

The Second Coming 06 the Great Supper

by Stan Ford

The sermon emphasizes the importance of coming to Christ and enjoying the fellowship of God, and it warns against making excuses to avoid this invitation.

Duration: 42:48

Scripture: Luke 14:11-24, Luke 14:26-27, Luke 14:33

Topics: "Humility", "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher reads from Luke chapter 14 in the Gospel of Luke. He discusses the parable of a man who gave a feast and invited guests to come. The parable teaches about humility and the importance of not seeking the best seats but being willing to be moved to a lower position. The preacher emphasizes that this parable is a picture of a future day when Jesus will judge and recompense people. He concludes the sermon by inviting anyone who wants to come to Jesus and trust Him for salvation to come forward and pray.

Transcript

Good evening here in America. I was wondering how many we would have, but you've come, and thank you for coming. It's my chance you're here for the first time.

You know, I almost feel like staying wherever you've been, but we're glad to see you. Especially glad to see you. There was just one omission concerning tomorrow.

Our good chairman, or notice-giver-outer, told us that there was no meeting tomorrow. But you will not forget that at Harrisburg Gospel Center at 8 o'clock is maybe the most important meeting of the week. It's Saturday morning prayer meeting.

They've been having it for such a long while, and when I flew in last Saturday morning, I was just able to get there in time for it. So, prayer breakfast, 8 o'clock, tomorrow morning, Harrisburg Gospel Center. And then, one other thing.

Ever since I've been here, I believe almost every evening, apart from the first evening when I didn't really feel like talking to anyone, but nevertheless, apart from almost the first evening, every evening someone said to me, Mr. Forley, are you going to give us your testimony? Are you going to tell us how you met the Lord? Well, I've been praying about it, and thinking about it, and if the Lord will, on Sunday evening, I won't

be forgetting that the Lord's coming back. But, I'd like to share with you on Sunday evening how we met Jesus Christ, and maybe just a little of what he has come to mean to us. I won't be able to share much of it, but I'll share a little of it with you anyway.

Tonight, I want to read a verse or two in the 14th chapter of the Gospel of Luke. Luke, chapter 14, if we may please. As we read it, I trust we will not forget what we have been saying during the past evening.

Luke, chapter 14. If the good man that's operating the mic would please take note that those P's and S's are singing again. Thank you.

He's got a little knob at the back, you see, and he turns the down factor, cuts the thing that's coming back and hitting me. Isn't it grand? After a week, we know how to work it. I wish we'd known how to work it in the first place.

That's my idea, but there we are. Luke, chapter 14, if we may please. And, I would like to commence reading a little way down in the chapter.

I would like to commence reading, please, in verse 15. 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. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper and paid many, and sent his servants at suppertime to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of bread, and I must need go and see it. I pray thee, have me excused.

And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee, 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 hence quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the haughts, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that thy house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those which were bitten shall taste of my supper. May the Lord just add his blessing to the reading of his words.

Would you join me in prayer just for one moment? Dear Lord, as we bow our hearts before thee, we're not unmindful of the fact that we need thee. We pray that the Spirit himself may take of the things of Christ tonight, and reveal them to every one of us. For Jesus' sake, Amen.

The parables of the Lord Jesus are, as we said last evening, but pictures of some great truth that would have happened, or will yet happen. You will remember that in the fourteenth chapter of Luke, the Lord has told a parable of a man who gave a feast, of someone that came in for the feast, and then was compelled by the giver of the feast to come up higher, for he had taken a backward place in the feast. The one who, first of all, had sat in the front, had to be told to go to the back.

And we were reminded that this feast, this parable, was but a parable of a day yet to come. And in the previous verse, from which we started this evening, we read these words, For thou shalt be recompensed

in the resurrection of the just. Isn't this remarkable? That, as in the past evenings, we've been looking forward to the day that we believe will shortly come, when He whose right it is to come will come, and will not parry, we have been thinking of many aspects of that.

I have taken you in one verse and another through the Word of God to point out to you some of the wonderful things that will shortly come to pass. And we have thought, indeed, of that great day when there shall be the resurrection of the just. We have thought of that awful day when shall be the resurrection of the damned.

But tonight, with the thought of the resurrection of the just before us, the Lord heard someone who turned to Him and said, How blessed it is to eat bread in the kingdom! O Lord, what a wonderful thing it is in that day of the resurrection of the just to enter in for the glory that you have for men and women! Isn't it remarkable that the Lord turned on this man and said, Just a moment, just a moment. What are you talking about the future for? What are you talking about the resurrection of the just for? What are you talking about eating bread in the kingdom for? Don't you realise that things are ready now? Why, come for all things are now ready! And it is this tonight that I want to share with you. I don't want tonight to talk just about the future.

I don't want men and women to leave this service saying, Well, it may be tomorrow, it may be five years' time, it may be a hundred years' time. I want you to realise that there's something for you tonight. Tonight! Come for all things are now ready! As I look at the parable that we have read, it seems to me that it falls into four sections.

First of all, we're told about a peace. A certain man made a grave cover. We're told about a peace.

But then we're told not just about a peace, but we're told about folly, about men that were bidden to come to the peace, and with one consent they began to make an excuse. All the folly of men and women, who will not hearken to what God has to say, and will turn their back on the invitation that Jesus gives. But then I want to remind you, not just of a peace, and not just of folly, but I want to remind you of people.

People, men and women. Why, when those that were bidden came not, the Lord Jesus told His disciples to go out into the highways and hedges and find the poor and the lame, the half and the blind, the people's hope. The hope that you and I gaze upon and say, oh, that poor man, that poor woman.

Jesus looked at them, and He didn't call them poor. He said to His disciples, you go and tell them to come, to come to my peace. There's a place for them.

But if I look indeed at the peace, and I consider the folly, if I gaze for a moment at the people, I am not unmindful that there was a famine. Although the peace was there, the Lord Jesus said those who in the first place were bidden to come and refused to come, there will be no peace for them, for He dared say that there would be, there would be a famine. For I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my suffering.

Firstly, a peace. You know, I'm always amazed how the Word of God likens the things of God to the thing that you and I enjoy so much, a peace. He said that this man gave a peace, and what a peace it was, He said, and He said unto them, a great supper.

A great supper. I wonder if I could speak to the ladies here just for a moment. If you were going to give a great supper, would I not be right in saying this? There would be three things that would mark it.

The first thing that would mark your great supper would be the preparation you put into preparing it. The second thing, if it was a great supper, would not just be the preparation, but the price you pay for the things that would be set before your friends. And I think all of you will agree with me that it would not just be the preparation, it would not just be the price, but oh, it would be the people that you would invite to a great supper.

You would think of your friends, maybe you would think of some that were in need, and you would say, come, come, for all things are ready. I say, do you honestly believe that God would do less than you? Why, when you think of the preparation that God has placed into what we call the gospel feast, that men and women may sit with him at his table, that men and women may know his company, his fellowship, and isn't that what a feast is all about? I went out with friends this evening for supper. It was a good supper.

But I would like to say this. See, nothing wrong with a supper, it was an excellent supper, but the thing that made it for me tonight was the friends that surrounded that table. But we were there with friends, and you could have placed the finest supper in the world before me, but if I had no friends to share it with me, it wouldn't be much of a supper.

Oh, I have a God, blessed be his name, and what a supper he has prepared. This gospel feast, that men and women might enjoy his company, and he might enjoy their company. And you know where that preparation began? My Bible tells me of the Lord Jesus, that he was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world.

Oh, please, please, don't come to me afterwards and ask me to explain that. I can't. I can't.

I only know this. God looked down the avenue of time and saw you, sir, saw you, madam, saw me. And God, knowing all about us, made a preparation that we might enjoy his fellowship in time and his presence in eternity.

Oh, what preparation! What price! What price! I've been in your lovely land now about five weeks. I believe I'm right in saying that I wasn't here two or three days before I got the letter from Mary, my wife. Oh no, it was a little longer.

It takes about six days to get a letter from England now. I don't know if it's your post or ours, but mine's a bit slower. I only know this, that it was the first letter I had from home.

And almost the first question Mary asked me, and the letter was full of questions, almost the first question she asked was, are things dearer there than here? Isn't it remarkable how we're always looking at time? You know, I was away in a place just outside of Liverpool a few weeks ago. I went into the post office. There were a number of ladies, elderly ladies, in a queue, waiting to get their pensions.

You know, they pay pensions in my country through the post office. There they were, waiting for their pensions. And suddenly, it began to pour with rain.

You know, the sort of rain you'd like here now, that we get every day. Nevertheless, it began to pour with rain. Suddenly, the conversation changed, and they started to grumble about the rain.

I couldn't stand it yet. I looked at them, and I said, you will excuse me, ladies. I've been standing here five minutes listening to your conversation.

And for five minutes, you've been complaining about everything going up. Butter's gone up, and flour's gone up, and eggs gone up. And I say now, bless my soul, the rain's coming down, and you're complaining about that.

You know, isn't it remarkable how folk have complained about everything? I say, what does that have to do with a sermon? I can't remember. But there it was. There it was.

I only know this. Oh yes, we were talking about the prices of things. To have at least a day in must cost an immense amount.

I'm sure it does. But friends, all friends, when I think of this gospel, the price, I'll tell you what it costs. It costs God His Son.

That's what it costs. My Bible tells me, God, soul of the world, that He gave His only begotten Son. He cost the Lord Jesus.

He went to tell His cost, and gave His life for us. That's what it costs. But if this piece tells us of preparation, and this piece tells us of a price, this piece tells us of a people, the Lord said, why the invitation was given out, and it says, come, for all things are now ready.

Now ready. Oh, what an invitation. Isn't it grand we don't need to wait one moment longer to enter into the good things God has for us.

They're ready now, and the invitation is given. Now. Now.

Just this very text. Now. But if there is a piece, they're calling.

For those that were bidden with one consent, they began to make excuse. Now, I would like just to emphasize that for a moment. It always touches me when I read it.

In other words, these people that were bidden to come to the piece, didn't want to come and they told lies. There was no excuse. With one consent, they began to make excuse.

You see, one of them said to the other one, listen, what are you going to say, I better not say the same thing as you. What are you going to say? Oh, well I won't say that. And they talked it over and they made up lies as to why they shouldn't come.

And sir, madam, let me be very frank with you tonight. As I travel from place to place, not just in this country, but in many countries of the world, I get tired of listening to some of the excuses that people give me for not being a Christian. Tired of it.

Because I don't believe them. They are but lies that people tell for not trusting the Lord. I mean, you take just for a moment of the three excuses that were given here.

The first one said, well now, look, I'd like to come to that feast, but I can't, you see. And I can't come because, well, I've bought a piece of ground that I must need to go and see it. Could you think of anything feebler than that? Now please, I don't know very much about many things.

But I do know just a little bit about farming and a little bit about farmers. You see, I come from a farming county. And I want to say this to you.

That I've never yet met a farmer who'd buy a piece of ground without seeing it. Now not me. Every farmer I know, if he hears that there's a piece of ground coming for sale, off he goes.

My son's not a farmer. But he's got a little holding. And some time ago, he wanted to buy a pill.

Dad, will you come and look at it with me? Yeah, come and look at it with your son. And off he went. And any of you farmers here, you know what we did.

We walked round the field and we looked at the harvest. For I know nothing in the world that'll tell you what's under the ground like what's on top of the ground. And then we looked at it and I said, son, you don't want to touch it with a barrack's hoe.

By, look at those nettles, the ground's sour. I say, up under there, it's summer but there's some reeds running. It wants to be drained.

And we walked around the ground and he never bought it. And I'm not a farmer. But here was a farmer.

And he said, I bought a piece of ground and please, I must go and see it. I've never looked at it. May I remind you of something? May I remind you that if he'd have gone and seen that piece of ground and it was waterlogged and it wouldn't grow a thing, he'd bought it.

It was his. Now tell you something, there are not two fools born the same day. He could well have put it up till the feast was over.

But he didn't want to go to the feast and he used an excuse. You know, if the first one was bad, the second one was awful, wasn't it? He said, I'd like to come to the feast but I've bought ten oxen. I've bought five yokes of oxen.

Now please, I don't know anything about buying working oxen. I've been to plenty of countries where they still plough with oxen, where they still work with oxen. But I've never bought an ox in my life.

And over the course of years we've bought a few horses. And I'll tell you something about buying a horse. You don't buy it unless you look at it and look at it well.

How many times have I stood by my daughter because they've got horses and I've said to them, well, tot it up. And up they tot it. Tot it back.

And back they tot it. And I want to see it from the side and I want to see it from the back and I want to see what its back's like and I run my hands down its headlock and I open its mouth and see how old it is. And I tell you something else I do, I don't know if you farming folk ever do, but I always look at its ears as well because I once bought a pony that's ears had been trimmed.

And I thought it was a good smart pony lifting its feet up. And it was as deaf as a post and they trimmed its ears out so it sounded the crack of the whip as though it was like an explosion of a gun. So I looked to make sure they hadn't trimmed its ears out.

And I want a warranty with it as well. Why before I buy a pony or a horse from a donor I say, just a moment, you'll give her a warranty, won't you? We want three days to prove the thing. But here was a man who bought ten of them.

They might have been gibbers. He could have put them in the chains and said, get up. And they wouldn't budge an inch.

But they were his. He bought them. And if you can't sell one piece of ground in a day, you can't sell ten oxen in a day.

He could well have put it on. But he didn't do it. But if the first one was awful and the second one was terrible, I don't know what to say about the third one.

I can't come. I'm married away. I say, did you notice what it was? It was a great supper.

My wife will be with us this time next week, please, Rob. I'll tell you something. If you invite us to a great feast, she'll be there first.

Why, dearie me, you will appreciate that over the course of the years I have to appreciate it in many weddings. The young couple come to me and say, Uncle Sam, we want to get married. Will you marry us? And after the lecture, I always give them a lecture.

After the lecture, maybe I'm performing the ceremony or not. Stand in the front, look at them, wilt now, and they wilt straight away. I only know this.

That if I'm invited to conduct the wedding, Mary always expects an invitation as well. She wants to be there. And here was a man who said, I can't come.

I'm married away. But do you know, sir, it is serious enough to use excuses like that. I bought a piece of land.

I bought ten oxen. I've married away. But that's not the terrible thing about the excuses.

Do you know the terrible thing about the excuses? It's this. That the things they used to stop them going to the feast were the three blessings God gave to Adam when he created man. When God made man, he gave him three blessings.

The first one, he gave him a piece of ground. He gave him a garden. The second one, he gave him authority over all beasts of the field.

The third one, he gave him a wife that he may be loved and he may love as a companion for the days of his life. Those were the three blessings God gave to a man My friends, those were the three excuses they gave for not coming to Christ. And I want to ask you something.

I don't know you all. I trust it sounds courteous because I would be courteous. But I wonder tonight if there's someone here and you've never come to Jesus Christ.

You've never asked him to be your saviour. What excuses are you giving? Are you saying I would come but I've got the business you see? I would come but I've got a social life. I would come but I've got a home life.

The very things that the Christ of God can enrich to you if only you come to him. I say, that piece of ground would have been the better if he'd not gone and seen it. If it was good ground, the grass would have grown a bit more.

There'd have been a little more feed for his oxen. His oxen would have been better able to work if they'd had a day of rest. His wife, well she might have been a better wife.

She might have found some recipes for good meals by going to the feast. But they wouldn't go. And if you refuse to come to Jesus Christ, madam, you're going to be the loser.

You're going to be the loser. There was a feast. There was holly.

But isn't it wonderful there were those that were people? The Bible says that were some were poor. They never had a piece of ground. They never had ten yokes of oxen.

I know not whether they had a wife. They were poor. And I want to say this to you.

And I want to say it here, tonight. Mary's not with me. But if we could manage to struggle on, I think we might, Mark, if the Lord will.

But if we can manage to struggle on for just a few more months till October, we've been married forty years. And when I married the girl that's my wife, I loved her then and I love her more now than I did then. And I want to say this to you.

I want to say this to you tonight, here in this very meeting. That no man's poor. He may lose all this world can offer.

But he's no pauper. He's got a wife that he can turn to. His companion in life.

I'm no pauper. I'm the richest man that ever lived. I've got Christ as my Savior.

I've got a wife who's with me in the work of God. I'm no pauper. Oh, here was a man who was poor.

So maybe he didn't have a wife. No grandaunts and no wife. Poor.

Why, the Bible says there were those that were maimed. I want to ask again. How do you get maimed? Maimed.

Oh no. Here was not a person who was born with a deformity. Here was a person who in life something had happened to him.

And he was maimed. I say, sin has left its mark. And it's left its mark on us.

There's not a man or a woman that it's not left its mark on. Maimed. Isn't it wonderful? Those that were poor and those that were maimed.

They were bidden to come to the fields. They were invited. Why, you may not be able to walk by your name.

You may feel you haven't an entrance fee. Well, there isn't an entrance fee. Here's the problem.

You will pardon me for saying this, but I was very thrilled the other evening when my dear friend brother Jim reminded us that whoever is invited to the service need have no fears the fact that they will be pressed to make some contribution. Thirty-eight years I've been serving the Lord, and I want to say this to you. In this and over thirty other countries.

And I've never conducted a service that I've been responsible for where we've had a connection. We've never asked anyone for a penny, and we never will. I say I don't look too bad on it, do I? I stand on the scales and I say one at a time, please.

And there's a good doctor over there that I ate with the other evening, and he was telling me, I'll let you into a secret. I suffer with a little bit of blood pressure, you see. And off I go to the hospital to get a check-up before I come over here.

He gave a list, and I gave it to the doctor to read, and you know, the things I'm supposed to have and so on. It started off and it said what's wrong with this man is obesity. Phew, I could have hit him.

And he couldn't even say overweight. Oh, don't you dare say that to me doctor, don't you dare say that to me. I said it, well what a thing.

Please, I know maybe I smiled as I said it, and maybe I ought to be ashamed of it. I did. I only know this, that I've got a God who's cared for me.

He's provided for me. And blessed be His name, He's promised always to. Always to.

There is no price for the gospel feast. Salvation is without money and without price. All you need to do is to come.

Come. Ah, the people. Remember this, and it's a solemn note on which to close, but I must use it.

The story tells us not only of a feast. It tells us not only of man's folly. It tells us not only of those that are evil or invited.

But it tells us of a family. For those that refuse to come, those that refuse to come to the feast, none of them, said the Lord Jesus, shall taste of my son. What an eternal famine it will be to have no taste with him, for eternity to be outside of the goodness and the mercy and the blessing of our God.

But isn't it wonderful? It's not necessary for us to be outside. For tonight we can come. Here then is our text.

Come, for all things are now ready. Don't just talk of that coming day. Don't just talk of the day when, how good and blessed it is to eat bread in the kingdom.

Remember the things of God are for today, to be enjoyed today. I want to ask simply, will you not come? Will you not take Jesus Christ as your Savior, and enter into the things he has for you tonight? Please, God you will, for his name's sake. Amen.

In closing, I wonder if we would sing together, please, 142. Number 142. I hear thy welcome voice that calls me Lord to thee.

Oh, I wonder tonight if there's someone who's heard that voice. Come, for all things are now ready. Are you willing to come? Willing to trust that Savior? Please, God you will.

142. Shall we rise and sing? I hear thy welcome voice that calls me Lord to thee. It's Jesus.

It's Jesus calls me on to perfect faith and love, to perfect hope and peace and trust for earth and heaven above. Oh, friend, will you sing it and mean it tonight? I am coming, Lord. Coming now to thee.

Come, for all things are now ready. The last verse. The Lord calls me on to perfect faith and love, to perfect hope and peace and trust for earth and heaven above.

Will you take your seats? Just one moment, please. The service is over. I'm not prolonging it.

I've said what I believe the Lord wanted me to say tonight. But I must remind you, as I do every evening, that I have in my hand a few copies of that wonderful little gospel booklet, God's Way of Salvation, and a few copies of Safety, Certainty and Enjoyment. As if tonight there's someone here.

And you are willing to come to Jesus Christ. You're willing to trust him. You're willing to make him yours for life.

When I dismiss the service with prayer, I'll be standing in the front. Maybe you care to do what someone did last evening, just come forward and say, I'd like to trust the Lord. Do you want to trust him? If I can help you, ask me for a booklet, and I'd love to speak with you tonight.

Hand in a joy, there are brethren and sisters here, trained counselors who'd love to help you. We are your servants, Lord Christ. Shall we pray? Lord Jesus, thank you for having salvation ready for us.

Thank you for paying the price that our sins may be forgiven. We pray that tonight we may hear thee say, All things are now ready, for us that we may be willing to come, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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