

GETTING READY FOR EASTER

INVITE - Luke 14

ICE BREAKER: Tell about the first time you were invited to church. What made you want to go? What would you change about the experience?

CONTEXT: In Luke 14, Jesus is attending a luncheon at the home of a prominent Pharisee, along with other Pharisees and experts in the law, (Luke 14:1-2). The Pharisees believed that God had blessed them, for their obedience to the law and doing good works. They were looking forward to the Resurrection of the Righteous, because they believed that they were included. They reasoned that because they were descendants of Abraham and lived a religious life, they had to be included. Jesus tells this parable of the Great Banquet, where many are invited, but they have reasons that they do not want to come. (Luke 14:18-20).

Parable of the Banquet

Luke 14:15-20 *When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." 16 Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. 17 At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' 18 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' 19 "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' 20 "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'*

1. What do you think the great banquet represents in this parable?

2. Who are the characters or groups of people in this parable and what do you think they represent and why?

3. What is the goal of the man/master preparing the great banquet?

4. What were some of the excuses people made for not coming to the banquet? Why would people make excuses not to come to a banquet?

5. What excuses today keep people from coming to Jesus' invitation to the Kingdom of God?

Luke 14:21-24 **21** *"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'* **22** *"'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'* **23** *"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. 24 I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"*

6. What do you think that the religious people (Luke 14:15) thought when Jesus opened up the Kingdom of God to the less desirable, miserable, blind, lame and poor people from the country?

7. What does each "empty chair" represent? (Luke 14:22) What is the responsibility of those who follow Christ regarding the "empty chairs"? (Romans 10:15, Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:19-20)

Romans 10:15 *And **how** can anyone preach unless **they are** sent? As it is written: “**How beautiful are the feet** of those who bring good news!”*

Matthew 4:19 *“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.”*

Matthew 28:19-20 - 19 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

8. What is indicated if we are not interested in evangelism (not fishing for people)? What excuses do people use not to invite others to fill the “empty chairs” by not sharing their faith with others?

9. According to Ephesians 2:8-10, why are we still left here on earth?

Ephesians 2:8-10 ***8** For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**9** not by works, so that no one can boast. **10** For we are God’s handiwork, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

The empty chairs bothered the master of the house. Empty chairs still bother the Lord.

10. What are ways that we can invite others to join us at the “Great Banquet” in the Kingdom of God?

Challenge from Pastor Brian’s Sermon: “We want to make this as practical as possible:”

- Who are the 5 people that you can invite to join us.
- Think about your friends, your neighbors, your co-workers, and your family members.
- Who are the people you might not have thought about yet?
- Who is the last person you could imagine coming?

Begin praying for those you may be able to invite to Easter Service at Sun Grove! Pray for Sun Grove’s outreach into our community!