

The Wedding Feast  
 Jesus Series  
 Pastor Glenn Barteau

Story Colie loves to set the table... loves to set the table every night for dinner. It's a time of community. And her favorite thing to do at dinner is really eating. It's "Best and Worst" She calls on each of us to share our Best part of the Day and worst part of the day.

When she gets to me... she always says... "I know what your best part of the day was... It was when you came home and saw us."

How do you argue with that...!

Intro Often times in scripture the imagery of a table is used.

Psalm 23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

- God loves to set a table before us.

***Set Plates***

It is a very relational picture. It's meant to cause us to **think about God relationally**.

***Set cups***

The world can be crashing down... You may be facing overwhelming stress or fear. You may have people in your life that are willing to mistreat, or use you...

Q: Do the cups go on the right or the left?

...but the call is to **lean on God**.

***Small plates***

By 750 BC Isaiah picks up this imagery of a table to describe God's heart and he expands it to banquet. These were celebrations of families & communities. They could go on for days.

Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare  
 a feast of rich food for all peoples,  
 a banquet of aged wine—  
 the best of meats and the finest of wines.

7 On this mountain he will destroy  
 the shroud that enfolds all peoples,  
 the sheet that covers all nations;

8 he will swallow up death forever.  
 The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears  
 from all faces;  
 he will remove the disgrace of his people  
 from all the earth.  
 The LORD has spoken.

9 In that day they will say,  
 "Surely this is our God;  
 we trusted in him, and he saved us."

This is the LORD, we trusted in him;  
let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.

Isaiah is describing community with God.

### ***Set Silverware - Knives***

Jesus day From this there developed a common phrase.

“Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

It was a reference back to Isaiah 25... People said this because they felt blessed to be a part of God’s community.

### ***Spoons & Forks***

Two Groups of People But unfortunately, people also used it to separate themselves. To put other down... It was a theological way of saying. ”Nanny, nanny boo, boo.”

It was really quite sad... You can imagine all of these people that thought they were **far and forgotten by God**. They understood the imagery of the table and their religion taught they didn’t have a seat.

### ***Moving a chair into place***

To have a chair at this table is pure bliss... It’s symbolic of belonging to God. To live in His love, His joy, His care. But they didn’t get to be a part of it.

### ***Set Napkins***

So, one day Jesus is sitting at a table... a table in the home of a prominent religious leader. Often times an itinerate Rabbi (like Jesus) who speak in a synagogue and when the service was over he would be invited to share a meal with someone of high importance.

And a number of VIPs (Righteous kinds of people) would be a invited to join in a meal... And anyone else... the “un-invited guest”... the non-VIPs the poor, the ill, those who didn’t know a lick about spiritual things... They could come... but had to stand at a distance around the outside of the room and they did not get to share in the meal.

### ***Sit at the table and put napkin in shirt***

Picture this moment: Then one of the VIPs sitting at the table says this famous line.

#### Luke 14:15

“...Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast of the Kingdom of God”... This man is playing off the imagery of the moment.

This man is saying its sweet of you to be nice to all these people not so important people... but isn’t it obvious that in the end they just don’t matter that much to God.

**“They don’t have a seat @ this table Jesus, nor in the kingdom of God!”**

So Jesus picks up on this man’s statement and turns it up side down.

#### Luke 14:16-17

Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

Luke 14:18-20

"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.'

This seems like a reasonable excuse... I'd rather have my honeymoon as a banquet of two... that's reasonable.

debate

Scholars have a lot of debate over these excuses... were they legitimate... or were they in some way inflammatory to the host of the banquet...

But that's the very point Jesus is making... It's not how legitimate the excuses are....

- Don't miss the banquet even if you have a good excuse. This is not like skipping a birthday party, forgetting to TiVo your favorite tv show. This is the Kingdom of God.
  - No matter how righteous your excuse you don't want to miss life with God.
  - And Jesus is saying the religious leaders are not sitting at the table the way they think.

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Jesus is going to take his illustration a step further... imagine...

Maybe the servants begin to bring out the food as Jesus is describing this great banquet filled with choice food.

### ***Start bring out the food***

Imagine mash potatoes... maybe garlic mash potatoes "Here let me help you imagine"

Gravy

Green beans with brown stuff on top

Maybe a large perfectly cooked turkey

With stuffing...

Cranberries

Rolls

Baptist Wine...

~ If the kingdom of God were a food... It would not be lima beans... it would be a feast... like a Thanksgiving feast.

**Pie...** I think there would be pie as well.

Q:

Now can you picture this moment... "they made excuses to miss this."

### ***Walk down into the congregation***

~ Jesus is saying to all the people at this table... you have been raised to know and love God... but in your legalism, and judgmentalism, you have made excuses for not really being at this table.

Then Jesus's story takes an earth shattering turn... something they just couldn't have expected.

*Luke 14:21-22*

Luke 14:21-22

"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.'

'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

Luke 14:23

"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.'

↳ So I'm going to need some volunteers

### ***Invite someone up to the table...***

Now I can't let you be a part of the illustration and not have something to eat.

### ***Fix a meal for the 1<sup>st</sup> person at the table...***

Q: *"Did you expect to come up on the platform today... perfect."*

### ***Fix meal for the next two people.***

Friends...

Jesus is saying to the people far from the table you have been invited... there is a seat at this table... **God desires your, company...**

Bring up a kid and give him a plate w/ whip cream.

### ***Move down onto the floor***

### Contrasting two Lives

So... Jesus is contrasting two different approaches to life... A decision of how we will live day to day.

1) A life of actually sitting at this table... feasting w/ God.... Being in community w/ God

2) A life that makes sense at some level....

But it's really an excuse for doing life my way. It may make sense. They may be legitimate excuses... justified excuses... by it still missing this table.

### ***Pour Lima Beans in bowl***

~ **Don't think of this as a decision of salvation... of whether I am or am not a Christian.**

This table sits before you and me every single morning...

i.e. I can start each day by seeking God... seeking to love God and love others

~ It means learning to love my enemies... maybe on a tough day it's just love my children.

~ Live out the Golden Rule... when I'm driving, when I'm shopping, when I'm at home, work, or school.

It means that in my **pain**...

~ I will rest in God.

~ In my loss, or my failure... when I am rejected... that I will turn to God. I will lay it all at his feet.

It means that in success...

~ I won't judge other people who struggle more than me...

~ I will cultivate a generous heart.

~ I will trust God with my money, my talents, my career, my family...

Friends

Jesus is saying we should open up our heart and mind to...

Feast on God's joy... God's peace... God's love... everyday!

Shift gears...

One of the wonderful things that happens when we sit at this table is the realization of what a blessing it is... To realize how much we really have.

It gives us a different perspective... a generous perspective... to bless others as we have been blessed.

One of the things that I love about you as a church... is your generous heart. Four times a year we have a special benevolence offering... and w/o fail you church... have given lavishly...

We use those gifts to help people during times of need. To care for people might lose their house, or they can't buy groceries.

Two things... I God leads you... give a gift to bless someone out of the blessing you have...

Worship... sing this song to God... Sing it as someone sitting at this table. Sing it with the wonder & delight.

Song & benevolence offering

