

Luke 14:15-24

"The Worthiness of the Kingdom"

November 2, 2025

1. Intro

- a. Well, this morning marks the end of our four-week study on the Sabbath dinner that Jesus was invited to at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees
 - i. Jesus kicked the evening off by stepping on the Jewish traditions surrounding the Sabbath, as he healed the man with dropsy
 - ii. He then upended their traditions of honor, as he encouraged them to be intentional about looking for the place of humility in their gatherings
 - iii. And then, as we saw last week, Jesus contended against all of their ideas surrounding one's position in society, as he said to the ruler of the Pharisees...
 1. The next time you put together a big banquet, don't invite all the people who you can later get some sort of gain from their invitation
 - a. Instead, invite the poor
 - b. Invite the crippled and the lame
 - c. Invite the blind
 - i. Invite all those who have no ability to repay you, and you will be blessed
 1. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just!
 2. This resurrection of the just, is the resurrection of the **RIGHTEOUS**
 - a. It is the resurrection of all who have been made righteous by their faith in Jesus Christ, as a gift of the grace of God
 - b. It is the resurrection of all those whose righteousness is shown by their bearing of **MUCH** fruit out in the world
 - i. That our Father in heaven may be glorified!
 - iv. So this has already been quite an evening for Jesus, but Luke still has one more parable from Jesus left for us to hear
 1. Jesus is now reclined at the table of the Pharisee, and one of the men next to him decides to engage Jesus in conversation
 - a. Jesus had just finished talking about the resurrection of the just,
 - i. And so, when the man heard these things, he said to Jesus in verse 15...

2. Luke 14:15

- a. ¹⁵"...*Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!*"
 - i. We need to pause here and ask, what is this man talking about when he talks about the blessing of all those who will eat bread in the kingdom of God?
 1. First, regarding his comment on eating bread, that's just a reflection of what they were doing in that moment
 - a. At the beginning of the chapter, in verse 1, the ESV renders it as
 - i. *"One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of the Ruler of the Pharisees..."*
 1. But the King James version actually translates it more accurately when it says,
 - a. *"And it came to pass, as Jesus went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees TO EAT BREAD on the Sabbath Day..."*

2. This serves as a reminder for us that bread was an integral part of the history of the Jewish people...
 - a. During the Israelites' 40 years of wandering in the wilderness, after their exodus out of Egypt, God supplied them with manna from heaven
 - i. For six days out of the week, the people would go out into the field and gather just enough of this manna for that day,
 1. And they would use the manna to bake the bread that would sustain them during their four decades outside of the Promised Land
 - b. After the Tabernacle was constructed, and later the Temple in Jerusalem, the bread of the presence was an important component within the house of God
 - i. Twelve loaves of showbread were baked each week, and placed upon the table in the holy place
 1. And, for centuries to come, the high priest and his sons would eat this showbread throughout the week, as a special memorial before the Lord
 - c. At Passover, and during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Israelites would make bread without yeast
 - i. And they would eat it as part of their yearly celebrations, remembering how God had rescued them from their slavery
 - d. And as we see here in Luke chapter 14, eating bread was an essential part of the Sabbath Day meals as well
 - i. Even today, in Jewish homes all over the world, the Friday night Sabbath dinner begins with the singing of Jewish hymns
 1. That's followed by a prayer of sanctification as everyone drinks a glass of wine together
 2. Then everyone goes and washes their hands
 - a. A blessing is pronounced over the challah bread that symbolizes the blessing and provision of God
 - b. And then the feasting begins with the breaking of the bread
3. So this man reclines next to Jesus, as they are most likely breaking the bread together, and he says to Jesus, the very SON of God, "How GOOD it will be to break bread together in the Kingdom of our God!"
 - a. How GOOD it will be when God has vanquished our enemies and oppressors!
 - b. How GOOD it will be when the land of Israel is free and prosperous once again!
 - c. How GOOD it will be when our Messiah, our King, finally comes, and the Kingdom of God is established again in Jerusalem!
 - i. The man didn't know, did he?
 1. He didn't realize that the King was reclining next to him
 2. He couldn't see how the coming of the Kingdom of God would be initiated by some no-name Rabbi from the little village of Nazareth
 3. They certainly couldn't understand how the Kingdom of God would come from someone preaching all about humility and caring for the least of these
 - ii. But that WAS what Jesus so often proclaimed, wasn't it?

1. And so, we find Jesus picking up these familiar themes once again, as we read here in verse 16...
3. Luke 14:16-24
 - a. *¹⁶But [Jesus] said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ ¹⁸But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ ¹⁹And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ ²⁰And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ ²¹So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ ²²And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ ²³And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. ²⁴For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”*
 - i. In this Parable of the Great Banquet, which is really an allegory of our salvation and of our entrance into the Banquet feast of the Kingdom, Jesus reminds us of this sobering reality
 1. There will be many who enter into the Kingdom
 - a. The Master desires that His house be filled, and it will indeed be filled
 2. But, sadly, there will be many who refuse the invitation, and they will never taste of His banquet
 - a. So the question must be asked... WHY?
 - ii. Why will some enter into the banquet, and others will not?
 1. Now, we have to acknowledge that the answer to this question must come on two levels
 - a. ULTIMATELY, all those who enter into the banquet enter in by the sovereign grace of God
 - i. Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9,
 1. *⁸For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁹not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*
 - ii. He could have just as easily wrote,
 1. For it is by grace that you will feast at the Great Banquet of the Kingdom...
 - a. You didn't get in by your own works
 - b. It is simply the gift of God, that no man may boast of his entering in
 - b. The great hymnwriter, Isaac Watts, wrote of these same things in the hymn that we often sing, “How Sweet and Awful is the Place,” as he put it this way...
 - i. While all our hearts and all our songs, join to admire the feast
 1. Each of us cry with thankful tongues, “Lord, why was I a guest?”
 - ii. “Why was I made to hear Thy voice, and enter while there's room
 1. When thousands make a wretched choice, and rather starve than come?”
 - iii. ‘Twas the same love that spread the feast, that sweetly drew us in
 1. Else we had still refused to taste, and perished in our sin
 - c. In love, God spread the Great Feast
 - i. And in love, God sweetly drew us in

1. ULTIMATELY, NO ONE enters into the Great Banquet of the Kingdom apart from the sovereign and gracious will of God
2. But the reality is that the Scriptures always speak of these things on two different levels
 - a. On one hand we have the sovereignty of God
 - b. But on the other hand we have the responsibility of man
 - i. And in this parable, it is the responsibility of man that Jesus highlights
- iii. And he answers the question for us...
 1. Why will some enter into the banquet, and others will not?
 2. Why will some enter into THE KINGDOM, and others will not?
 - a. Jesus shows us that it is because their priorities have been misplaced
 - i. Generally speaking, we could say that their priorities have misplaced in three different categories
4. The first is in the priority of their possessions
 - a. The Master of the Banquet had prepared the great feast
 - i. He sent out his servant to tell the people who had been invited that everything was ready
 1. But they all alike began to make excuses
 - ii. The first to make an excuse said to the servant, "Sorry... I just bought a field, and I must go out and see it"
 1. Generally speaking, we could say that this man missed out on the banquet because he had misplaced his priority over his POSSESSIONS
 - a. He'd prioritized his "stuff" over the Kingdom of God
 - i. One can't help but think of the rich young ruler at this point, who Jesus will later encounter in Luke 18
 1. This man wanted to enter into eternal life... he WANTED to enter into the banquet of the Kingdom
 - a. So he worked hard to keep all the laws of God
 2. But then Jesus confronted him with one more command...
 - a. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven...
 - i. Come, follow me!
 - ii. And Luke tells us that this man became very sad, for he was extremely rich
 1. He wanted to enter into the Kingdom, but he just bought some new stuff that he had to go enjoy instead
 - a. Yes, it made him sad, but clearly not sad enough to repent and turn and follow Jesus
 2. How often do we miss out on the Kingdom here on earth for this very same reason?
 - a. How often do our possessions draw us away from the feast that we could be experiencing with Christ and with our fellow saints?
 - i. I'd love to go on a mission trip to a third-world country...
 1. But to be honest, I'd rather go on a vacation in the mountains, or at the beach
 2. And our bank statement will attest to the fact that we almost always choose the vacation, don't we?
 - ii. I'd love to give more money to the poor in our community, or toward reaching the unreached all across the world...

1. But to be honest, most of our money is tied up in our mortgage, or our car payments, or in all sorts of other expenses for all those things we HAD TO HAVE
- iii. Thankfully, we don't have this problem yet here at our church, but I've been around MANY Christians in other churches who often skip out on gathering with the saints on a Sunday morning...
 1. Because the weather is nice, and they want to get out and use that boat they purchased earlier in the year
 2. Or the cabin they own up in the mountains is calling their name
 3. Or... their son or daughter has to travel the next few Sundays for whatever competitive sport they're in
3. Friends, how often do we miss out on the Kingdom here on this earth, because we've misplaced our priorities when it comes to our possessions, or all the other things that money can buy?
 - a. Now, hear me when I say this...
 - i. These things are not wrong or evil in and of themselves
 1. God often gives good gifts to His children, and He wants us to use them for our enjoyment
 - ii. But when we hold up the stuff... and the vacations... and the comforts in one hand
 1. And we hold up the things of the Kingdom in the other hand
 - a. And then we make the EXCUSE, and say, "Sorry, I've got a new field I need to go check out..."
 2. Then we have misplaced our priorities
 - a. And we are missing out on the Kingdom
 - i. This was the case for the first man who made excuses for not coming to the feast
 - iii. The second man said, "Yeah, sorry... I can't make it either. I just bought a bunch of oxen, so I'm gonna have to decline as well."
 1. Generally speaking, we could say that THIS man missed out on the banquet because he had misplaced his priority over his WORK
 - a. In those days, many people earned a living and provided for their families through agriculture
 - i. But they didn't plow their lands with the heavy machinery that we use today...
 1. Instead, they used oxen to pull the plows
 - a. So for this man, we could say that he just made a major investment in his work
 - b. He just bought five yoke of oxen, and he needed to go make sure they were going to do the job for him
 - b. He had received his invite to the great banquet, but he decided HIS JOB was the priority he needed to attend to...
 - i. And his priorities were misplaced
 2. To illustrate this misplaced priority, we can actually look at the example of someone who did THE OPPOSITE of this man, and that would be the prophet, Elisha
 - a. Elijah, spelled with a "J", was the great prophet of the Old Testament days
 - i. He had battled the prophets of the pagan gods
 - ii. He had defied evil kings and queens

- iii. He had performed extraordinary miracles by the power of God
 - 1. But Elijah's time was drawing to an end
 - a. So God called Elijah to go to Elisha, spelled with an "s-h," and pass on his position to him
 - b. And in 1 Kings 19, Elijah walked past Elisha, who was plowing a field with TWELVE yoke of oxen in front of him,
 - i. And Elijah cast his cloak upon Elisha's shoulders
 - 1. In a sense, Elijah was inviting Elisha into the greater work of the Kingdom of God
 - a. He was inviting him to the Great Banquet!
 - ii. At this point, Elisha could have begun making excuses, couldn't he?
 - 1. "Sorry, Elijah... I've got these twelve yoke of oxen here, and the work I'm doing is REALLY important... can't help you out this time!"
 - iii. But that's not what Elisha did
 - 1. Instead, Elisha went back to his friends and family to throw one last feast
 - a. He started a big bonfire with the wooden yokes that had been upon the oxen's necks
 - i. And then he slaughtered the oxen
 - ii. He boiled them over the fire
 - iii. And they had a glorious goodbye party for him!
 - 2. And then he got up and went to do the work of the Kingdom with his new master, Elijah
 - a. Elisha understood that Kingdom work ALWAYS takes priority over our EARTHLY work
 - 3. I wonder, friends, do we have this same kind of attitude toward work as Elisha did?
 - a. Or have we misplaced our priorities, and made our EARTHLY work the thing that REALLY matters?
 - i. Now, granted, this is an easy thing to do in our culture, isn't it?
 - 1. We live in an EXTREMELY compartmentalized culture in our day today
 - ii. Kingdom work is the work that we do on Sunday mornings between the hours of 9 and noon, and MAYBE on a Wednesday evening for an hour or two at the most
 - 1. But for many of us, the majority of the rest of our week is spent on our earthly work
 - a. We spend forty hours (or more) at the office, or on the jobsite, or in the classroom, or on the computer
 - b. But that's a separate compartment, isn't it?
 - 2. Kingdom work is for Sundays... WORLDLY work is for the rest of the week
 - a. And if there is too much worldly work, well then we might have to skip out on the Kingdom work on Sunday as well, won't we?
 - i. Too often we find ourselves making excuses for why the Kingdom work has to be put on hold...
 - ii. Sorry, I just bought five yoke of oxen – THOSE are the priority today

4. My friends, the Bible makes no such distinction in any of its teachings
 - a. Listen to how Paul describes the Christian's attitude toward work in Ephesians 6:5-8,
 - i. He uses the language of bondservants and masters in this passage, but we could rightly apply it in our day to "employees" and "bosses"
 1. *⁵Bondservants [or employees], obey your earthly masters [your boss] with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, ⁶not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, ⁸knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free.*
 - b. In Paul's mind, there was no distinction between Kingdom work and worldly work
 - i. For Paul, when you do your worldly work with sincerity and with good will and with an attitude of excellence,
 1. Then that IS Kingdom work!
 - a. How might our attitude change when it comes to our jobs if we prioritized the Kingdom IN our worldly jobs?
 - c. Now, if you think Paul's view of our work out in the world is challenging, just listen to what Peter says about it
 - i. In 1 Peter 2, Peter doesn't just talk about being a good employee for good bosses, but also to bad ones...
 1. *¹⁸Servants [or employees], be subject to your masters [your bosses] with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. ¹⁹For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*
 - ii. How's THAT for a high standard for the followers of Jesus?!
 1. Peter says that, even when we suffer under unjust bosses, if we would just endure and be subject to their authority...
 1. Without being deceitful...
 2. Without reviling them in our hearts...
 - ii. If we would simply entrust our lives to our Father in heaven, then we will be following in the footsteps of Jesus himself!
 1. And Peter says that this is a gracious thing, as we are mindful of God in our worldly work
5. May we be reminded, brothers and sisters in Christ, that whatever worldly job we may hold on this earth, our KINGDOM job title is AMBASSADOR

- a. And that position of Ambassador is to drive all of our attitudes and actions in any job that we might hold here
 - i. So let us not be found making excuses, friends, when invitations to do Kingdom work present themselves outside of Sunday morning or Wednesday evening
 - 1. Let us instead, like Elisha, fully devote ALL of our lives to doing the work of the Kingdom
 - a. For our WORLDLY work IS Kingdom work, IF we have not misplaced our priorities
- iv. There is one more man in the parable who chose to make excuses instead of coming to the Banquet
 - 1. This was the man who replied, “Sorry... I am out as well. You see, I just got married, so I don’t have time now to come to your feast. I have to spend time with my new bride instead.”
 - a. Generally speaking, we could say that THIS man missed out on the banquet because he had misplaced his priority over his RELATIONSHIPS
 - i. Now, on the surface, we might think to ourselves, “This guy actually had a GOOD excuse... isn’t it a GOOD thing to prioritize our marriage, and to take care of the other relationships that God has given to us here on earth?”
 - 1. We would all agree that, yes, these things are ABSOLUTELY good to prioritize
 - a. But when they take priority OVER THE KINGDOM, then we have made the wrong choice
 - b. And our excuses fall flat
 - 2. We’re going to dive more into this area next week, as we look at Jesus’ teachings on the cost of being a true disciple
 - a. But we cannot forget that, in this example, the man isn’t choosing his wife over watching a football game with his buddies
 - i. He’s not choosing his wife over testing out his new oxen in the field
 - ii. He’s not choosing his wife over any other kind of earthly engagement
 - 1. He’s choosing to prioritize her over the great banquet of the Kingdom
 - 3. And we can often find ourselves in this same place as well
 - a. Maybe we’re in a marriage, or even in just a dating or courting relationship...
 - i. And one person in the relationship IS NOT walking with the Lord
 - 1. What do we do at that point?
 - a. Do we let that person lead the relationship, and therefore bring the whole relationship down instead of up?
 - b. Or do we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, and on HIS Kingdom, and say to our significant other,
 - i. “This is the way of Jesus, and THIS is the way I am going to choose to walk...”
 - 2. Are we prioritizing the relationship? Or are we prioritizing the Kingdom?
 - ii. For the husband, Paul says in Ephesians 5 that we prioritize the Kingdom by loving our wives,

1. And by giving ourselves up for her... loving her as Christ loved the Church
- iii. For the wife, Peter says in 1 Peter 3 that you are to prioritize the Kingdom through your gentle and your quiet spirit toward him,
 1. As you help lead them toward Christ in your respectful and pure conduct
 - b. We are to prioritize the Kingdom in our marriages and in our dating relationships, as we pursue Christ TOGETHER
4. But this can apply to any relationship, can't it?
 - a. Are we choosing to maintain unhealthy friendships with people who continually drag us down and drag us away from the Lord?
 - i. James says in James chapter 4 that "friendship with the world is enmity with God"
 1. He's not saying that we shouldn't have unbelieving friends
 - a. Even Jesus was known as the "friend of sinners"
 2. But if you hang out with the world TOO MUCH, then their passions will become your passions
 - a. Their desires will become your desires
 - i. And James says that these passions and desires will ultimately lead us away from our Father
 - b. In EVERY relationship, we must prioritize the Kingdom over the other person, no matter who they are in our life
 - i. We prioritize the Kingdom by walking in love and humility
 - ii. And we prioritize the Kingdom by walking in truth and obedience
 1. Again, Christians, let us not be found making excuses for choosing relationships over the great banquet of the Kingdom of God
 - v. Now, I want to say it again...
 1. Whether we are talking about our worldly treasures, our jobs, or our relationships, none of these things are necessarily evil or wrong
 - a. It is when we place them OVER the Kingdom that we begin to miss all that the Lord has for us
 2. In his book, The Weight of Glory, C.S. Lewis puts it in this way...
 - a. "If we consider the unblushing promises of reward promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at sea. We are far too easily pleased."
 - i. Isn't that a perfect illustration?
 1. All these men who were making excuses didn't realize that infinite JOY was being held out before them
 2. They didn't see that the invitation to the banquet was an invitation of a holiday at sea
 - a. Instead, they settled for mud pies in a slum
 3. And they chose to reject the invitation into the Kingdom
 - b. So Jesus once again turns the gaze of his audience to the poor, and the crippled, and the lame
 - i. This is consistent with the whole of his ministry, isn't it?

1. When John the Baptist got thrown into prison, he fell into a season of doubt, and he began to wonder if this Jesus was truly the Messiah that had been promised
 - a. So, in Matthew 11, John sends some of his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"
 - i. Jesus doesn't say to John,
 1. "Don't worry John... I'm going to bust you out of jail soon, and you're going to live a life of ease and prosperity and popularity!"
 - ii. No, he instead says to John's disciples...
 1. *4"Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. 6And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."*
2. What is the evidence that the Kingdom of God has arrived, and that the true Messiah is here?
 - a. Just look at the poor... the crippled... the lame... they are all receiving their invitations, and they are beginning to fill the house!
 - i. For Jesus said in Luke 6:20,
 1. *Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."*
 - ii. He said in Luke 5:31,
 1. "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."
 - b. Brothers and sisters, it is not the healthy and the wealthy who Jesus has come for, but the poor, the crippled, and the lame
 - i. And that is EXCEEDINGLY good news, for that is all of us!
 - ii. And so Jesus looks at us, those who are too poor to bring anything to the table
 1. He looks at us, those who are too crippled and lame to make the journey
 - a. He looks at us, and he says "I will provide EVERYTHING you need... you simply come to the banquet."
- c. And as you begin to eat bread in the Kingdom of God, look around you
 - i. For there is still room for others to join in as well
 1. Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in
 - a. Instead of prioritizing worldly treasures and possessions and vacations and comforts...
 - i. Prioritize the Kingdom
 1. Use your time and your money and your resources to GO into the world and make disciples of ALL nations
 - a. Compel the people to come in!
 - b. Instead of prioritizing your work and compartmentalizing it into something that is separate from your calling...
 - i. Prioritize the Kingdom
 1. Recognize that if you do your job with humility and respect and with excellence, that God might be glorified in all your work
 - a. Then your worldly work is now KINGDOM work
 - i. Compel the people to come in!

- c. And instead of prioritizing your relationships, and allowing them to pull you away from the great feast
 - i. Prioritize the Kingdom
 - 1. Share the Gospel with everyone you encounter
 - 2. LIVE OUT the Gospel in every relationship that you have
 - a. Walk in love and grace and humility
 - b. Speak with unwavering truth
 - i. Compel the people to come in!
 - d. For the Kingdom of our God is of greater worth than any treasure...
 - i. It is of greater worth than any job...
 - ii. It is of greater worth than any relationship...
 - 1. So don't settle for worldly excuses friends
- ii. The Lord our God desires that his house may be filled
 - 1. At the human level, we are all called to go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come into the great banquet of the Kingdom of God
 - a. And we do so, knowing that GOD will INDEED fill his house, as we look ahead to the Great Marriage Supper of the Lamb,
 - i. Where we will break bread with people from every tribe, every tongue, and every nation
 - ii. We will break bread with ALL who have been ransomed for God, by the precious blood of Christ!