

LESSON 8, MARCH 9

DON'T MISS OUT!

Luke 14:1-35



Introduction

In his masterpiece novel The Remains of the Day, Kazuo Ishiguro describes one of the last remaining butlers employed by British nobility. In the story, Mr. Stevens takes serving seriously, asserting that the one necessary quality of a good butler is “dignity in keeping with his position.” In the end, however, this dignity isolates Stevens from his father, his staff, his employer, and people who needed his help. Only when he reflects on his life does he realize that he must use the remains of his day to serve others, not himself.

Can you think of a time when your attitude about your responsibilities blinded you to the needs of people around you? _____

Following Jesus means serving like Jesus. In **Luke 14**, Jesus exchanges the dignity of a religious leader for the demeanor of a servant. He heals the overlooked, he advocates for the outsiders, and he encourages the outcasts to leave their sins behind and follow Him. Choosing to follow Jesus cannot be a mindless choice, for **Jesus will call you to serve God's guests, not yourself!**

Looking for God's guests (Luke 14:1-14)

1. Who does Jesus notice just as He is entering the chief Pharisee's home for a Sabbath Day luncheon? (Luke 14:1-2) *A man with the dropsy*

Dropsy is a medical condition that causes a person's limbs to swell up with liquid. Before getting into the Pharisee's house, Jesus decides to treat this man with love.

2. Why do you think Jesus asks the lawyers and Pharisees whether it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day before healing the man?

(Luke 14:3-6) _____

The lawyers are experts in the Law of Moses. According to the interpretations they and the Pharisees taught, Jews were free to care for their animals but they were not to do any other manual labor (compare with Luke 13:11-17). By interpreting the Law as a list of “dos and don’ts,” the religious leaders effectively bypassed the point of the law—to love God and your neighbor (see Luke 10:27-28). The religious leaders expected to have grand, spiritual discussions over their Sabbath lunch, but they overlooked the needy man sitting in front of their home.

3. What practical advice does Jesus give to the guests at the luncheon?

(Luke 14:7-10) _____

The “chief rooms” are the best spots at the table—next to the host, at the ends, etc. In this culture, people did not sit in chairs for meals; instead, they reclined on their side and elbows on the floor, eating off a low table. You can imagine how much more difficult (and embarrassing) it would be to change spots in that time than it would be today.

4. List a couple other ways that the principle that “those that exalt themselves will be abased and the humble will be exalted” is true (Luke 14:11) _____

5. What practical advice does Jesus give to the host of the luncheon?

(Luke 14:12-14) _____

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6. Why should we care whether we connect with people who are “outsiders” or have a shameful past? _____
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Calling for God’s guests (Luke 14:15-24)

1. Scoffing at the blessing Jesus describes for those who serve the outcasts, one of the guests says, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15)

Jesus takes even this occasion to issue yet another warning through a parable. In effect, he says, “Do not count your chickens before they hatch. And do not count your blessings too early. There will be surprises at God’s banquet table.”
- Darrell L. Bock

2. In Jesus’ story, what did the man tell His servant to do after the dinner party was ready? (Luke 14:16-17) _____
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3. In what way are the invited guests’ excuses similar to each other? (Luke 14:18-20) _____
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The dinner party represents the kingdom of God. Those who get to participate in the celebration at the beginning of the Millennium—or “eat bread in the kingdom of God”—are those who are saved out of the Tribulation or return with Jesus from heaven.

4. In the end, what types of people did the man command the servant to beg to attend his party? (Luke 14:21-23) _____

The servant was first to bring in the poor, maimed, halt (unable to walk), and the blind. Then the master commanded him to go into the main roads and country lanes to compel any wayfaring traveller nearby to come to the dinner. The Master will have a full house, despite the invited guests' refusal to come.

5. Why doesn't God accept those who reject His invitation to join Him in His kingdom? (Luke 14:24; see Luke 13:24-28) _____

Suffering for God's guests (Luke 14:25-35)

1. After addressing the critical religious leaders, Jesus turns to the great multitudes to explain the seriousness of becoming a follower of Jesus (Luke 14:25)

Jesus uses the word "disciple" to describe His true followers. A disciple was a student that would master the wisdom of his teacher and live by that wisdom. By making his teacher's wisdom his "philosophy for living," the disciple would ensure that he would never forget it. As the Suffering Servant, Jesus wanted His followers to master serving others (see Luke 12:37; 22:26-27; and Isaiah 52:13-53:12).

2. Why must a disciple of Jesus "hate" or love family members less than Jesus Himself? (Luke 14:26) _____

3. Why must a disciple of Jesus “bear his cross” or accept possible future torture as he follows after Jesus? (Luke 14:27) _____

4. What should the builder do to make sure that he can finish his construction project? (Luke 14:28-30) _____

“Haply” means in the end. The builder must make sure that he has his ducks in a row, so he doesn’t start a project that he cannot finish. Otherwise, it is only natural to mock the foolish builder who doesn’t count the cost (see Proverbs 1:22-27)

5. If a king decides that he doesn’t have enough resources to win an impending battle, what should he do? (Luke 14:31-32) _____

6. Just as builders must consider their resources for construction and kings must consider diplomacy for peace, what things must a person consider before deciding to follow Jesus? (Luke 14:33) _____

7. How does Jesus describe people who say they want to follow Jesus but won’t risk losing their family, facing hardship, and forsaking everything they have? (Luke 14:34-35) _____

8. What is surprising about the people who draw near to Jesus and the people who criticize Jesus after He says that disciples must be willing to forsake all they have? (Luke 15:1-2) _____

These sinners are the outcasts that Jesus is serving with His life. The Pharisees that hosted Jesus won't give them the time of day, but Jesus will heal them, eat with them, teach them, and receive them as His disciples. God's guests are not those with the most dignity but those who will accept His invitation to leave all and follow Jesus.

Conclusion

In what ways do Christians often become self-serving? _____

For Theophilus, along with all other Christians, Jesus' teaching to the Pharisees is a wake-up call. Being a part of the kingdom of God is not about getting a free lunch in heaven; it's about bringing in the outcasts and wayfarers into His family. If you're too comfortable with your position or possessions to toil as His servant, you're as useless as flavorless salt. It's time to get serious about caring for people like Jesus did.

What is something that you have had to give up since you started following Jesus? _____

Lima has one of the largest populations of families affected by poverty, violent crimes, and low graduation rates in all of Ohio. Serving like Jesus means we need to compel people with a past to come join the banquet table of God!

Can you think of a place in the month of March where you could connect with someone who not saved? _____
