

=THE PARABLES=

Lesson 4

The Great Supper

Objects to have:

Pictures of people eating together in all different situations: a picnic, a birthday party, a fancy dinner, a family dinner

Your Bible.

Introducing the lesson:

A busy mother was in the kitchen early one Saturday morning. She was cleaning some potatoes and then putting those potatoes in water in a pan on the stove. While the potatoes were cooking, she put some eggs into another pan that was filled with water and put them on the stove to cook. She got out some onions and chopped them up and some pickles and chopped them up. While the potatoes and the eggs were boiling, Mother put some baked beans into a big dish that had a cover on it and put the beans into the oven. Then she cleaned some ears of corn and put them into a big pan to cook. My, Mother certainly was busy. “What are you doing?” asked Billy as he sat in a chair by the kitchen table, watching Mother.

“I’m getting all the food ready for us to take on a picnic this afternoon,” said Mother. “We’ll have some potato salad and some baked beans and some corn. I baked cookies last night, and we’ll take some of those. See that big bunch of bananas on the top of the refrigerator? We’ll put them in the picnic basket, also.”

Billy asked, “Is just our family going on the picnic?”

Mother said, “I have invited some neighbors to go with us. We’ll all pile into the van and take the big picnic lunch; our neighbor family and our family will go together to the forest preserves and eat our picnic lunch.”

(Hold up your picture of someone having a picnic.) That looks like fun! The picnic is more fun when our friends can go, too. But what if at the last minute the neighbors call on the telephone and say that they can’t go? That would be a very big disappointment.

(Hold up the picture of the birthday party.) It’s Mary’s birthday! What fun it is getting ready for the birthday party. There are balloons to be blown up, decorations to be hung on the wall, candles to be put on the big birthday cake, sandwiches to make, and potato chips and pickles to put out. The ice cream is in the freezer, ready to be served with the cake. What a fun time everybody will have at the birthday party! There is enough food for twenty people. Games will be played, and there will be candy treats as well as little toys for everybody.

The time for the birthday party to start has come, but nobody comes! Twenty people received invitations, but not one person comes. What a terrible disappointment!

(Hold up your picture of a fancy dinner.) Mmmm! Look at all that delicious food. Just mommies and daddies are invited to this dinner—it is going to be a very fancy one, but not one invited guest comes!

(Hold up the picture of what appears to be a family dinner.) What an exciting time it is to look forward to having company! Lots of times our company are aunts and uncles and cousins and Grandma and Grandpa. It is time for all the company to come, but not one relative comes to the dinner. That makes a person sad enough to cry.

Jesus told a story like the ones I just told you, and He told what to do when those who were invited to come do not come. (Pick up your Bible; hold it while telling the following.)

Telling the story:

Jesus was in a house. He was in the house of a man who was called a Pharisee. I'll tell you what it was like to be a Pharisee.

The man belonged to a group of men who sat around and talked about the Old Testament. They talked about the laws that were given by God and written down in the Old Testament. Some of the men would say, "These laws are okay as far as they go, but we are so smart, that we can think of other laws. We can add to these laws, and we can say that all the people must obey the laws that we write down. If the people do not obey the laws that we write down, we will call them ungodly people."

That's the kind of person who had invited Jesus to come to eat at his house. Jesus sat in the house of the Pharisee to eat a meal in that house.

There were other important people there, too. They were important because they called themselves and each other important. God did not call them important, however. God called the Pharisees proud. Proud people will never admit they are sinners. Proud people will never admit that they need to come to Jesus and ask forgiveness for their sins.

One of the Pharisees said to Jesus, "It will be a happy time to be able to sit and eat bread in the kingdom of God." He meant that he could be one of the important people who would eat with King Jesus.

And Jesus told him a story. Jesus said, "A certain man made a great supper. He invited many people to come to his supper. He said, 'When the meal is ready, I would like you to come.'" Then Jesus said, "When the supper was ready, the man said, 'It's time for all you people who have been invited to the supper to come. Come quickly while the food is hot and while it is ready to be eaten.'"

One man who had been invited to come said to the servants who came to say that the meal was ready, "I can't come; I have bought some land, and now I have to go see it." That was just an excuse not to come to eat the meal. Nobody would buy any land without first seeing it—to see where it is, to see how good it is for growing food.

The servants of the man said to someone else who was invited, "Come on now. The meal is ready. Come quickly; it is time to eat."

That man said, "No, I can't come now. I have bought some animals that I'm going to use to help me do my work on the farm. I have bought ten oxen. I have to go now and see how strong those oxen are. I have to see whether they can do the work that I need for them to do." That was just an excuse not to come to the supper. No farmer would have bought animals that could help him on the farm without first seeing whether the animals were strong and healthy and whether they could really do the work.

A servant of the man who was giving the meal ran up to another man and said, "Supper's ready. Come on now."

That man said, "Oh, but I can't come. I just got married. We can't accept your invitation."

The people who were invited to the feast disappointed the man who had invited them, so he said, "Then, servants, just go up and down the roads. Invite whomever you see to come to my supper. If you see a crippled man with a crutch, invite him to come. If you see a blind man, lead him to my house to eat my supper. If you find a deaf man, have him watch your lips while you tell him that he must come, that he must accept my invitation to come to eat my supper. If you find some poor people, pull them by the hand and insist that they come to eat the supper that I have prepared."

Now, that was a different kind of story that Jesus told! Jesus told the story to help people to understand that they should come to Jesus when He says, "Come." All the work had been done, and everything was ready, and the time was right for those people to accept Jesus as their Saviour, but they did not want to come. There were other people who would come to Jesus if they were invited, so Jesus says, "Go, invite them to come to Me. In fact, beg them to come to Me. In fact, drag them to Me." We are to tell people that Jesus wants them to come to Him. We are to tell them that He has made everything ready. He has died on the cross and paid for our sins because He loves us so much. He is alive and begs us to trust Him as our Saviour. We are to tell people that. Everybody should get the invitation.

LEARN OUR BIBLE VERSE: Luke 14:23, “And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”