

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

September memory verse: Romans 6:14-18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

¹⁷ But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

The fourteenth chapter involves an invitation for Jesus to come to a supper on the Sabbath day and of the things that transpired at that supper, and the subsequent exchange between Jesus and the people as Jesus talked to them concerning etiquette and concerning the demands of the kingdom.

So it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him ([Luk 14:1](#)).

It is interesting to me that Jesus accepted the invitation. He knew that they were out to get Him. It seems to me that Jesus was always open to an invitation to eat, going so far as inviting Himself to Zacchaeus' house. "Come on down Zacchaeus. I want to come over to your house and eat." And finally in Revelation, standing at the door and knocking, waiting for anyone to open so that He can come in and eat. "And if you will open the door I will come in and I will eat supper with you." As we this morning were talking about the significance of eating in that culture, becoming one, how Jesus desires to be one with us.

Now the Sabbath meal was different from other meals in that all of the food had to be prepared before the Sabbath. You weren't to kindle any fire. If you were to have anything that was hot it had to be hot before the Sabbath. And somehow there had to be ways to maintain it being hot. Now in those days they had definite rules of those things that you could not do to keep food hot and things you could do to keep food hot, but there was a kosher way of keeping your food hot even that they even had developed for the Sabbath day.

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

Today they plug in before the Sabbath begins. Their hotplates and their water for their coffee (they use instant coffee on the Sabbath day) all have to plug it in. They can't fill the pot once the Sabbath is come. But once it is plugged in, you can pour it out of the pot into your cup and make your instant coffee. That doesn't constitute work. Just don't pour any water into the pot to heat it on the Sabbath day. You have got to have that going before the Sabbath day. And you can't turn the switches on. You just have to have it plugged in and going before the Sabbath day comes. So they still have some interesting little rules for the Sabbath day.

If you want to go out to eat, you cannot pay with cash, but you can pay with credit cards on the Sabbath day. To pay with cash would violate the Sabbath, but to pay with a credit card, they have this unfortunate concept that so many people have about credit cards and that is you are really not paying. That is a dangerous thing.

So the Sabbath day meal was different. And they were watching Jesus. Now it seems that they were watching Him because there was a setup.

And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake the words to the lawyers ([Luk 14:2-3](#))

Answering what? It doesn't say they asked Him any question, but realizing, no doubt, that this whole thing was a set up. He was invited to eat on the Sabbath day to break bread with them, and here right before Him they have set this man with this disease of dropsy.

And so Jesus answering them, realizing that it was a setup,

spake to the lawyers and the Pharisees, and he said, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And they held their peace ([Luk 14:3-4](#)).

They didn't answer Him.

And so he took, and healed him, and let him go; And he answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox that has fallen into a pit, and will not immediately pull him out on the sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things ([Luk 14:4-6](#)).

Now, under the law they did have a provision that if your donkey or ox would fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, you could pull it out. They did have many open wells, so it was not uncommon for a donkey or an ox to fall into a pit. So Jesus brought up their own law to them, and they could not answer Him.

So then He dealt with them concerning etiquette.

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden to the feast, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms ([Luk 14:7](#));

Usually they had at these feasts a table with three pillows around it. They were called tricliniums. And they would usually sit the people three at a table, and the middle pillow would be the place of honor at that table. And say you were going to invite nine guests. You would have three tables set up in this triclinium, and at each of the tables you would have the center pillow for your guest of honor. And of course, they would sit and sort of recline, and that is why they are called tricliniums. They would recline on these pillows and eat in sort of a reclining position.

So, Jesus was watching how they were jockeying for the best positions, for the places of honor, for the places of note, for this business of trying to get into the place of prominence. So He said,

When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, don't sit down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than you has been bidden to the feast; And those that bade thee and him come and say to you, Give this man your place; and you with shame will have to go to the lowest room ([Luk 14:8-9](#)).

It is an embarrassing situation. You sat at the head table, but you don't belong there. So they come up and say they are sorry, but they don't have any place for you at that table, so you better take a table in the back. And everybody sees you leave the head table and head for the table in the back.

But when you are bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; and when he that bade thee comes, he may say unto thee, Friend, come on up higher: then you will have honor in the presence of those that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted ([Luk 14:10-11](#)).

I think that one of the characteristics of greatness is humility. Some of the greatest people have been very humble people. I think that one of the most humbling things is to have God use your life. For you know it is not you and you know you are not worthy. But if you seek to exalt yourself, the law of the Lord, you will be abased. But he that will humble himself, the Lord will lift him up.

Then said he also to him that invited him, When you make a dinner or a supper ([Luk 14:12](#)),

Now he is turning on the host.

When you make a dinner or a supper, don't call your friends, and your brothers, and your family, or your rich neighbors; in order that they might bid you again, and recompense you for the invitation. But when you make a feast, call the poor, the

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

maimed, the lame, the blind: And you will be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: but you will be recompensed at the resurrection of the just ([Luk 14:12-14](#)).

These are interesting rules of the kingdom.

And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God ([Luk 14:15](#)).

I think that someone at the table got the flash of light as Jesus began to talk about how in the kingdom there is going to be an equality. There won't be the exalting of one man above another. There won't be important people and unimportant people, but we are all one in Christ Jesus. And we will all share together in the glory and in the honor in the kingdom. And this man got a flash of light in the kingdom and he said,

Blessed is the man that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God ([Luk 14:15](#)).

And then Jesus gave a parable unto them. You see, all of these have to do with being invited to dinner, going to dinner, because they are sitting at this dinner, or at this Sabbath dinner with the Pharisee.

Then he said unto him, There was a certain man which made a great supper, and he invited many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to those that were invited, Come; for dinner is ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said, I have bought a piece of ground, and I better go see it: I pray thee you will have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: And I pray thee you'll have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then 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, the maimed, the halt, and the blind ([Luk 14:16-21](#)).

These are the ones that Jesus told the fellow he should have invited anyhow.

And the servant said, Lord, it is done as you have commanded, and still we've got more room. And 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 say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper ([Luk 14:22-24](#)).

In this parable I believe that the one who has made the invitation and inviting to the supper is really none other than God. And the reference is to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And these are some of the excuses that people give for not coming to Jesus Christ.

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

The first man's excuse was sort of a commercial excuse: "I bought a house and I need to go take a look at it." Pray tell, what kind of a fool buys a house without looking at it? He was busy in commerce.

The second man is busy in his labors. It takes precedence over the kingdom. "I bought five yoke and I need to prove them." Again, what man would buy five yoke of oxen without first testing them? Which of you would buy a car without driving it around the block?

Then the third said that he had just married a wife and couldn't come. Why didn't he bring his wife?

You notice that they all began to make an excuse. And there is a difference between excuses and reasons. Sometimes you can make an excuse when you don't have any real reason for it. But I would warn you as Benjamin Franklin said, "The man who is good at making excuses is seldom good for anything else."

They began to make excuses for different reasons, so the lord said to go out into the highways and bring in the poor, the maimed and the halt. Remember to Jesus, He fulfilled the prophecy to the poor, the gospel is being preached. And still there was room, so he was to go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, and the gospel was being preached compelling men to come into the kingdom of God.

Now at this point he probably left the supper, for we read,

And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them ([Luk 14:25](#)),

Having left the house, the people were outside waiting for Him. At this point great multitudes of people were attracted to Him and were following Him and listening to Him. And He is on His way towards Jerusalem, but they think He is on His way towards Jerusalem in order to overthrow the Roman government and to establish and set up His kingdom. And that is why they are being attracted. That is why the multitude is coming. They think that the kingdom is going to come now immediately, and James and John are saying, "Lord, can I sit on the right and left hand?" and all of this jockeying for position was going on. But they don't understand. He is not going to Jerusalem to overthrow the Roman government. He is going to Jerusalem to be put on a cross.

You cannot follow Christ just because it is a popular movement. There is a shallowness and a danger to popular spiritual movements. The Jesus Movement was sadly weakened by the endeavors to commercialize the thing and to popularize the thing. And the Jesus Movement parades and banners were fade aspects.

In following Christ, you just don't get on the bandwagon. It is just not joining because everybody is doing it, or it is the in thing to do. This was at that time the in thing.

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

Multitudes were following Him. And because there is a danger in this, He turns to the multitudes and He becomes extremely severe in His words. He is really more severe than I would like Him to be, for He said,

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple ([Luk 14:26](#)).

I am not going to be popular, being acclaimed as king. I am going to be crucified. There is a real cost if you are going to come after Me. You better count the cost. You better measure it.

Now, don't misunderstand Jesus and think that I have got to hate my father, and my mother, because that is just the opposite of what the gospel teaches. The fruit of the Spirit is love. And if say I love God and hate my brother, I am a liar and the truth is not in me. How can I love God who I haven't seen and hate my brother who I have seen? Then what does Jesus mean, unless you hate your father, mother, brothers and so forth? That is in the language a comparative.

Your love for Jesus Christ must be supreme. It must be greater than your love for your family, your home or yourself, because it may cost you all of these things to follow Jesus Christ. And for many of those people it did cost all those things. Following Christ did cost some of them their families, their family relationships. For they were ostracized by their families when they made their commitment to Jesus Christ. And the same is true today. Many people have found it quite costly to follow Jesus Christ. It cost them their family relationships. But Jesus said if you are not willing to give up these family relationships, you can't really be My disciple. You have got to love Me more than you love any other relationship that you have. Your love for Me must be supreme and every other love must be subservient to your love for Me.

Then He went on to say,

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple ([Luk 14:27](#)).

I am not going to be crowned as king of the world. I am going to bear a cross. I am going to be crucified, and if you are not willing to take up your cross you can't really be My disciple. If you really want to follow Me and be My disciple, it can involve a cross and you better consider that.

Jesus is deliberately laying out the terms for discipleship and they are not soft, easy, comfortable terms. They are harsh. They are severe. And it is important that you count the cost, the cost of discipleship.

Then Jesus gives a couple of parables in which there is that emphasis of counting the cost.

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

For which of you, intends to build a tower ([Luk 14:28](#)),

This is probably one of those towers that they built out in the middle of their vineyards, which are so common even to the present day in that country.

The people generally lived in the cities, but they had their farms in the countries. During the spring, summer, and fall seasons they would move out of the cities and into these towers that were built out in the middle of their orchards, or vineyards. These towers had the living quarters in the first level, but then you can go up into the upper level, and from the tower you can look over and watch the vineyard to make sure that no one is coming in and ripping you off. They were just towers for the protection for the vineyards. So He is probably referring to one of these vineyard towers.

Which man of you, who intends to build a tower, doesn't sit down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all those that see it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and wasn't able to finish ([Luk 14:28-30](#)).

Count the cost. It is important. Don't just jump in. He is not really seeking to create a popular movement. He is seeking to thin the crowds of those that were following. Count the cost.

What king, going to make war against another king, doesn't sit down first, and consult whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends an ambassadors, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he has, he cannot be my disciple ([Luk 14:31-33](#)).

Now, you count the cost. Unless you are willing to forsake everything you can't be My disciple. Unless you are willing to take up your cross, you can't be My disciple. Unless you love Me supremely, you cannot be My disciple. The terms of discipleship are harsh. They are severe. And it is wrong when people tell you just accept Jesus and you are not going to have any more problems. Listen, many times when you accept Jesus your problems are just beginning. It is not easy. It is not going to be easy. The Lord doesn't say it is going to be easy. He said it is going to be tough and you better sit down first and count the cost. You better not get started in it if you can't finish it, or are not willing to finish it. You need to make an accounting here and determine whether or not you are really willing to pay the price to go all the way through, because unless you are willing to forsake everything, really, you can't be My disciple. These are heavy, hard words.

Then He said,

Salt is good: but if the salt have lost its tang, who will use it for seasoning? It is neither fit for the land, nor for the dunghill; but men will cast it out. He that has ears to hear, let him hear ([Luk 14:34-35](#)).

Commentary on Luke chapter 14, by Chuck Smith 9.4.22

In those days salt was used for three basic things. Salt was used, number one, as a preservative when they would butcher. They would roast the meat right away and the meat that they didn't roast they would salt because they didn't have refrigeration. Salt has an antiseptic type of an effect. It kills the bacteria on the surface of the meat and preserves the meat.

Salt was used as a seasoning to flavor the food, like we use salt today-add a little zing to the food, to the taste. Foods without salt are flat. Just a little salt really makes a difference. Every once in a while when we were kids, Mom would forget to put the salt in. Potatoes without salt, mashed potatoes are flat. It is amazing what a little salt will do for mashed potatoes. We are the salt. Salt is good. But if it has lost its savor it is not good.

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount talked about salt in an earlier part of His ministry. He said, "You are the salt of the earth" ([Matthew 5:13](#)). Again, talking about if the salt has lost its savor wherewith would it be salted, therefore it is good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under the foot of man. Salt is good if it is tangy. If it isn't, it is worthless.

The third purpose for salt was to put it on the path to kill the vegetation so that they would keep the paths clear from vegetation by just putting salt on it. The salt would destroy the vegetation. It was a weed killer.

You as a child of God should have a preserving effect in the society in which you live. Our rotten society testifies against the church. It bears witness against the church. But you should have sort of a zingy effect where ever you go. You should add zest and flavor because of your walk with Jesus Christ.

Salt has another capacity of making people thirsty. And you should be creating a thirst in people.