

EXCUSES AND THE LOSERS WHO MAKE THEM
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Luke 14:15-24, Revelation 19:7-9, Deuteronomy 20:5-7

Someone asked me at a youth conference, "If you could interview anyone in the world, who would you pick?" I would have picked Michael Jackson. I would ask, "What went on in your head?"

Did you ever feel nervous speaking to someone? Your boss? A celebrity? The first time, when I first spoke to Lisa. I said, "She's out of my league, but I want to ask her out." You are not yourself. The first time I talked on the phone, I was pacing, the longer I speak to her, trying to come up with things to say...Do you like trees?" Now I say, "Hey, what's up?"

Familiarity makes things common. Want never to lose that feeling of honor when I speak to God. In 50 years, when I pray I want to still feel nervous. Do you still believe it is an honor, or has it become common. Or do you speak to Him like it was no big deal. The Holy of Holies, when the presence of God was in that place. Only the High Priest goes in once a year to speak for the people. He would begin with cleansing and atoning at the altar. The jingle bells were on the robe, so that others would know that the guy was alive. When Uzzah touched the Ark, he died. They would tie a rope around the Priest's ankle. You could not walk in there, or you'd die too.

If you knew you would walk in to the Holy of Holies, what would you feel? I'm going to come into the presence of God. You'd confess your sins...What an awesome thought.

Do you see your prayer as different from the Holy of Holies? The One who determines what happens on this little planet.

Hebrews 10:19-23:

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, ²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. ²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

When Jesus, the moment that He died, the curtain split open. Now we have direct access to God. His broken body was that access. The reason people couldn't enter was sin. But Jesus paid with His blood. I can now boldly come.

I hope it doesn't get old to me. I still want that wonder. Is it still an honor for you? To enter the Holy of Holies.

I'm going to give you a minute to do that right now.

A couple of weeks ago, I was speaking in San Diego and was praying with the worship leader. "God, show me Your Power." "Let the roof cave in..." I want something supernatural. That's what I've been praying for our services.

God can supernaturally change you. Cancer, money, friend who is suffering, sin issues. No one knows about it, except for you. Everyone is in a different place. Don't treat Him casually.

Read Luke 14:15-24.

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 one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

¹⁶ Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 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 compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

Jesus was saying that the Master is God. God holds this banquet. But the first group, had excuses. Check out my field, my wife...Master gets angry. Get beggars, fill up the place with people who are not too busy for me. Let the people who were invited, don't give them anything.

Jesus was at the Pharisees' house. Take the places of honor. Why don't you invite the poor. Speaking about blessed—"Blessed is the man who will eat at the Feast in the Kingdom of God." Isaiah 25 talks about a feast that God would hold.

Revelation 19 talks about the end of the world.

¹⁷ And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."

Revelation 19:7

Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.

When God talks about Himself, He talks about Jesus as the Groom, and the Church as His Bride. He's talking about the Wedding Feast. When you go to a wedding. Maybe you had a reception. The Feast would last for days in New Testament times.

We are the Bride. Given our white gown of purity. We are given these gowns, coming into His presence, that day. Imagine if we were there right now. Imagine next Sunday you were going to be sent off on a cruise. You go crazy getting things in order. When you step onto that cruise ship. Now, my vacation starts. "I'm driving away from my world." Imagine sitting at the Feast. Life on earth is over. No more dealing with sin, people looking at me because I'm weird, no more sickness and dying. Jesus and His banquet. No more pain, no more tears forever. Some of us are tired. But it seems like getting harder and harder every day. You just want it to be over.

I'm with my family, ushered in the presence of God. Paul is groaning, waiting to be clothed with his righteousness. Being with my family in heaven. Don't worry about the struggle. "Blessed is the person who will be sitting at that Feast." What if I could put the fast-forward at the Feast, "Man, we're here!" That moment will be incredible. We're here. Remember the garbage we put up with there?

Let's talk about the Feast. The food is ready. It's all on the table. The guy says "I bought a field, a yoke of oxen, just got married..." The servant says "They are all too busy." The Master gets angry.

Jesus is inviting them to this banquet. There is no excuse. There is nothing more important than dining with Jesus. Deuteronomy 20:5 talking to the Israelites going to war. (Print Scripture)

There were valid excuses for not going to war. But in this parable there is no valid excuse for coming to His table. What was valid for the OT wars, not for today. God Himself is down on one knee, "Will you enter into a relationship with Me-for better or worse, forever and ever?"

No excuse is valid. What a fool to not go to that banquet. You have a better offer.

Whatever you have going on, that's the stupidest decision of your life.

The people who didn't come. It's too late. You just started your business, you just got married.

God, the Master, says "Go into the streets and get someone to sit at My table."

"I can't get baptized now. I'm embarrassed."

"I was going to serve God, but not this year. I have other things that are more important."

What about your time with Him? I know it's an honor to speak to God.

I asked a friend, "How's your time with the Lord." He said, "Me and my wife, get up at 3:45, we pray together, we go to separate rooms." I get up, I go to the bathroom, and I go back to bed. We've got time. No excuse in the world.

If you want something bad enough, you do it. I chose a better offer. We fill our houses with stuff. Golf clubs, money, surf board-they compete.

Don't put God off. I want Him. I want all of Him.