

RSVP

Luke 14:15-24

Preface

All my life I wondered what RSVP was an acronym for. This past week I learned that it is not an acronym for anything in English. I found that it is an acronym for the French term, “répondez, s'il vous plait.” As you might guess, translated into English it means “Respond Please.”

According to Miss Manners on the internet, it is redundant to put “Please RSVP” as that would mean “Please Respond Please.” So you see you ladies have been writing French on your invitations and didn't even know it.

Now us guys aren't big on RSVPs. We just invite our friends and if they make it great and if they don't it's their loss. But we should probably start putting an acronym on our invites as well - LMKYC (Let Me Know You Comin).

Today we will look at a parable told by Jesus that involves an RSVP. The parable is simple and easy to understand but the message it represents is of utmost importance. Parables are earthly stories with heavenly meanings. The parable of the Great Banquet packs an **important life changing message**.

Scripture – Read

The Parable of the Great Banquet

¹⁵ *When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the man 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. ¹⁷ 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.’*

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 make them come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.” Luke 14:15-24 NIV*

Introduction

In Luke 13 as Jesus was making His way into Jerusalem, someone asked him a question. ²³ *“...Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”* To which Jesus answered, ²⁴ *“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. ²⁵ Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading”*

Jesus goes on to tell a parable about the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus is speaking of the experience of being with God for eternity.

Included in the intended recipients of this message were the Jews who had rejected the messianic message of Jesus Christ. They were so caught up in their religion that they could not see Christ for who He was – the Son of God.

This simple parable is intended to give us insight into a powerful message from God. **This parable does not stand on its own.** God did not just tell us this parable and expect us to fully understand. The parable simplifies and explains God's message that we find throughout scripture. He invites us to salvation through Christ.

Some will accept God's invitation to be a part of His kingdom. Sadly, **many will refuse God's multiple invitations.**

Let's note some important observations from the Parable of the Great Banquet.

Content

1. God's Invitation Is Broad

In Jewish custom, being a part of a banquet was an indication of a relationship. To be invited to a banquet meant you were no longer a stranger but a part of one's circle of friends.

Notice that God's invitation is broad. It includes everyone. The parable tells us that God's attitude is "**the more the better.**" God desires for everyone to accept His invitation into His Kingdom.

One gets the impression that God is not picky about who responds to His invitation. I believe that is an accurate assumption. **God is not concerned with our education or family upbringing. God is concerned with our heart.**

Why is salvation offered to so many? Because God's grace is just that - Grace.

We don't inherit our salvation.

We can't earn our salvation.

We can't negotiate our salvation.

We can only receive it by accepting and believing.

Salvation is a **life changing event**. It is when we go from allowing self to be on the throne of our life to making Jesus Christ Lord of our life.

God's invitation is broad. Whatever you have done, whatever you're past; God calls you to be His child.

2. Man's Excuses Are Hollow

Illus: Have you ever told someone you would come to something and then when the time came, you didn't feel like going? You try to think of every excuse imaginable to get out of going.

Jewish custom was to send an invitation announcing the feast. The recipients would respond to that invitation indicating they would come. Then when the feast was actually ready, another invitation was sent asking them to come. Therefore, the people who had been invited had indicated they would be there but later **made hollow excuses for not attending.**

Some claimed they had new **land to inspect**. Did they not inspect the land before they purchased it? Was the land going to disappear before they could get back to it?

Others had **new oxen they were eager to test out**. Had they not seen the oxen perform before making the purchase? As you can see, the excuses were hollow and meaningless.

Their excuses were a lie. They were clearly conveying the message that **something else was more important to them than their relationship with the host that invited them.**

Illus: Everywhere I go I invite people to church. If they say they aren't coming to Barnwell, I ask where they are going. I hear all sorts of excuses. The vast majority of them are hollow excuses that any fool can see right through.

The worst is I won't go to church with those hypocrites. What about God? Will you not go for God? Is God a hypocrite to you?

Notice what our parable tells us about God's response to our hollow excuses; "**...the owner of the house became angry...**"

Our silly excuses for not responding to God's call to be a part of His kingdom bring Him to anger. They disappoint our Lord and grieve Him.

The next time you reason that **God is too kind and loving to send anyone to hell**, consider this parable and all the times God has invited people to come be a part of His kingdom.

3. The Consequences Are Grave

Verse 24 says, ²⁴*I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.*”

The consequence of rejecting God’s invitation is to **NOT be a part of the Kingdom of God**; to not be one of God’s children; to spend eternity in hell!

Make no mistake about it, this parable is speaking of the Kingdom of God and where we spend eternity. Jesus had been speaking on this very subject in the previous chapter.

²⁷*“But he will reply, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!’* ²⁸*“There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. ²⁹People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.”* Luke 13:27-29 NIV

God Word tells us there will be weeping **and gnashing of teeth**. The sorrow and regret will be deeper than any sorrow or regret we have ever felt on this earth.

Contrast to what the Bible says about those who do accept Christ as their Savior. ⁴³***Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.***” Matthew 13:43 NIV

Conclusion

God’s love for you is expressed in His invitation to salvation.

³⁴*“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! Luke 13:34 NIV*

Today God sends you an invitation. **God invites you to receive His gift of salvation.**

God invites everyone to accept His invitation of salvation. But **sadly many find hollow excuses to refuse**. It does not matter your stature in the community or even your stature in the church. **What determines your presence before God is your response to His invitation.**

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23).

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me.” (John 14:6)

Repent - Acknowledge your sin before God.

Receive - Accept God’s gift of forgiveness and salvation.

Reverse - Change the direction and lordship of your life.