, He finally ends up in Chapter 19, as He enters the temple. Now, once again, you have to understand this is His final walk to Jerusalem, and this is the week that He's going to be crucified. So, He goes to the temple and this is the time in which they have the Passover. They're getting ready for the grand meal of the Passover. And it's going to be on a Sabbath at this particular time. You can just imagine.

It says in verse 45,

(Luke 19:45) "Jesus entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling,

(Luke 19:46) saying to them, "It is written, 'AND MY HOUSE SHALL BE A HOUSE OF PRAYER,' but you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN."

(Luke 19:47) And He was teaching daily in the temple; but the chief priests and the scribes and the leading men among the people were trying to destroy Him."

Why? Because He was trying to help. And they were trying to hurt. It was the kindness of God and the graciousness of God to come in to rescue. And all the way through the gospels, you see Christ was against the religion, institution of man. That what they had formed, even though it seems godly and it seems righteous... Of course, the way that Paul puts it, "The self-made religion has the appearance of wisdom, but it's of no value to anyone." And the reason it's no value is because it has no heart. When we tell you to come to Jesus, what we're telling you to come to is the God who loves you. And when you serve Him, you don't serve Him because you have to. You don't serve Him out of regimen. You don't serve Him out of rote. You serve Him because you want to, because He died for you. I mean, how could you refuse somebody that loved you that much? The Creator of the world comes and loves you that much. How could you turn away from Him? How could you not serve Him? This is what our motivation is. This is the Spirit of Christ within us that moves within us. And this is what causes us to see things quite differently. It is an invitation that God has made to all people, and yet they made His house a house

of exploitation. They were buying and selling, and they were oppressing the weak. They were stealing from the widows. And He goes, "This isn't Me at all." Who would you liken God to? And unfortunately, most people only have what they would perceive to be religion to liken God to. And it's no wonder that people don't go to church. I mean, I can comprehend that. Why would you go to church in a place that's oppressive, a place that exploits, a place that uses, a place that's condescending, a place that's critical? This is not the heart of Jesus. Jesus came to save the poor. Of course, that's His message at the very beginning of Luke 4, as He goes into the synagogue in His own hometown. And He says, "Let Me quote to you Isaiah, you know, I came to release the captives. I came to free those that are in captivity." So, you hear the voice of Jesus, "Come unto Me all who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. God, thank You that You gave Me babes."

All the way through Chapter 12 of Luke, you see Christ saying, "Don't worry about things. I'll take care of you. You're worried about so many things. Don't worry about

that." And you just have the Spirit of a God who actually loves you. Why do we call it the gospel? Because it's good news. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. And as John 14 so aptly puts it, He's even prepared a place for you, and He wants you to live forever with Him. To forgive you of your sins, you go, "Well, you know, that's kind of condemning." No, it's not condemning. It's freeing because the sins that you have are the things that weigh you down. They're encumbrances. There's not one sin that is actually good for you. And so, it is that God comes and He frees you. And He gives you a heart that says, "You know what, I don't want to do it anymore." And how gracious that is. There is an invitation that is given for a meal in that final day. But I want you to read a couple more places.

One is found in Luke 22, in which finally the feast of the unleavened bread, the Passover was approaching. The chief priests and the Pharisees were not very accommodating, not very helpful, not very loving, as they have invited Him to the meal.

But it says this in Chapter 22,

(Luke 22:1) "Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching.

(Luke 22:2) The chief priests and the scribes were seeking how they might put Him to death..."

Nice invitation, isn't it?

But if you'll drop on down to verse 14, Jesus turns to His disciples and He calls them in, and it says this,

(Luke 22:14) "When the hour had come, He reclined at the table, and the apostles with Him.

(Luke 22:15) And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."

That's a different kind of dinner, isn't it? Now, if you just take the contrast of the dinner of the Pharisee and this dinner, what is God like? What would it be like to sit down and eat with Him? People would say, "I'm so trepidatious to be with God." What is it like to be with Him? He's the one that's sitting at the table going, "You know, I've wanted to have this meal with you, and I'm so glad we're together, and I want to let you know that I'm about to die for you." Can you imagine the depth of that

conversation? This isn't somebody looking to pick you apart. It's not somebody looking to condemn you. It's somebody here to save you and He's sitting with fishermen and tax collectors. I mean, the hostility of the of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, "Why is this guy eating with sinners?" And Christ goes, "This is who I came to save."

Well, Revelation 19 says that there is this wonderful meal that's coming up. You know what the meal is? Revelation 19:7. You can actually read the last part of verse 6.

(Revelation 19:6) "... "Hallelujah! ..."

That's a good one.

(Revelation 19:7) "Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready."

(Revelation 19:8) It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

(Revelation 19:9) Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the

Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

Would you like to be invited?

There's one invitation before this one. You know what it is? Revelation 3:20. Read it with me. That's you inviting Him. A very interesting text. It's always amazed me that the God of the universe would knock. I mean, He owns everything. Why does He have to knock? But He lets you choose. I mean, He came to love you. He died for you. He didn't hold back anything. His blood was spilled out and poured for you.

But it says this in verse 20,

(Revelation 3:20) "Behold, I stand at the door..."

And it's in the present continuous.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."

God wants to have fellowship with you. He wants to have a relationship with you. He loves you. It's not more complicated than that. It's not the memorization. It's not

the rote. It's not the ritualism. None of that has anything to do with God. God's just looking for real genuine people that will love Him back.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we just ask that you work within our hearts. Help us to see the reality of what the Bible really says. So many things are being said, so many things done under the guise of religion, under the guise of being a representative of God, and yet they don't look anything like you, if we understand that You look exactly like Jesus. And so, Lord, we come before You today, and we receive Your love. Not what men have been saying about You, but what You said about you. And we open our arms to you today. We hear You knocking and we receive You. You tell us in Your word, as many as received You, to them You gave the right, You gave the power to become children of God, even to those who would believe on Your name.

For God so loved you that He gave His only begotten Son,
that if you will believe in Him, you will not perish, but you
will have everlasting life.