

## 'THE REALLY GOOD LIFE' (Life of Christ Series) Gospel of Luke

### R.S.V.P.

Important parties, banquets, and dinners almost always require a formal invitation to come and join the festivities. There is usually a place on the invitation called RSVP (*French for 'respondez s'il vous plait' meaning 'please respond or answer'*). Reservations are important so the host/hostess will know how much food to prepare, the seating arrangements, expenses, etc. RSVP invitations are more than just a nice gesture to a formal event; they are an expression of VIP etiquette requiring a cordial and prompt response.

The Lord Jesus Christ will be hosting an awesome banquet at the end of the age called the '*Marriage Supper of The Lamb*' (**Revelation 19:7-9**). All of those trusting Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior will be automatically admitted, not as His guest, but as His spiritual bride. There will be OT saints (pre-cross believers) in attendance as family and friends of the Groom. There will be NT Tribulation saints (converts to Jesus following the Church Age) as honored guests of Jesus and brethren of the Bride. They all will have received and responded to the gracious invitation of God to be in attendance at the heavenly social event of the ages. In the weeks before a wedding, it is the bride's joyful task to get the invitations sent out in advance to as many as possible; likewise it is our blessed privilege and duty, as the bride of Christ, to deliver the invitations to accept Jesus as Savior and Lord to all we know and meet (**Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Colossians 4:2-6**). Only when they call upon the Lord to save them can they re-plan the rest of their lives and get ready for the coming big day (**2 Corinthians 11:2**).

Not everyone will appreciate the invitation; some will throw it away, others will mark it *return to sender* and still others will just ignore the request to RSVP. With such a special invitation, failure to respond is snubbing the one who sent it. It is actually quite rude to neglect a response and even more rude to attend without communicating that you're coming! It is not our responsibility to evaluate people's responses to God's offer of salvation – it is our job to just deliver the mail of the gospel of Christ to everyone around us. At the believer's banquet to come, most of those we have invited will be stunned to hear *no admittance* as they are turned away at the door. Because of their failure to RSVP affirmatively to the Spirit's gracious invitation to 'Come!' during their lifetime, they will have eternity to regret their bad manners toward the heavenly Master of ceremonies. Another even more socially unacceptable way of handling an invitation is to say 'yes' only to make some weak excuse later and ignore the event altogether. It would be better manners to decline by saying, 'no, thank you' than neglecting a response or failing to inform the host you've changed your mind.

In trying to invite people to come to Christ for salvation or even to church to learn the Bible, you will encounter many people who just put off your invitation. They are full of excuses why they won't come and frequently do accept your invitation only to never really show up in the end. Like the parable of the *soils* (**Matthew 13, Luke 7**) only *a remnant* of those you invite will actually take you up on responding to the Spirit's call to come to Christ, church, and the spiritual banquet He is preparing for those who sincerely love Him. Another thing to remember is that we must not let ourselves get hung up on inviting the same procrastinators and evaders who keep refusing to take spiritual things seriously – we must continually invite new potential candidates for eternal life. It is an honor to get an invitation even once, let alone twice or three times – beyond that is '*casting your pearls before swine*' as Jesus said (**Matthew 7:6**). Trying to replant unfertile soil becomes very irritating to someone who doesn't really want Christ right now, and it's very frustrating for you to reach a person who doesn't care about spiritual things. Blessings await the Christian who is faithfully, prayerfully, and graciously continuing to invite everyone, everywhere, all the time, to the Savior, His Book the Bible, and His family, the church (**Psalms 126:5-6**).

## 'The Wedding Feast Guest List' (The Few, the Saved, the Committed) Luke 14

### The Cancellations

"Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "**Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!**" Then He said to him, "**A certain man gave a great supper and invited many and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, "Come, for all things are now ready."** But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused. And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then **the master of the house, being angry...**"

14:15-21a

**Notes:** These guests had all ready been invited and agreed to come; now they change their minds and don't. The excuses for not coming to the Lord vary, but the reason is the same – 'I don't want to obey Him' The lesson of the parable thus far = like the man in **v. 15**, many who assume they're saved – aren't! The Lord finds excuses (even non-sinful ones like these) unacceptable and deserving of rejection.

### **The Compelled**

*"... **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 here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.** And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there's room. Then the master said to the servant, **"Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.** For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper." **14:21b-24***

**Notes:** The Lord's advice to His servants is to discontinue trying to reach those who are full of excuses. The Lord's change of strategy is repeated – go after the socially disenfranchised (same as vs. 13). The Lord's next advice is to go after the aliens, strangers, travelers and outsiders who will come. The Lord makes it clear why to discontinue pursuing 'excuse makers' – they're no longer invited!

**\*Dispensational note:** This is probably a preview of what will happen with the gospel of Jesus from that time onward – the initial guests (the Jewish nation) will not come, so the gospel goes to the social pariah of Israel, the Samaritans and the Gentiles as Christ predicted (**Matthew 8:11-12, Acts 1:8, Romans 11:25-32**).

### **The Committed**

*"Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, **"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.**" **14:25-27***

**Notes:** The Lord Jesus is always *raising the bar* of commitment for those who want to be His disciples. The mind-set of disciples: #1) love HIM above everything and #2) reject anything hindering #1 The method of disciples: crucify the desires of the 'old you' daily and frequently' (**Galatians 2:20 & 6:14**) Because a disciple is so in love with Jesus, his or her priorities will be unpopular and even maligned by those who are required to be secondary to Him, one's church family and the kingdom of God.

### **The Considerations**

*"For which of you, intending to **build a tower**, does not sit down first and count the cost whether he has enough to finish it – lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' Or what **king, going to make war** against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. **So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.**"* **14:28-33**

**Notes:** The term *disciple* means *disciplined* (Is Christ ruling over your ministries and personal life?). A good disciple takes time to *sit down* (think & pray) and *count the cost* prior to doing things. The normal Christian life is a *building project* (the kingdom of God) and a war (against sin and evil). A loyal disciple of Jesus gives God everything He can and trusts Him for all resources still lacking.

### **The Concern**

***"Salt is good;** but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It's neither fit for the land nor the dung-hill, but men throw it out. **He who has ears to hear, let him hear!**"* **14:34-35**

**Salt** had two main purposes in Jesus' day – 1) a flavor enhancer on food and, 2) a preservative against spoilage. Pure salt cannot lose its flavor but cheaper salt that is mixed with other minerals can seem to go *flat* in its taste and lose its effectiveness as a preservative. When the inferior salt (*in Israel - salt from the water of the Dead Sea after evaporation*) lost its *saltiness*, it was most often thrown upon footpaths to keep them free of vegetation or it was just thrown out on a manure pile as completely worthless.

**The Lord's teaching** seems to imply that spiritual zeal for the Lord is great – like true pure salt, energetic faith and love for Christ truly changes your life forever and keeps you from a sin-spoiled life in this world. Secondly, true discipleship, like pure salt, changes the lives of those a disciple touches and has a sanctifying affect upon all who come into contact with him or her.

If a person's spiritual interest in God, Jesus, the Bible and eternal things diminishes, goes *flat* and ceases, it is likely that (as impure, cheap salt) such a person's faith and love for the Lord was a temporary, religious whim. And like the inferior salt, such a person's religious experience will be tossed out as worthless in God's sight.