

THE GREAT SUPPER

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Jesus's;

Parable of the Great Supper portrays the blessings awaiting those who knowingly and joyously participate in the coming of his earthly kingdom. They are recipients of blessings prepared for them from the foundation of the earth. They are the chosen who will see Christ at the head of the table of kingdom glory. They are the beloved of God who now reap the benefits of divine grace and of lives well lived.

But there is

an element of choice: when invited to the feast by the Master's servant, some will be, as the parable indicates, too occupied with making money or the daily cares of family living to attend. The servant reports this unwelcome news to the Master, who then orders the servant: (Luke 14:21-24 WEB). "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame." "The servant said, 'Lord, it is done as you commanded, and there is still room.'" "The lord 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 tell you that none of those men who were invited will taste of my supper.'" "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame."

Who was "invited,"

but valued wealth and social activities over joining Christ in his kingdom? Who didn't have time or energy for God's kingdom? Who entirely "missed the message" of the prophets and of Christ himself concerning the serious issues of obedience to God's word sufficient for entry into his kingdom? Who was it who thought "cheap grace" was enough?

The invited

guests were prominent people of the day. They belonged to the right social circles, had the blessings of long-time religious training and membership, and more wealth and possessions than they deserved or needed. But they were so busy enjoying and protecting their heritage that they didn't have time for the things of God or for his Great Supper around the table in his kingdom. They were the "beautiful" people for whom the adulations of men were more important than the presence of God. They were people who, in the immortal words of Christ, "have a form of godliness, but deny the power thereof" (Matt.

Folks, when

we deliberately and knowingly devalue and disobey God's laws for justice, mercy, truth, and love; it's us! When we claim that grace supersedes the entirety of God's law for human governance, it's us! And when we substitute religious ritual and ceremony for obedience to God, it's also us!

It's not

enough to do miracles, or cast out evil spirits, or even to prophesy in Christ's name---these behaviors are all good, but are rendered inadequate for a place at God's Great Supper when we practice lawlessness, best defined as studied ignorance and flouting of God's laws for personal and national justice, mercy, and righteousness.

Jesus said

it very clearly in Matt. 7:21-23: "Not everyone who cries, Lord, Lord! will enter the kingdom of heaven [site of the Great Feast], but he who does the will of my Father in heaven. In that day many will say unto me, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, and cast out devils in your names, and done many wonderful works in your name? And then I will reply to them, "I never knew you, depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."

As these

favored people missed out on the feast, another group was chosen. They were the "down and outers" of society, the "poor, maimed, blind, and lame." They were the underclass, unwelcome in polite society, "losers" in the game of life. But they had several attributes that Christ valued above religiosity and pretension: They had faith, and they had need. They needed God in the deepest way, and they had faith to believe for their deliverance from destitution into the kingdom of God.

Liberation theology posits that one can best find Christ in the company of the poor. Their poverty and suffering has built their faith, thus their qualifications for entry into the Great Supper of Christ's kingdom. Don't allow wealth and "things" to get in your way.