

CHAPTER 2

AUTHENTIC SEVERE DISCIPLESHIP AND CALLING

ACCORDING TO JESUS AND HIS DOCTRINES OF GRACE

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY OF

LUKE 14:15-24

PREFACE TO CHAPTER 2

The great doctrines of sovereign grace have not the notoriety that they should have. The Bible doctrines concerning the most important matter in Scripture, personal deliverance from the penalty and power of sin, are treated as sinners treat most Bible truth, namely with disregard, disrespect, and disbelief. One of the most hated Scripture truths is the reality of the Holy Spirit's call to sinners in their confrontation with the Gospel. Amazing as it is that anyone who has any spiritual understanding could deny what is clearly in Scripture, still we have experienced such ignorance throughout nearly forty years of Bible ministry. Ignorance among God's people concerning all the deeper truths of Scripture has always grieved this writer, both inwardly and through personal outward attack.

No servant of Christ should fail to expect opposition from the Evil, who is the author of all false doctrine, and the real source of all opposition to true doctrine. We understand that he goes about just as free from any impediment to his movement as a lion moves when he is making himself known by his roar.⁰ We fully anticipate his activity to undermine God's revealed truth. But when people whom we respect and regard as Christian show hate instead of love, that is also the unequalled work of the Evil. May Christ's Spirit restrain opposition to His truth so that this presentation of it may have free course into the regenerated souls and enlightened minds of the real Christians, who are such only because they were effectually called by His Servant-Spirit's irresistible grace. Amen.

⁰ *1 Peter 5:8*

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The Parable of the Great Supper

Luke 14:15-24

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.*

¹⁶ *Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.*

¹⁷ *And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.*

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.*

¹⁹ *And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.*

²⁰ *And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.*

²¹ *So that servant came, and showed 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.* ²² *And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.*

²³ *And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out unto the highways and hedges, and compel them to come, that my house may be filled.*

²⁴ *For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*

Luke 14:15-24

Volume II, Chapter 2

AUTHENTIC SEVERE DISCIPLESHIP AND CALLING

ITS SEVERITY ACCORDING TO JESUS AND HIS DOCTRINES OF GRACE

The Kingdom: Entered Only By An Effectual Call

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY OF *Luke 14:15-24*

Christ has now finished emphasizing the character required in His Kingdom—mercy, humility, and grace—which are characteristics of love. This love permeates the Kingdom of God as is evident in the redemptive mission of Christ. In dealing with the last of these characteristics, grace, Jesus referenced this gracious disposition of love as not seeking a *recompense* when showing love to others in verse twelve, but promised, *for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just (v. 14)*. Since the context of our Lord's reference to a *recompense* connected it with a feast, one of the guests responded with how blessed will be those who should be so honored to sit down to it (*v. 15*). This gave opportunity for Jesus to illustrate through a parable another great lacking in Israel, which had brought about His withdrawal from the nation.

This parable details the condition of sin presently prevalent in Jewry, as also in all men, and the lack of a Divine call to them that would bring them into Kingdom at that time. Whereas immediately following His denunciation of Israel (*13:34-35*), Christ dealt with a failed character among them (*14:1-14*), now He deals with God's call to salvation that would result in a loving character among them (*14:15-24*). The failed external call from the Prophets (Himself included) was caused from an absent internal call from God's Spirit. Only through God's Servant (first Jesus and then His Holy Spirit) can any fallen human achieve the required character just illustratively presented by Jesus in verses one through fourteen.

But love ye your enemies, and do good and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. [Added emph.]
Luke 6: 35

Hoping for nothing again is the phrase that characterizes the grace of our God and is to characterize Jesus' disciples. Now Christ teaches those virtues come only through a spiritual calling from His Holy Spirit, Who changes the natural human into the supernatural disciple by an altogether sovereign act (14:16-24).¹

The Parable

Jesus now gives another parable in which God is represented as a wealthy householder who, having prepared for a gigantic and elegant feast, finds the disinterest of its original subscribers so provoking that He opens wide the door to others. He summons people from among the original subscribers (Jews) who seem to be the least proper or suitable to such a high ranking banquet (His humble disciples—fishermen and publicans). And having made such a massive preparation, and being of such a gracious heart, He is constrained to seek out guests from the travelers and foreigners (Gentiles) from outside his own neighborhood. But even these poor and wasted and needy strangers are hesitant to accept and even refuse; therefore in near desperation the generous householder requires that his servant *compel them to come in, that my house may be filled*. God is the central figure of the parable, Who has such a generous heart that He is constrained to give a blessing to others. He enlists His Servant (initially and prominently Christ but now the Holy Spirit of Christ) to seek out, to convince, and to persuade these astonished, crippled, poor and travel-be-worn persons, that they are really welcome to enjoy such a splendid entertainment for nothing done on their part.

¹ God did not choose to call and so enable Israel at Christ's first coming in order to facilitate the Gospel of death and resurrection. But God will inwardly, spiritually and effectually call Israel to salvation and to His righteousness of character at Christ's second coming, *Isaiah 12:1-6; Ezekiel 11:17-20; Romans 11:25-29*, et al.

True Grace—The Parable’s Essential Message

As with all the Doctrines of Grace, Irresistible Grace finds the origination of its declaration and explanation in Christ’s teaching. Effectual Calling,² or as it is in fact, Irresistible Grace, is a somewhat neglected and misunderstood Bible doctrine! To “some” it represents an evil besmirch of a free human people who are able to choose his or her own destiny. To us it is the effectual calling by God’s marvelous grace those whom He alone can invite to His heavenly communion. It is a godly call to those who, if left to their own choices, will always choose *the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, or the pleasures of this life*³ over God’s Kingdom; and issue forth irrational excuses to justify such a carnal and foolish choice.⁴ On the one hand, irresistible grace is feared as a threat to true evangelism, while on the other hand, it alone is the true interpretation and representation of the Biblical evangel.

That God calls men to salvation is not generally the point of division. Rather, it is the effect and extent of His calling which causes the problem. The question really is: When God calls a sinner to come to Christ through an external offer of salvation in the Gospel, is there something else He does for some and not for all who hear that external offer? This lesson deals to some extent with answering this question. Certainly, Christ does something extra for that multitude of souls who answer and come with grateful hearts because of their entrance into a blessed environment for which they have no resource by which to defray its high cost. But those first bidden only externally will never taste of its sweet meats, but only cry out in anguish from the outer darkness; there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. All this because Christ did not add to that external call of the Word, any simultaneous effectual call of the Spirit.

² See the Author’s, [The Reason for Electing Grace](#), subtitled, [Human Weakness Requires A Divine Calling](#).

³ The hindrances to the good seed of the Word, *Matthew 13:22, Luke 8:14*.

⁴ The “Some” just referred to, by their espoused beliefs of a human free will, hold themselves so high as peculiarly more righteous and insightful so as not to respond with any excuses to God’s external call to them. But they of themselves “chose” in themselves to come to Christ. They are thus much better than the average sinner. Sic.

THE JEW'S EXTERNALIZED KINGDOM

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.
Luke 14:15

Jesus has just finished a particularly pointed lesson on grace (14:12-14), which revealed the absolute need of men to know, to understand, to experience, and to live grace. Jesus taught that to be a part of *the resurrection of the just*, to share in the blessed event that ushers in the Kingdom and hence become a part of His Kingdom, one must have been characterized as an especially prepared subject of the Kingdom. In other words, “Not just anybody will be a recipient of the *recompense of the resurrection of the just*. But one of Christ’s hearers speaks as if he had not at all heard what Jesus just taught. This one fellow-guest was indicative of the general temper of all the guests. Since this was a Sabbath day feast at a Pharisee’s house, the pharisaical philosophy would be prevalent. He was probably a Pharisee himself. Upon a mention of the *recompense of the resurrection of the just*, the mind of this fellow-guest immediately turned to the Kingdom of God Dining Hall and that Great Feast with Abraham Isaac, and Jacob. Moreover, he blurted out in effect, “Blessed of the Lord are all we Jews who will one day be feasting in the Kingdom of God. That bread will be our recompense and sweet to our taste buds.” The Jews’ participation in this feast, though now withdrawn, was nevertheless offered to the Jews as a spiritual and inward affair. But the Pharisees and scribes mistook the Kingdom as did this fellow as a rather carnal affair for fulfilling the flesh. But the Jews were called to a spiritual feast as previewed in the previously given parables (14:1-14). In other words, to partake of the mercy, humility and grace of the true Kingdom of God, one must have lived it spiritually in this life as the Apostle defined it,

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:17

This man, if he heard at all what Jesus said, thought only of a physical kingdom as a reward for physical deeds. He missed the difference in Christ's teaching contrasting the future retribution for deeds of love, and the future retribution of deeds of love. It is not for our lives of grace, but of our lives of grace by which we were changed to be as He. Grace is already an innate part of the true subjects that will find its culmination in *the resurrection of the just*. But this man represents for us today that class of people who wish to go to heaven, and they like to hear good things talked about; but they never get any further than a wish. They desire only to be safe and happy at last, while rejecting the present invitations to turn to God through Christ and begin living out the future blessing of grace now. Their only concept is that of an externalized kingdom for externalized subjects. They do not understand a spiritual kingdom for spiritually adept subjects, who are skillful in living out the kingdom now, because of having received a spiritual enlightenment, solicitation, and enablement—the effectual call from the Holy Spirit.

A STINGING PARABLE

And said He unto him, A certain man

Luke 14:16a

This fellow-guest spoke words that imply that, like his class of Jews, he, at any rate, fully expected to share in these blessings as a matter of course because he was a Pharisee. He had totally missed the basis of this blessedness of *remuneration at the resurrection of the just* as being love and grace lived out in life's activities. That this particular man had missed such pointed teaching as to the true character of the Kingdom of God moved Jesus to speak this particular parable to this particular person. Christ said to him in effect, "You are the very picture of the total failure of Jerusalem. You are failing to hear what I am saying; and in doing so, you are turning down the invitation to attend that very Kingdom Feast right now. Despite all your seeming enthusiasm and praise for the Kingdom's blessedness, though previously invited, you are actually refusing to come." Christ had taught that to be a blessed recipient of *the resurrection of the just* was to

possess now a moral antecedent opposed to self-assertion and self-seeking. But that is exactly what this particular Pharisee was doing. “How blessed are we Jewish Pharisees to get to experience that blessed Kingdom,” said this fellow-guest. But Christ answered,

“ No, you will miss it, because your very statement reveals a total lack of comprehension of its essential, and a total dearth of true experience with its fundamental. The Great Feast of which you so longingly delight to partake is prepared already. The invitations were issued, but now the final summons is being declined. The Feast notwithstanding shall have guests enough and the table shall be filled. But when you present rejecters come to beg for admission to it, as you will yet do, not one of you shall taste of it.”

How appropriate that our Lord would issue such a reproof and warning of Israel’s spiritual loss. It was because of their apparent hardness of heart, misrepresentation and perversion of God’s holiness that Jerusalem was left desolate. On this particular Sabbath day, Jesus had challenged their externalizing of God’s day and Law to the subversion of its real meaning of mercy (14:1-6); and then rebuking their self-assertion and pride, He taught the fundamental of Kingdom humility (14:7-11), and their utter lack of real love and grace (14:12-14). Now, He, through parabolic method, shows the largeness of God’s heart to share His blessing with men, who have no resource to return, and who must finally be brought and compelled to accept the summons to attend. God is so desirous to give, that His only alternative is to call spiritually, irresistibly, and effectually persons who will appreciate not just the greatness of the Feast but the goodness of the Host.

PREPARATION FOR A GIGANTIC FEAST

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

Those persons present to hear what Christ spoke to this one fellow guest would immediately understand the picture presented in this parable. It would have been obvious to them that this feast was representing the Kingdom, and that this

certain man represented God. They also would have in the parable a picture of a very wealthy man, because this feast was really of huge magnitude. The amount of preparation for such a large feast was enormous. As was the custom of those times, the invitation was sent, and recipients would respond with a yes or no. Then, after the feast was ready, a servant would be sent out to make the final announcement, *Come; for all things are now ready (14:17b)*. The final summons of *verse seventeen* was “not in order to inquire again whether the guests will come, but in order to make known to them when they should appear.”⁵ This *verse sixteen* is not dealing with that final announcement and summons, but with the initial preparation and initial invitation.

The application is the great preparation which God had made in order to share His goodness with the wicked persons who believe in and respond to that goodness, who if left to themselves would never affirmatively answer the final summons. The gigantic feast is prepared. From the foundation of the earth, Christ Jesus was the lamb slain.⁶ The greatness of the supper is measured by the supreme cost of its fare. A great supper is one that has the costliest food. How high is the overhead for these delicacies at His table! Such are the outlays from His Son giving all in order to provide a place and the menu. No mere condiments or snacks, His feast is a well-prepared banquet of the highest order. Only the wealth of the Host could have provided for such an outlay. The preparation for this feast and the entree for wicked sinners to partake is the precious blood of the Son of God, high nourishment indeed. And look at those provided for, *Whosoever will*.⁷ Not just the best of dainties but the volume of the partakers is extensive. The blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient for many at this feast.

And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.
John 6:35

⁵ J.J. Van Oosterzee, The Gospel according to Luke, Lange's Commentary, Vol. VIII, p. 227. ⁶ *Revelation 13:8* ⁷ *Revelation 22:17*

*For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.
He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in
me, and I with him.* John 6:55-56

God *was making*⁸ preparation for this feast early in Israel's history; in fact He was making preparation before the foundation of the world,

According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

Having predestined us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.

Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth; even in him:

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Ephesians 1:4, 5, 9-11

And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Revelation 13:8

Before the foundation of the world precedes the physical world or man's creation. Even in the Garden of Eden reference was made of the seed of the woman crushing the head of the serpent as a reference to God's already prepared victory over sin in the behalf of mankind by the Seed, the Lamb, even Christ.⁹

In calling Abraham the Kingdom was announced as vitally connected with and dependant upon the Gospel work of Messiah,¹⁰ and that initial invitation for its ultimate fulfillment was given to

⁸ KJV *made*, but Gk. imperfect tense, "was making."

⁹ Genesis 3:15 with Galatians 3:16

¹⁰ Galatians 3:8; Genesis 12:1-3

Israel. God had been preparing for the feast through the Seed of Abraham; and Israel, through Abraham and other of his progeny, had accepted the summons with pleasure and anticipation. During Christ's earthly ministry the time of the final summons to the feast (Kingdom) had come. The preparations were completed, the promised Messiah had arrived and God's Servant¹¹ had been sent with the announcement, *Come; for all things are now ready.*

WHAT SERVANT?

And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. Luke 14:17

That this very wealthy man entrusts this feast to a single servant is significant.¹² Doubtless, he could have sent many, but Christ preserves a very important picture in citing a single servant. Some interpreters see John the Baptist, the Apostle Peter or Paul as this Servant. Some even suggest that the singular is used to denote the singularity of the message from the Prophets and Apostles, John and Jesus. Messiah is the Servant of God, and Jesus is the Messiah.¹³ So why is this *servant* not the Lord Himself during Jesus' tenure on earth, and the other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, after the Ascension and Pentecost? During Jesus' absence today, is He not the Servant of God who testifies not of Himself but of Another? Is He not in all matters of invitations to men the one most assuredly the Agent? He carries the invitation to Jew and to Gentile.¹⁴ He is the one Servant behind the ministries of John, Jesus, Apostles, and all ministers of the Word, both then and now.¹⁵ Was it not against Him that Jesus warned of a possible

¹¹ *Isaiah 52:13-53:12*, et al.

¹² In what some see as nearly the same parable in *Matthew 22:1-10*, there are quite distinct references to *servants*, as referring to the many prophets sent to Israel. In Luke's parable the servant is singular only. Also some of those who answer the summons to that marriage feast are proven to be illegitimate and actually lost, though still at the feast. Anyone answering the summons to Luke's feast is genuine and authentic, q.v. *14:24* and the intent and tenor of the collective parable. For those and other reasons these two parables are not the same.

¹³ *Isaiah 42:1-3; 53:13-53:12* ¹⁴ *John 16:7-11, 13, 14; 14:26; I Cor. 2:10-13*
¹⁵ *I Corinthians 12:8-11; Ephesians 4:4, 11*

blasphemy?¹⁶ The danger lay not in mere words, but in a condition of heart which stood in strict rejection of the truth which He brings to it. This invitation to the Jews, *Come; for all things are now ready*, was stubbornly refused, and that was the condition which could never know forgiveness. He is that Servant who convinces men of the reality of Christ and of the reality of God's ample provision in Him. He will seat an enormous number at a gala feast, which is undeserved and cannot be requited, a feast prepared by the Son and Spirit of God, and only for those prepared for it.¹⁷

REJECTION OF MESSIAH BY ISRAEL AND ALL MEN

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.*

¹⁹*And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.*

²⁰*And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.*
Luke 14:18-20

As the host in the parable represents God, these who were first invited represent Israel as a nation and specifically the Pharisees and leaders, but the application of this parable's message applies to all men without exception. Israel, in rejecting God's provision in Christ, represents all naturally born humans who, without the influences of the Holy Spirit, stubbornly refuse the provision of the Gospel presented to them.¹⁸ Christ means to convey the reason for their rejection of their Messiah and God's final summons to them. The excuses given, remember, are given to the Servant of the Host. These excuses represent resisting the Holy Spirit's testimony to the truth of God and His abundant supply for them. This resistance against the Holy Spirit was the historical problem for Israel (Cp. *Acts 7:51*), and an innate and unchanging problem for mankind. These three examples provide a cross section

¹⁶ *Matthew 12:31-32* ¹⁷ *Revelation 19:7-9; Matthew 20:23; 25:34; with Philippians 3:20-21; Romans 8:29-30.*

¹⁸ *Psalms 14:2-3; 53:2-3; Romans 3:10-12.*

of their problem as well as all men's basic problems with God's provision of redemptive deliverance from sin through Christ.

The Common Excuse

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. Luke 14: 18a

I pray thee have me excused. Luke 14:18c, 19c

I cannot come. Luke 14:20b

And they all with one consent began to make excuse would be literally translated, "And they began all from one to make excuse." Two Greek prepositions have the fundamental meaning, "from," ἐκ and ἀπο. But each one has a distinction; ἐκ means "out of the midst of," while ἀπο means "away from the edge of." The Lord Jesus used the latter, ἀπο. If this distinction has meaning here, we can find a significant reason for the Lord's obvious omission of a complete object for this preposition, *from*. He did not say what it was that was the source of these excuses. He simply said that, "They began from one [blank] to make excuse." If the above distinction concerning this preposition is applied, it would read something like this, "And they began away from the edge of one [blank] to make excuse." The idea of a sort of springboard is evident. We might translate, *And they began from one [source, spirit, origin, mind] to make excuse.*

In the translation above, several words are supplied that might give the gist of Christ's meaning, but the thought "from the edge" could be retained. But really from the edge of what? We do not desire to carry literalism to an extreme; still, this springboard idea is present in the Greek text. Is the idea here that all three men used their verbal excuses only as springboards to vent their deeper sentiment? Is that not really the problem with unyielding sinners? Their excuses are really truisms. Their excuses are statements whose utterance is trite and meaningless. While to them their excuses surely seem novel or momentous, they are in reality just extenuations of disinterest in the feast (spiritual correctness) and its Host (God). This is the problem today. Circumstances provide opportunity for a multitude of reasons to neglect God in one's life.

But change the circumstances and one simply changes the excuses. The verbal reasons for refusing God's invitation are platforms for voicing the deeper held sentiments that "This feast really does not interest me. In fact the Host does not interest me." An excuse against Christ's provision in the Gospel is a rostrum from which evil men launch the requisites of a darkened soul. The word *one* denotes the unity in the origin for all excuses and the commonality of all three to have taken back the word to attend that they have given. There is one common source for all rejection of God's gracious offers. The depraved and abominable adamic nature—indwelling sin—is the one common denominator in all men, and in all their refusals toward God, without exception.

Possessions—The Cares of this Life

I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it.

Luke 14:18b

This is the first of three excuses that parallel the three things that choke the Word in Christ's Parable of the Sower, *the cares and riches and pleasures of this life*.¹⁹ Possessions were the predominate concern of this and the second excusers, only this first one specifically seems obsessed with the viewing of his newly acquired possession, hence *the lust of the eyes*.²⁰ This natural tendency even to miss the pleasures of a feast, when occupied with predominate pursuits is a mark of man's depravity. His own worldly advantage and the lust of covetously scrutinizing it consumed him even to miss supper, and a very special one at that. One characteristic that separates the worldly from the godly is one's occupation, one's engrossment, one's intentness, one's involvement. What is the occupation of one's life? One's real interests determine one's mind-set. This excuse at first glance makes clear that his mind was preoccupied with worldly cares to such an extent that eating took second place, not to mention the breaking of his word to the host.

¹⁹ *Luke 8:14; Matthew 13:22.* ²⁰ *I John 2:16*

And likewise goes the application and interpretation of this illustrative picture from Christ. God calls all men through the creation gate, the conscience gate, or the Christ gate. The creation issues a summons to every sinner that God is righteous, and that God is Love. He can see God and understands enough to know *his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*²¹ Yet without exception, no man ever yields to that call to them to respond to *that which may be known of God, for God hath shown it unto them by the things that are made.* The problem is universally common: man has the physical, the present possessions, and their required cares in this life, that occupy his attention until God is made subservient to his lustful refusals and irrational excuses.

Possessions—The Riches of this Life

I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.

Luke 14:19

As with the first excuse-giver, this man was similarly controlled by possessions, yet with the specific of gaining money, *the pride of life.*²² Five yoke of oxen is a business, obviously. One yoke usually was sufficient for the work done by oxen, but this man had acquired five in order to hire them out to gain wealth as an entrepreneur. So much was his occupation 24/7, as with all businesses, that he must now *prove* or test each pair in order to evaluate properly the worth of each, and from this appraisal set the fees for each.

All men have this potentiality for possessions to control one's life to the near exclusion of some other necessity. This world of physical realities seems to require a certain *care* or pressure from the necessity of our living to seek riches. *But beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.*²³ The first man was seeking to acquire earthly chattel, but this second man is bent upon increasing his wealth. And like all worldly mined

²¹ Romans 1:10-21 ²² I John 2:16 ²³ Luke 12:15

earthlings, he chose to be with “irrational oxen”—brutes of the mortal—rather than with the loving Eternal Who created both them and him.

The Pleasures of this Life

I have married a wife.

Luke 14:20

This third man issues the most plausible reason for dismissing the gracious summons. He must become acquainted with a new wife. Even the Law allowed for one year for man and wife to “become acquainted” before any conscription into warfare could be pressed.²⁴ One’s own natural urges, now to be morally refined to the holy confines of matrimony, is now the reason for refusing to attend to the feast that before he had accepted. What this represents is *the lust of the flesh*,²⁵ or the desires of the body to fulfill what are lawful and God-given pleasures of this life. The sinful use of things in themselves lawful, hinders men from responding to Christ’s summons in the Gospel. The former possessions-oriented men were controlled by mind-oriented pursuits that are driven to excess by indwelling sin. But this man pictures “the sensual satisfactions and pleasures that do most drown and swallow up the soul of man, and keep it from minding heaven and heavenly things.”²⁶ This references not the hindrances by the state or marriage generally as mentioned by Paul, “But he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife.”²⁷ This excuse truly concerns “the first heated wedding delight, as the type of all carnal pleasure.”²⁸ Fallen humans allow sensible enjoyments and pleasures to “excuse” them from any positive response to God’s call for their feasting on His gracious provisions in Christ.

Excuses Found in the Ordinary Things of Life

What do these excuses represent about Israel? And what application would they have for men generally today? Basically, the

²⁴ *Deuteronomy 24:5* ²⁵ *I John 2:16*

²⁶ Matthew Poole, Vol. III: Matthew–Revelation, *A Commentary of the Holy Bible*, p. 243.

²⁷ *I Corinthians 7:33* ²⁸ J.J. Van Oosterzee, op. cit., p. 228.

parable pictures Israel (the Pharisees in particular) as not really wanting to attend the Great Feast in the Kingdom of God. While one man voiced the blessedness of that Kingdom feast, he really himself did not want to attend it. The reason for this disinterest in God's affairs is the main teaching in the excuses. The one common and main problem with the three was preoccupation. The Pharisees were prepossessed with something that caused a disinterest in the Host and His feast.

In the parable no immoral acts are suggested. There is no mention of uncommon things in the lives of those bidden. Buying land, oxen, or having a new wife were not unusually evil. Quite the contrary, these things were the commonplace activities of ordinary life. But after closer examination they do each represent a distinct problem wicked men have with answering Christ's summons to salvation. The Pharisees and the Scribes were busy, preoccupied and prepossessed with their conventional duties of religion, and that was their problem. This parabolic teaching aims at the religious and theological experts. They were not occupied with wives, or lands, or oxen so much as they were preoccupied with religion and theology. The keepers of the house of God in Zion and the government of God in Jerusalem knew nothing of mercy, humility, love, or grace. They were occupied with "religion and theology." In the parable, those who refused felt no real desire, saw nothing attractive in such a feast, had no real reverence for the host; they considered it not a feast at all but something much less to be desired than their ordinary pursuits. Those common things would have to be delayed or given up momentarily if they had complied with the invitation by the Servant. The Pharisees certainly fit that picture well.

But what of the application from Israel's example for today? Churches are full of preoccupied religionists. Men in the world also are like these excuse-makers. Material necessities outweigh the appeal of the Kingdom and its Host. To enter the spiritual Kingdom implies the giving up of something that seems, if not necessary, yet most desirable, and the enjoyment of which appears

only reasonable. It was “reasonable” for a man to see the land he bought. It was reasonable to try out the oxen one bought. It was “reasonable” to spend all one’s time with a new wife. But, it is “treasonable” for church members to spend all their time on ceremonies, customs, and programs. It is “treasonable” to be preoccupied with one’s own pursuits. Jesus agreed with His fellow guest about the blessedness in the Kingdom of God, but these excuses of “reasonableness” told Him that many do not really see its blessedness as greater than the worldly life here and now. Israel could not see it, and man today cannot see it. The Host will turn from this outrageous disinterest in Himself and His grace, and will turn to those whose lives become comparably unimportant, because of the illumination of their spiritual understanding with the beauties of Christ and Spirit and God. They are called and *drawn* such that they will be interested; and those at first are lacking fascination for Him, He will *compel*.

These excuses and the disinterest they reveal angered the Host (v. 21). God is righteously provoked by this preoccupation which insults His grace. How proper it will be when men are eternally separated from His favors of goodness, because they insulted the amazing grace of the Living God. Unbelief and rejection of His mercy, love and self-humbling grace is really inexcusable, and these kinds of extenuations for sin will exempt no one from the severity of that wrath.

BRINGING IN THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

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.

Luke 14:21

And having returned, the slave reported to his lord these things. Then, becoming angry, the master of the house said to his slave, ‘Go quickly into the wide streets and narrow lanes of the city, and the poor and maimed and blind and lame bring in here.’²⁹

Luke 14:21 ADT

²⁹ Author’s Distinctive Translation

God's Glorious Love-controlled Wrath

Upon hearing of the rejection of his gracious offer and the disinterest of those first invited, the master of the house became angry. What kind of anger of God does this represent?

“In a striking way there is depicted to us, in the image of the householder, the reciprocal relation which exists between the Divine wrath and the Divine love. The freer, more unrestricted and more urgent the invitation was, to so much the more vehement anger is the love from which it sprung moved; but this anger leads again to new and yet more intensified revelation of love, which at any price will see its glorious goal attained.”³⁰

The Remnant

He then sends his servant into the city to bring in the impoverished, the one-legged, the sightless, and the cripples. Was this not exactly what Jesus did do? These casts-off of society represent the publicans and sinners who did accept the invitation during Jesus' ministry. Notice it was into the *city* that the servant was sent. This *city* represents Jerusalem. *These poor, maimed, blind, and lame* represent the Remnant of Israel who are saved by grace.³¹ While the *city* as a whole is too occupied with possessions and pleasures to come, the Servant is to *bring* in the impoverished of spirit, the incomplete before God, those who cannot approach God, and the ones who are ignorant of pharisaical religion and theology. This Remnant is *brought*. Literally, they are “led in.” Quite apart from the *compelling* required for the Gentiles (14:22-23), Israel, as the sheep of His fold and as natural olive branches, needs only to be “led in.”³² Those listed as *the poor, maimed, blind, and lame* would naturally shrink from coming to such a feast, because of their unworthiness. That is the very virtue most to be preferred before God.³³ The *poor* are listed first to emphasize the grace of the Host. These who are brought can bring no remuneration to the Host. He knows no return for His favors.

³⁰ J.J. Van Oosterzee, op. cit., p. 228. ³¹ *Romans 11:1-5*

³² *John 10:9* ³³ *Luke 18:13*

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Isaiah 55:1

Oh, how gracious is our God to bring into His Heavenly Home men who know no virtue, no goodness, no holiness, no standing, except and until that His Servant said to them, *Come; for all things are now ready.*

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called;

But god hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are;

That no flesh should glory in his presence.

I Corinthians 1:26-29

CALLING THE GENTILES

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out unto the highways and hedges, and compel them to come, that my house may be filled.

Luke 14:22-23

And yet there is room. May we unnatural olive branches, who are grafted into the olive tree, praise our God for this truth. After the Remnant of Israel is brought in, still there is room. God has a great feast. He is abundantly good and seeks to fill His house with guests. God, in His ages-long plan has now to turn to the area outside the confines of the city of Jerusalem, to the country roads and even to the hedgerows in order to fill His Kingdom Feast with guests. This feast in the parable was of grand scale and is an emblem of the magnificence of Divine grace. The invitation is now broadened to include not only the poor, etc. of the city—Jewish publicans and sinners—but also the

heathen outside the city of Jerusalem. Now God will turn to those *without Christ, strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*³⁴ The parable deals with the men who are on the country roads, travelers if you will. These are men of the Gentile heathen who are commuting from place to place. The Servant is to *compel* the inhabitants of the hedge-rows³⁵ to come. Some have suggested these were those vagabonds who actually lived as squatters in the *hedges*. According to the Talmud there were commonly no hedges around the fields of the Jews. But if one traveled outside the immediate area of Jewry, hedges were a common sight. The hearers of this parable knew about those dirty Gentiles who housed themselves under the thorn bushes and clumps of vegetation allowed to grow in the property lines. Hedges served as natural barriers to thieves, cattle, and travelers. “Gentiles, Gentiles, Gentiles” was ringing in the ears of the Pharisees at this Sabbath day feast when they heard about those in *the highways and hedges*.

Irresistible Grace—Effectual Calling of Sinners

And compel them to come in.

This is the effectual call from God’s Servant, the Holy Spirit. When the host in the parable gave this instruction to his Servant, he knew the difficulty that his servant would have. These travelers, strangers, and foreign vagabonds would not know the host. He was unknown to any of them. Also such a generous offer from a perfect stranger would meet with stark unbelief and suspicion. Indeed, a *compelling* would be necessary to overcome the incredulity of those country people as to the invitation to them being seriously meant. They might laugh right in the servant’s face. But the urgent desire of the would-be host urged the servant to persevere after them. In effect he says, “Take no excuses, harass them out of all their hesitancy and obstacles. Dispel all their fears. Tell them you have orders to bring them in just as they are; make them come without preparation and without delay, because all things are already prepared for them.” Here is this group of dirty, dusty, travel-worn and unkempt strangers being

³⁴ *Ephesians 2:12* ³⁵ KJV *hedges*, Gk. more literally, “hedge-rows.”

led back to the city and to the great dining hall of this very wealthy host. What a picture of the Holy Spirit's effectual calling of sinners!

The saved of the Gentiles are like these in this parable. And the Spirit's moral constraint of earnest, pressing invitation, coupled with assurance, both of the reality of the feast and of the gracious goodness of the Host, assure us of our welcome to it. Before we came to God through the wooing of the Holy Spirit, we knew nothing of the Master of the house. All was very new to us, and the favors of His love were so unexpected and undeserved. But like those in this parable when we became convinced, when we saw the sincerity of His pleadings and the wonders of His payment for our acceptance, when we began to see the huge provision of His love, we speedily ran along side that wonderful Servant to get to the Host and to His Father.

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II Thessalonians 3:13-14

Just imagine this group seated at the feast in the parable. Finally they have arrived. They were wholly unprepared. They had neither proper dress nor adequate manners for such a splendid Host and provision. But welcome they were, for that host's generosity and warming reception made them truly feel at home. And they wondered why they had missed knowing such a host for so long. Is not our own experience very similar? Did not the Host warm our wondering hearts; and, though especially at first we felt out of place, at once we had to respect, reverence and adore Him? God, you are such a wonderful Host. You make us all feel welcome and loved and wanted. Thank you for your compelling Servant Who brought us here.

Christ's irresistible grace is illustrated in the parable.³⁶ The first position of the sinner is absolute refusal to come to God.³⁷ At the point of first summons to attend God's Presence, he would have to be forced. But between that time and the time of his moral choice to come to Christ, God works in Providence, the Holy Spirit, and the call of the Gospel of His love. Thus the sinner is changed and Christ finally brings spiritual life. This life opens the eyes to Christ, and unshackles the body from the hold of sin. Now the sinner comes, but as regards his initial position, he was compelled to come to Christ. That is the effectual call. From that initial confrontation until he is broken, convinced, and pliable through the urging of the Holy Servant of God, he has experienced that wonderful and absolutely essential, and in the final end, irresistible grace.

EVENTUAL JUDGMENT

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

This verse is variously interpreted. The *you* is plural; therefore the host in the parable is not speaking to his singular servant as throughout the parabolic illustration, but this is Jesus' own personal word to the multitude present at the Sabbath day feast.³⁸ This would seem to be the obvious meaning. Also, the *For* is significant since it sums up the entire parable with the reason why Jesus would judge Jerusalem so severely. When He pronounced that judgment (13:34-35), He echoed Israel's rejection pictured in this parable in the words, *and ye would not* (13:34c). Indeed, it was their disinterest in the very

³⁶ We have personally been made aware of numerous churches that taught this parable was instruction for church members to go out and force people, coerce people, trick people, treat people, and beg people to come to church. What wicked rubbish! I would liken that to the Romish Church and its use of this parable during the inquisition to justify their attempts to force believers in Christ to recant faith in Christ alone for personal salvation, and then to force them into the Popery system. We are not sure which of these interpretations is worse.

³⁷ *Romans 3:10-12; 6:17a; Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-19; John 10:26; 6:44, 65; 5:40; 17:2, 24; 8:34.*

³⁸ Those who believe this include scholars such as Alford, Stier, Edersheim Barnes, and Hendrikson.

character of their Messiah that excluded them from the Kingdom blessings. What a scathing rebuke to these guests at this Sabbath day feast! and it is the last recorded Word from Jesus to them at the feast. He must have looked them all right in the eye and said in effect,

For I am telling you that this present feast which you think is so very like the Great Feast in the Kingdom, is as close as you will come to it. I have invited and the Servant-Spirit has testified, and ye would not. You, as a result, will never taste of the blessing of the spiritual rule of God, which is My rule. It is My supper, for, you see, I am that Host of the parable, and the King of Israel and so much more.

The Spirit's Severe Effectual Calling

Authentic Severe Discipleship and Calling denote the austerity by which all Christians are made into authentic disciples. God's call is a stinging experience as it convicts of a bitter guilt of personal sin, a total void of God's righteousness, and the inescapable severity of God's judgment. Severe indeed is the experience of the Servant-Spirit's enlightenment of one's own helplessness and hopelessness. It is only then that He illumines one's broken and emptied soul with the glorious love and the splendid mercy of Jesus, the Savior. Severe calling? Yes indeed until Christ is revealed. Then His beauty and redemption compels the broken sinner to run arduously and forcefully to a total obeisance at His pierced feet. Amen!

Thus the teaching at this feast ends on a note of eventual judgment for those who are disinterested in the God of grace. Might I ask you a question just now? Are you a lover of Him? And are you a connoisseur of love—mercy, humility, and grace? Christ's Authentic Severe Discipleship and Calling eventuates in that love. His love is only attainable for those who know something of this very real severity experienced in their Calling. The Kingdom of God begins here and now with a severe Calling, which is an unpleasant experience with *sin righteousness and judgment*, which results always in His love—mercy, humility, and graciousness—felt, received, and lived out in life.

We shall now see in the next chapter the measure of severity Christ requires in the lives of all authentic disciples.