

An Invitation - Part 2 - Hinderances to Eating at the Banqueting Table

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of accepting God's invitation to His banquet while addressing the hindrances that prevent believers from fully engaging in spiritual fellowship and growth.

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Scripture: Luke 14:15

Topics: "Christian Life", "Humility", "Overcoming Worldly Idols"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. emphasizes the importance of recognizing and overcoming the hindrances that prevent us from fully participating in God's banquet table, which represents a deep relationship with Him. He calls for repentance from the worldly idols of pride, materialism, and self-preservation that distract us from our spiritual calling. The preacher urges believers to approach God with humility, acknowledging their need for His grace and the necessity of serving others selflessly without expecting rewards. He highlights the need for accountability, transparency, and vulnerability within the body of Christ to foster genuine fellowship and spiritual growth. Ultimately, Beach Jr. encourages the congregation to respond to God's invitation and to seek a deeper communion with Him and one another.

Transcript

Lord, from the wicked enticements of this age, Lord, deliver them, Lord. We pray, God, have mercy. Don't let them, Lord, follow the strange gods that this culture are worshipping, Lord, the gods of money, the gods of materialism, the gods of self and self-preservation and the god of pride and thinking that we're the most important person in the world and the god of selfish ambition where we think that the purpose of our existence is to fulfill our own lusts and our own desires.

Oh God, please, we beg You, Lord, for the sake of Your Son to preserve our children. And Lord, we ask that You'll forgive us for so many times modeling a lifestyle and an attitude that is less than holy in Your eyes. And then, Lord, we get upset with our children when in fact they're just imitating the worldly hearts that we have taught them.

Give us the courage, Lord, to repent and acknowledge our sin. Give us the courage, Lord, to be transparent and to be willing to see the areas of our life that need to be readjusted and to be corrected. Give us the strength and faith, Lord, to make changes.

Help us, Lord, to make changes, not to hear the Word and not be a doer of the Word. Deliver us from this snare, Lord, where we deceive ourselves. Now, Lord, we pray You'll just continue with the power of the Holy Spirit.

We acknowledge, Lord, that our sufficiency is in God and not in ourself. We acknowledge, oh God, that any glory would go to the Lord Jesus Christ. We tremble at the thought of ever wanting the creature to be glorified, Lord.

Any of us, Lord. We tremble at the thought of wanting to be bigger than the foot of the cross, Lord. We pray, God, You'll deliver us from these inherent tendencies to want to exalt ourself above our brother, above our sister, above our husband, above our wife.

Oh, God, help us to realize that You alone are the Exalted One in Heaven. You alone. We just pray, God, that You'll be patient with us, Lord.

We are a people of stubborn nature. We are a people, Lord, who go our own way. We are a people, Lord, who after hearing Your Word over and over again, seemingly, Lord, fall back into the sin of our own way and pride and arrogance.

And we pray, God, that You'll be merciful, but yet firm, Lord. And chasten us, Lord. And correct us, Lord.

And scourge us that we might be partakers of Your holiness, Lord. We just look to You, Lord. We look to Your sovereign Spirit who is reigning in our midst here, revealing the things of Christ to us.

We love You and praise You, Father. In Jesus' mighty name. I would invite you, if you would please, to turn your Bibles to Luke 14.

I encourage you, if you didn't get the tape last week, to get it. I believe it's called An Invitation. Gary's not here.

This is going to be part two. Last week we received a clarion call from the Holy Spirit. A clarion call from the Holy Spirit who is speaking this Word not only to us, but He's speaking this Word throughout the entire body of Christ.

Everywhere. There is no exemption. There is no place that is exempt.

Wherever there is the slightest resemblance of the true candlestick, the true testimony of the Lord, the true presence of the Lord, wherever there's a gathering of believers, whether it is 200 or 2,000 or 22,000, it doesn't matter. Wherever there is the resemblance of a true testimony of the Lord, the Holy Spirit has been faithfully sent from God the Father. And He's bringing this message as the true servant of the Lord, the true servant of God, the Holy Spirit is the faithful servant.

And He's bringing this message. The banquet table is ready. The banquet table is ready.

But time after time after time, when the Holy Spirit knocks at our heart and we sense, as we did this morning and as we have been for many, many months and we do when we're in our homes, we sense the Lord speaking to us. And whether we intentionally do it or not, whether it is a conscious thing or not, we find ourselves giving the Lord excuses as to why we cannot accept His invitation to follow Him, to receive His wealth, to lose our life, to lose our way, to lose our nature as Colette was talking about. Oftentimes, our own device is our set ways.

We're so set. And the Lord loves us so much, but He must break us. He must break us.

We must be broken vessels. You remember the way Gideon won the battle. Three hundred men.

Vessels of clay. And inside those vessels of clay were candles. And it wasn't until the vessels of clay were broken that the brightness of the candle shone forth and that was the way in which God secured the victory for Gideon and his army against the enemy.

And likewise, brothers and sisters, the Bible says in Corinthians that we have this treasure in earthen vessels. There is a treasure if you belong to Christ, if you are a believer. Dear brother, dear sister, Christ lives in you.

Christ is with you. But there's very little that the Lord can get out of your life and out of my life if my vessel, my outer vessel, is hard and unbroken. Because when people touch me, they're not going to touch the treasure.

They're going to touch the vessel, the nature, the attitudes, the strong opinions, the complaining spirit, the human wisdom, the human judgment, the human understanding, the nature. And every one of us have peculiar things in our nature that must be broken before the fullness of the light of Christ can have the liberty to shine forth and to touch people. And so we find that last week we heard the call of the Spirit of God telling us that a great supper has been prepared.

That was chapter 14, verses 15 through 24. And yet each one began to make excuses. They began to make excuses.

They began to say, oh, could you excuse me from this great supper? Listen, brothers and sisters, can you imagine such a thing? Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the One Who always was, had no beginning, will never have an end. Can you imagine the mystery of Almighty God creating human beings like you and I and then personally inviting us to a banquet, Norman, a banquet, where He Himself is going to feed us with heavenly food, with spiritual wealth and treasures, and He has His servant the Holy Spirit come and deposit these treasures into our spirit and give us glimpses of the wealth and the beauty and the fullness of the life that is lived unto God? Can you imagine? Can you imagine how the Holy Spirit can invite us to come and how we can actually make an excuse? Oh, the depths of sin. The depths of the rebellion within the heart of man.

The depths of our selfishness. I mean, it's likely that none of us would even think twice about rejecting an invitation from a high dignitary to go out to lunch. We would probably be flattered.

We would probably be flattered and call some of our friends and say, oh, guess who invited me? Guess who invited me? So-and-so invited me to lunch. And then us guys would tell our wives, please, clean my clothes. Could you iron that shirt? Could you shine my shoes? Oh, we wouldn't think twice of rejecting an invitation from a dignitary.

But brothers and sisters, what about the invitation from Almighty God that's going forth? What are we doing with it? That was last week. Listen closely. The whole topic of the Great Supper started in verse 1 of chapter 14.

Last week was an invitation. Beware of making excuses. Now, we're going to look at verses 1-14.

And we're going to see how... Listen. Listen carefully. How to approach the banqueting table.

How to approach the banqueting table. Brothers and sisters, there is a banqueting table that is prepared for us. Our Father in Heaven, whom Abraham was a type of, is a wealthy man full of treasure.

Spiritual wealth, spiritual treasure. All the treasures are hid in Christ Jesus. He wants to fill our lives with treasure.

Listen, He wants to wean the church from a taste for this world. And He wants to put in us a taste for the spiritual world that's in Christ Jesus. He wants us to see that there is no loss in losing everything for the sake of following Christ.

He wants us to see that there is no loss in losing our own life if in fact we are gaining Him. He wants to deliver us from that perspective of perceiving that loss means sorrow. And in order for Him to do this, He brings a wonderful lesson here.

So I want us to listen carefully. I want us to ask the Holy Spirit to speak to us. Brothers and sisters, ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

If you have been invited by the Holy Spirit, either today or you've been invited in the past, and you know that God has called you and has spoken to you time and time again and is inviting you to the banquet feast where your life becomes an offering to God and where you are after God, your heart is after Him, you desire to find full satisfaction in Him alone. You desire to forsake all the idols of this world. You desire to be free from anything that would possess you.

Perhaps not outwardly being free from possessions. That may or may not be a requirement. But God help us if we ever tell God that He can't do it.

Don't put your hand on anything God has given you. It's not yours. Remember that.

The big problem in the body today is the problem of ownership. We have supposed that the things that we have are ours. They're not yours.

They belong to God. What happened to the Word of God? The Lord owns a cattle on a thousand hills. The Lord is the Creator of heaven and earth.

The Lord owns the fullness of the earth. There is nothing that you currently possess that is actually yours. But why do we hold as if it is ours? Because our minds need to be washed.

And so, maybe not outwardly, but brothers and sisters, the call of the Spirit of God to the Bride of Christ is this. Nothing, nothing can possess you. You may have possessions.

You may not have possessions. You may have a lot. You may have a little.

It ought not to matter to us. What ought to matter is that our hearts ought to be so broken before God that we ought to say, Oh dear God, may it be that nothing possesses me but a love and a passion and a desire for You and You alone. Oh God, deliver this heart from grasping anything of earth.

Because nothing can possess me but God. We were created to be possessed by God and to possess God alone. That's why we were created.

That's why God created the church and placed it on the earth so that the church could demonstrate to the world what it is to be a redeemed people in whom God is the King. And oh how we have fallen from this testimony. And now we want acceptance from the world.

We want approval from the world. We want to act like the world. We want to laugh at the things the world laughs at when we ought to be weeping.

We want the same entertainment as the world. God delivers us out of the world that we might be a peculiar people, a peculiar treasure. That we might show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

God wants us to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. But it's impossible. It's impossible to be free from the entanglements and allurements of the world if God is not our satisfaction and pleasure.

And this is why in fact Christianity has created a system of religion that enables the believer to profess I've left the world and then they get the whole world back in their Christian life. Same idols. Same idols, but now it's a different name.

It's Christian now. It's Christian. Chapter 14.

How to come to the banquet table. How to come to the banquet table. And it came to pass as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread.

Now notice the phrase, eat bread. Jesus is going to take this whole scenario of eating bread in the house of a Pharisee and He's going to do what He does so many times. He's going to take what He's doing and He's going to bring it into another realm.

He's going to bring it into a spiritual realm. And that's what He's doing right now. And the fullness of this is seen in verse number 15.

And then Jesus takes it and runs with it. But watch now. There's people eating bread on the Sabbath.

If we're going to sit at the table that is spread before us and feast on the Word of God, feast on the truth that is in the Word of God that the Holy Spirit can bring to us, if we're going to enjoy love feasts one with another, not carnal love feasts, but spiritual love feasts, at which time we get together one with another in homes and we wait on the Lord and we let the Holy Spirit reveal the treasure and the wealth and the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ one to another. Listen, listen. I want to take a detour for a second.

I want to take a detour. Please listen. We're going to go back here.

The Lord is grieved. The Lord is very grieved as He looks at the church because there's not a real intense desire within the hearts of believers to gather together one with another. Now, we're not talking about a setting where there's a religious agenda.

We're talking about the simple joy of making time where you are before the Lord and God knits your hearts to a few other believers and you often gather together with anticipation and expectation that as you gather together in the name of the Lord, He will move in your midst. He will speak to you. Words of encouragement.

Words of correction. Words of instruction. The whole reality of the joy and anticipation of gathering together with a few like-minded believers is fizzling out of the minds of believers because they're too busy.

They're too busy. They don't have time. That's neglecting the house of God.

How is the house of God built up? The house of God is built up as Christ has communicated one to another through living members. We are all ministers. Yes, there's different calls.

Are all apostles? No. Are all prophets? No. Are all pastor-teachers? No.

But we're all ministers of the new covenant. That is, we are vessels in whom the ministry of life should be flowing. Brothers and sisters, there is a blessing.

There is a blessing that comes that cannot come any other way when believers have been stirred by God and respond to God and make time to gather with other believers. Not talking about a religious gathering where there's an agenda, where there's programs. I'm talking about a pure, simple love feast.

Think about it. Think about it. You've got seven days in a week.

You've got seven nights. Everyone's got a few hours at night where they chill. What do you do? Play.

That's what most people do. They play games. And the house of God is neglected.

The house of God is neglected because we're playing games. Not concerned about the building of the house. About imparting Christ to our brother and letting what our brother or sister has impart his life to us.

And the Lord's grieved. So what do you do? Do you make a law? Do you legislate it? Do you get together and say, all right, now this is what we've got to do now. It won't work.

It won't work. We've got to keep weeping and praying until we wake up and see what we're missing. Why do you think Paul says in Ephesians, redeem the time? What does it mean to redeem the time? Buy it back.

The word redeem means to purchase. Buy it back. Listen, your time.

Everyone has been given the same amount of time. But you know what we as Christians need to do? We need to buy it back and give it to the Lord. We take our time and we use it for who? Ourselves.

Listen, brothers and sisters, it's time to take the pampers off. It's time to take the bottle out of the mouth. It's time to grow up.

The house of God is lying in ruin. And the answer is not for a charismatic leader to arise and say, okay now, brothers and sisters, this is the plan. This is what we're going to do.

This is how we're going to build the church and put a bunch of things together. Now, I want some hands here. Who's going to volunteer to do this and that and get things moving? That's not the answer in the heart of the Lord.

The answer is for every individual member of the body of Christ to recognize they are called with responsibility before God. You know what a true elder is in the midst of the body of Christ? Someone whose heart is broken because the house of God lies in ruin. Not somebody who has got a plan and to try

and sell their plan to people.

That's not what an elder is. Someone who's got an agenda for the body of Christ, that's not an elder. Someone who wants your money, that's not an elder.

An elder is someone who is broken because they've touched the heart of Christ and they see the house of God in ruin and their heart is broken and they pray, Oh God, Oh God, Oh God, help us together to lay aside our own desires, our own ways. Help us to take the time we do have and dedicate it to You and begin to pray and travail so that there's ministry within the body. It becomes a priority.

A priority. Listen, there's great lack in our life because we never receive from anyone. We're islands to ourselves.

See? We're islands to ourselves. Every home should be a church. Every home should be experiencing body life.

Every home. You don't have to have hundreds of people over. Just a few.

But you remember months and months ago there's three words that come with this. People are afraid of these words. Accountability, transparency, and vulnerability.

See, that's what happens when you say yes to the call of the Spirit. Suddenly you become accountable to God. Suddenly you become accountable to your brothers and sisters.

Because if you know the Lord wants you to gather on Tuesday and you have a bad attitude, what are you going to do? Say you had a fight with your wife. But you know the brothers want to get together on Tuesday. What are you going to do? Get in your car and take off? That's why the house of God is in ruin.

Don't have time. See? Vulnerability. We have to become vulnerable.

And transparent. We have to be transparent. These are the qualities necessary in our heart in order for the house of God to be built.

What does it mean for the house of God to be built? Does it mean that numbers are added? No. No, it's not that at all. It's not numerical.

The house of God is built as Christ increases in our lives. As the virtues and perfections of Jesus Christ are more and more evident in our life individually and as we come together. That's the building of the house of God.

The building of the house of God. Till we all what? Ephesians 4, till we all what? Come to the unity of faith, to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, a spiritual man. Until we all come together to the place where the full manhood of Jesus Christ is being seen corporately through the body of Christ.

That's not going to happen through magic. That's not going to just happen through osmosis. Nor is it going to happen through charismatic leaders taking captive groups of people and laying out an agenda for their life.

And building kingdoms. That's not how it's going to happen. It's going to happen when all the stones in the body realize their responsibility before God and their calling.

And hear the call of God to take up the cross and die to self. And die to living lives like the world. And being in love with Jesus and full of the Holy Ghost.

And just pouring our lives out one for another. And the house of God is going to be built then. And true ministry.

Ministry. The ministry called in the church to minister to the church. True ministry.

The ministry that builds up the church. The apostolic ministry. The prophetic ministry.

The pastor-teacher ministry. True ministry. Will never take captive the people of God.

They will never set an agenda for the people of God. But they will do nothing but what the servant did. Who was sent, Eliezer, from Abraham to find Rebekah.

What did he do? He spoke of nothing but Abraham. And what did he give Rebekah? Did he sit down with Rebekah and have a little private conversation with her? Hey, I want you to get to know me. I'm really a nice guy.

Hey, Rebekah, you've got beautiful eyes. He didn't want himself to be seen or heard. All he did was give them the treasures that belonged to who? His master, Norman.

And a true ministry raised up by God will give God's people nothing but the treasure of Christ. Plus nothing. They will not build a kingdom for themselves.

They won't seek to create a codependent relationship. They will hide behind the cross and faithfully minister the Word of God and tell the truth. And the effects will be God's people will become hungry for more of Jesus.

Hungry for God's Word. That's the detour. Now let's get back on.

He's at a Pharisee's house. And behold, there was a certain man before him which had dropsy. He was paralyzed.

He was a paralytic. And Jesus answering spoke unto the lawyers and the Pharisees saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they held their peace. And He took him and healed him and let him go.

Listen carefully. And answering them saying, Which of you shall have a donkey or an ox fallen into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things. Now listen, Jesus is starting to address heart issues.

He's eating bread. And now what He's doing is He's teaching them He's teaching them the requirements the heart requirements necessary if we're to sit at the banqueting table of the Lord. Now examine yourself.

Examine yourself now. Say, Lord, help me. Because listen, brothers and sisters, you can get an invitation to this banqueting table and we've already learned what the banqueting table is.

It's feasting on Jesus and His Word. It's being radical for Him. Not lukewarm.

Not a casual Christian. But radical. A passionate lover for Christ.

First thing He deals with is the spirit of Phariseeism and religion. Phariseeism and religion. Phariseeism and religion has to do with creating rules and regulations that give the appearance that one is holy or that one is close to God.

But they are void of a true relationship with God. And they are contrary to the Word of God. I'll say that again.

If you're going to come to the banqueting table and feast on the Word of God and feast in the presence of Jesus Christ and enjoy the love feasts that we ought to be enjoying one with another on a daily basis, the spirit of religion and Phariseeism must be uprooted out of our life. Following rules and regulations that give you the appearance of being a holy spiritual person. Any root of that is an enemy to God and makes you unable to feast at the banqueting table of the Lord.

The Lord doesn't entertain Pharisees. The Lord's table has nothing for a Pharisaic religious spirit. What do you do to try to impress your friends? What do you do to try to impress yourself, your husband, your wife, your children? What goes on? What kind of rules and regulations are you following as substitutes for a passionate relationship with Jesus Christ? They're going to have to be put aside.

Because they will keep you from hearing the Word of the Lord. They'll keep you from fellowship and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ. Next, verse number 7. And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden.

See what he's doing here? He's speaking parables now. Listen, a parable is an earthly story communicating heavenly truth. Say that again.

A parable is an earthly story which communicates heavenly truth. Jesus is a master teacher, isn't He? Now here's the second issue. The first is the heart of a Pharisee has to be taken out of us.

Secondly, He created a parable here when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms, saying unto them, When you are bidden to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than you be bidden. And he that bade thee and him come and say to you, Give this man place. And you begin with shame to take the lowest room.

But when you are bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room. Does this sound like Rebecca? Does this sound like Rebecca in the story that Colette was sharing? When Eleazar came and asked for a drink of water, what did she say? Oh sir, I not only will give you water, but I'll water your camels. I'll take the lower seat.

I'll serve you. Brothers and sisters, Jesus here is emphatically speaking to us. And I pray that we have ears to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying.

There will be none who will sit at the banqueting table of Christ and feast on His Word and feast in His presence or feast at love feasts and know the joy of being able to gather with other believers and have the Lord move and have hearts burn because the Lord is revealing Himself. There will be none who will sit at His table who have any hint of wanting a higher place. Any hint of wanting a higher place than your brother or your sister.

Any hint of feeling that you're deserving of something better than, something greater than a mere servant. Every husband here needs to realize that he is a servant. Every wife here is a servant.

Every teenager here is a servant. We are called to be servants. And Jesus had taken note, listen, He had taken note how those who were invited to the banquet were looking for what? Places of importance.

Do you know why we get angry in our real lives? Come on, let's come back down where we live. Do you know why we get angry at things? Because the root of it is we feel that we don't deserve what is happening. The root of that is we're better than this.

But servants aren't deserving of any rights. This is where marriage problems come. All the couples that I've ever talked to over the years, and there's been quite many of them, the root cause of all the conflicts that have been communicated, sometimes resulting in divorce, sometimes resulting in people living together because they just can't accept the fact that divorce is an alternative.

But they live together, but they're really not together. They just accept mutual existence one with another. One does his thing, she does her thing, and they try and avoid each other as much as possible.

Some marriages are in that condition. Christian marriages. There's no healing.

There's no unity of spirit. There's no passionate love. And people say, why, why, why? The root cause of this is because somebody is in that marriage looking for a higher place.

Someone is looking for a higher place. Someone doesn't feel they deserve to be low. Someone feels they don't deserve.

And that becomes a stumbling block. When we feel that we deserve something better, we get into conflict because we're asserting rights then. Rights.

And this is inherent within the human heart. Without the grace of God, we get all mad, don't we? We get furious. We can let loose the moment we begin to see ourselves as something better than a servant.

Is anybody hearing? You want to sit at the banqueting table and feast on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you want to know what it is to have meaningful fellowship with other believers? Know what it is to come together and enjoy a love feast? Know what it is to begin to experience the input of other believers in your life? Pray God deliver you from a Pharisee spirit. Number two, pray that God deliver you from pride, wanting to exalt yourself. Listen, the fear of being vulnerable, transparent, or accountable is rooted in what? Pride.

I don't want pride to see the way I really am. Oh, so what I'm basically saying is I want to wear a mask. I want to be a hypocrite.

Is that what a hypocrite is? An actor. What's the root of that? Pride. I want to be something better than I really am.

See, what I really am is a horrible sinner apart from the grace of God. And if I am a good man and I am able to love my wife and I am able to serve my brothers and sisters, and it's above reproach, it's only because the Lord's got a place in my life. It's the Lord.

But if I step out from that place of abiding and get cocky and haughty and think for some reason now I've got it together, watch out, watch out, I'm going to fall as fast as I would if I jumped off a building. See? So that's who I really am. Are you trying to portray anything differently to your brothers and sisters? If so, I smell a Pharisee.

And Pharisees can't go to the table. But you know what? Pharisees have a really good religion. Don't they? Pharisees can put together a religion, Norman, and it looks good.

But you know what it is? An abomination to God. Okay. Verse 10.

But when you are bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room. Take what? Take the place of a servant. Now listen.

What is it that is the true test to reveal what's in our heart? Life. What we're going through. Just like Colette was saying.

It's not what you look like when you come here. Everyone's got on their best smile. It's just the nature of a public gathering.

You know, I might be walking out the door and Alan's walking. I say, go ahead, brother. Oh, that looks so good, doesn't it? What am I doing at home? Get out of my seat.

That's where I sit. Get away from me. So what about... Oh, Alan, go ahead, brother.

What's that? That's what it is. It's phony. It's being a phony.

Not that I couldn't be gracious to Alan. But what it is, is I've let the Lord... See, this is something that I remember preaching on years and years ago. Selective crosses.

Remember that? That brought a lot of trouble in our life. That word from the Lord. Selective crosses.

We choose where we're going to let the Lord establish His reign. Certain areas of our life. Then other areas of our life, the Lord doesn't have any part.

We select. Everybody wants the Lord to reign when they're in public. So they learn how to put on their good smile.

They're gracious to their wife in public. Oh, come on, sweetheart. Then we're home.

What are you doing? Get out of my face, you! Usually it's the home where the Lord is least welcome. And you know why? Because we bought into the lie. Just like the Gentiles.

What is the home to the Gentile? It's the place where they set up their shrine, worship their gods, and they sit as king. But what should the home of the believer be? The church! Thank you, brother! It should be the church! And who reigns in the church? Who said Christ? That's the right answer. That's it.

See? But you see how much we're like the Gentiles. It's my home. I do my thing.

And that's why there's great lack. Let me tell you, you'll never become the person God wants you to be all by your little lonesome self. There's a place to seek the Lord.

There's a place to pray and set yourself aside and hear God for yourself. But the other side of the coin is you need the input of the church in your life. Part of that is a gathering like this where the Word of the Lord is preached and taught.

This is an equipping time and it's essential for the church. But this is not all of it. Equally, equally, equally we need the input of our brothers and sisters on a daily basis.

And those who have set their homes up as their castle very seldomly have the grace in their life that comes when people become vulnerable and transparent to other believers. You could tell the difference. Oh, they might hear God from time to time.

Lone rangers. They might have a degree of being spiritual but there's a lack of grace in their life. It's a grace that can only come when we open our homes and our hearts and we go home and we cast out the devil.

We cast out the kingdom mentality. This is my house. Bless God.

I do what I want in my house. We teach our kids that horrible lie. And then we wonder why from generation to generation the lie of religion is passed down.

We wonder why. Because we pass it down to our kids. We wonder how many people want to buy a home with the motive.

With the motive. Oh, God. That I might have a place where believers can come and I can lay my life down.

Or, we start out that way. That's our motive to begin with and then six months later, what happens? It's gone. Everything is different than what you planned.

You know, that's the scenario oftentimes with the desire for home businesses. I've talked to people over the years. Oh, I can't stand going to work.

I don't have any time for the Lord. Or I don't have any time for the church. If I can only work at home.

And they pray, oh God, oh God. And the Lord gives them the desire. And then what happens? No time.

Less. What's that? They brought the work home. That's the last thing you want to do, right? No, wait.

Can you hear this? Do you understand the spirit of this? This isn't law. This isn't condemnation. This is life.

Do you see? Do you see what happens here? See why we have to be careful? Some of us here, some of us here have wanted something. And the Lord has given it to us. And our original desire for it was commendable in the eyes of the Lord.

But we've let it slip. We've let it slip. See? So we have to be careful.

We have to guard against these things. Okay, let's move on. I hope we're hearing the Holy Spirit.

Very clear, very clear word from the Lord these past several weeks. The Lord is after us. Number one, Phariseeism.

Relationship. Religion without relationship. Outward holiness.

God's against it. And you'll not sit at His banqueting table. This book will be a dead book to you if you've got a heart of a Pharisee.

Number two, the heart of an arrogant man wanting to be something better than just a mere servant. You'll never sit at the table of the Lord and feast from His Word. You'll never enjoy real fellowship.

Alright, next. Now, let's finish this off. Verse 11.

Whoever exalts himself... That word exalt is in the present tense. That is, whoever keeps exalting himself. Whoever lives a life demanding that they are something better than a servant, you're going to be humbled.

And don't think God can't do it. God has a way of humbling, doesn't He? He knows how to bring us down, doesn't He? Oh, He knows how. If you don't think so, then you just read the story of Nebuchadnezzar.

Huh? He was a man... Oh, look at the great kingdom God's given me. Look at what I've done. And God humbled him for seven years.

He walked around like a dog. He barked. His fingernails grew a foot long.

And he lost his mind. And really what God showed him was the true nature of his wisdom. That's his best right there.

That's what you and I are without the grace of God. Alright. Number 12, 13, and 14.

This is a stumbling block in the body of Christ. And that's why there's a famine of the true word of God. There's a famine.

There's no love feast going on because of this next section here. Oh, Jesus is such a great teacher. He's got such beautiful things in his word.

Then he said also to them that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors. Now, the key is this next verse. Listen.

Lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the lame, and the blind, and thou shalt be blessed. Here it is.

Here it is. For they cannot reward thee. Number three.

Oh, God, help us. Motive in our service toward the Lord and toward one other. If the motive, listen carefully.

If the motive of our service is this. I serve my brother and now he owes me something. We cannot come to the banqueting table of the Lord.

That kind of service is not love. Because love does not what? Seek its own. Love does not serve with the motive of now you owe me.

Love pours out and out and out and out with no desire for reward. Again, every single marriage that can get a hold of this would be healed of all the horrible things that go on in marriages. Why are there so many problems in marriages? Because we can't serve selflessly.

There's got to be this idea of you owe me this. You owe me this. You owe me this.

How about the body of Christ? So many broken relationships. Why are there so many broken relationships in the body of Christ? Because when we seek to reach out to someone, we feel that they're in debt to us. And if they don't recompense, if they don't reward us, if they don't somehow acknowledge or do something nice for us, we get mad.

We close our heart to them. And there's a breach. Why? Because our motive has to be cleansed.

Ask yourself this question as we begin to close. Ask yourself this question. Where has the Lord shown you that your service toward him or your service toward someone else is connected to a motive in your heart where you expect some kind of a reward? Well, guess what? As long as that is there, you're going to find it hard to come to the banqueting table of the Lord.

Verse 14, the latter part. When we get to the place where God cleanses our motive, and we can serve him and one another without expecting to be repaid, here's what our hopes are set on then. For thou shalt be rewarded at the resurrection of the just.

There's our reward, brothers and sisters. The resurrection of the just. Let's bow our hearts if we could, please.

Father, we thank you for the table that you have spread before us. We thank you for calling us. We thank you, Lord, for making us see so clearly that you have great treasures and wealth for us in your Son.

And now, Lord, we pray that you will very firmly and lovingly deal with us and free us from all these things that hinder us from coming to your banquet. Free us from the Pharisee spirit. Free us from pride and thinking that we're deserving of something more than just being a servant.

And free us, O God, from the motive of wanting a reward for what we do on earth. God, please keep us from making excuses. Excuses, excuses, excuses.

Help us to surrender our life to you today and be changed by your power. Okay, the healing of the Lord is present. As we sing this one song, I want to just make an invitation.

Anyone here, you've heard the Lord. He has spoken to you. And you want Him to touch you and heal you and do something in your life that only He can do.

I want to invite you right now in your seat to simply cry out to Him and say, Jesus, here I am. Do the work that you must do. If you want special prayer, come forward and we'll get together and pray with you as we sing this song.

Father, we look to You today. Do the work in our hearts. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit.

I pray, Lord, for every person here who in their heart, just now, in the privacy of their own heart, Lord, they cried out to You and they said, Lord, You've spoken to me through Your Word and I need help. I pray for those people today, Lord, by the power of the Holy Spirit and the name of Jesus, You would create faith in their heart. Enable them to believe that You have heard their cry and that You will answer their prayer in Your timing.

Help them, Lord, not to get discouraged or give up. Help them, Lord, not to become despondent, but to patiently wait for Your timing. That You'll make all things new.

That the winter months in the Spirit will pass and the day of spring will come and the sound of birds will be heard once again and the smell of the beautiful spring flowers will once again flood your life. It will happen. Just be patient and wait.

God will do it. He loves you with an everlasting love. He said, I'll never leave you.

I'll never forsake you. Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. That's what He's saying to someone here today.

And He loves you. God bless you. We have to move on.

Unfortunately, we're under time constraint, but God be with you. God bless you. And let's lay hold of what the Lord is doing and believe Him to do it.

Jesus' love. Amen. Oh, Lord, I receive.

Receive. Beautiful.

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