

## Life Group Notes

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Speaker:** Andy McCullough

**Title:** Excuses & Invitations

**Passage:** Luke: 14:15-24

What do we learn from this story?

### 1. **Jesus is telling us about himself.**

The comment in v15 was about eating in the Kingdom of God, the Messianic banquet. Jesus is saying, "I am the promised Messiah. The long-awaited time has come." "I am the one sent by God to invite people to his banquet." But at the same time, it is *my* banquet (v24). I am both the one sent by God, and I am God. This is an extraordinary claim!

### 2. **The anger of God**

The host is rightly angry (v 21) at the insulting refusals of his generosity. They are made up excuses, deliberate insults. He had every right to retaliate, to use that energy as retribution. That would have been an appropriate response. But he re-processes his anger into grace. A parable takes something we do understand to explain something that we don't understand. Yes, God is angry. This is a righteous anger. He has every right. We do not, we dare not, shy away from the personal sense of injustice in God caused by humankind's blatant disregard of his offer of grace. The question is, what does God do with his anger? He doesn't pour out vengeance. No, through the cross, he reprocesses that anger into grace.

### 3. **The urgency of inviting**

There is a time-bound urgency to this whole parable. From "come, everything is now ready" .. the ticking clock, the potential waste of food, all of it is pressured, urgent, "compel them to come in." That urgency, between it being prepared and it being too late, is the time in which we now live, between the First coming and second coming of Christ. That is an appropriate tone for the church.

### 4. **This story is our story – the story of the world**

Ever since Eden, God has invited people to feast at his table. Adam and Eve walked away. So have many, many others. But God hasn't given up inviting people. He sends Jesus into the world, among the poor and blind and crippled and lame.

### 5. **Invitation**

Some say no because they see themselves as important and the invitation as unimportant. Others say no because they see themselves as unimportant and the invitation as too important.

The time is now. The invitation is clear. The clock is ticking. The host is gracious. How will you respond?

### **Questions:**

1. What does this story teach us about Jesus?
2. What do you understand about the anger of God from this passage?
3. Is there anyone that you can invite to the next Alpha Course? What does it mean for you to "go out" to people on the outside and invite them in?
4. In what ways do you feel the urgency, the ticking clock expressed in this parable?
5. What does this story teach us about God?
6. What does this story teach us about ourselves?