

# THE GOSPEL CALL GOES OUT TO ALL

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Old Testament Lesson; Proverbs 9:1-10

Epistle Lesson; 1 John 3:13-18

Sermon Text; Luke 14:16-24

At this time of year, many invitations go out. Maybe you have received some invitations, recently. I know I have received many invitations. I have just a few of them in my hand, here. Invitations to people's confirmations, graduations, year end parties, and it is even the season of weddings. But, these are just a few of the 'hard copy' invitations I have received in my mailbox, at home, or on my desk, here at Holy Cross. Some invitations, today, even are received electronically. Sometimes we receive e-mails that have invitations in them. And, it is very convenient today to receive invitations by Facebook.

When you receive an invitation, the person who sent it to you, wants you to respond. They want you to R.S.V.P. There are really two things you can say to the invitation you received. You can say, "Yes, I am coming." Or, "No, I am not coming."

It is fun to get invitations, isn't it? ☺

Well, in our text for today, Jesus is talking about an invitation. It is interesting to know Jesus had been invited to a very prominent Pharisee's house for supper, a banquet, or a feast. It is while He is at this banquet, that He shares this parable of the Great Banquet. In this parable of the Great Banquet, He is talking about how the

Gospel Call has gone out to all, or we might say, “*A great invitation has been extended to all people.*”

Now, as Jesus speaks the answer, (the words of our text for today), certainly He is responding to questions that the Pharisees, the Elders, and the Teachers of the Law, had given to Jesus, while He was at that feast. But, there is also a specific question Jesus was answering, one that had been lingering out there, for a little while. The question was this.

### **Are only a few people going to be saved?**

Knowing that, it sets the stage for when Jesus shared this parable of the Great Banquet. (Remember, a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.) Let's recall the parable, once again, here. Jesus said there was once an owner who was going to give a banquet. He sent out invitations to all of the people he had invited to that banquet. When the time was ready, he sent his servant to say, “Come, for everything is now ready.”

That is really what happened in Jesus' day. When a person was to give a banquet, they would invite many people, and send out the invitations. On the day of the banquet, the day of the feast, a servant would walk around and tell people, “*Today is the day. Come, everything is now ready.*” Towns were not very big in those days, so it would be easy for a servant to do that. Consider the city of Jerusalem. It was only five football fields long at the time. And, three football fields wide. It was a relatively small city. A servant could easily walk around and tell all of the people who had been invited, “Come, for everything is now ready.”

Well, notice what Jesus said in our text for today. “They all alike began to make excuses.” The people who had received those invitations had collaborated with each other. They said, “*We are not going to go to the party. We are not going to go to the banquet. So, let's make up excuses.*”

The first one said, “I have just bought a field, and I must go and see

it. Please excuse me.”

The second one said, “I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.”

The third person did not even say, “Please excuse me”, but, said, boastfully, “I just got married, so I can't come.”

That is when the servant came back to his master and said, “*Look at all of these excuses. They don't want to come to your great banquet.*”

The master got angry and told that servant to go into the streets and the alleyways, to invite other people to come. The servant did that, but there were still places to sit at the great banquet. So the master told the servant to go out to the highways and the byways, out into the countryside and to invite them, too.

Then the master gave a warning. That warning is this. “*Whoever received an invitation, rejected it, and made an excuse, they will not taste any of the food I have prepared at my great banquet.*”

This is a parable. In a parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. What is the meaning of this parable Jesus told? The meaning is this.

**God the Father is the Master.** He is the owner of the house and He has sent out a great invitation to His banquet.

**That invitation is to the banquet of eternal life, with Him, in Heaven.**

**Jesus is the servant.** The Bible tells us,

“When the time had fully come,  
God sent His Son, born of a woman,  
born under law

to redeem those under law,  
that we might receive the full rights of sons.”

When Jesus came and lived a perfect life for us, when Jesus died on the cross and said, “It is finished”, He was saying, “Come, for everything is now ready.”

**Remember, the invitation was extended to you.**

Receive it.

Believe it.

Accept it.

And you will have eternal life in Heaven.

But, there were people who made excuses. The people who made excuses were the Jews in Jesus' day – the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Elders, the Teachers of the Law, who collaborated with each other and said, “*We will not accept this invitation.*” We see the excuses they gave. “I bought a field.” “I bought oxen.” “I got married.”

Really those excuses are this. “I bought property.” “I have possessions.” “I have family who is far more important than receiving that invitation to the great banquet of eternal life in Heaven.”

And so, because those Jews, (the Pharisees and Sadducee, and Teachers of the Law), rejected that invitation, God the Father told Jesus to invite other Jews to come to that great banquet of eternal life in Heaven. And so, Jesus did that.

These are Jews who have received that invitation and have believed in Jesus, as their Savior. Just like the tax collector Jesus talked about in one of His parables, who was in the temple with the Pharisee.

The Pharisee wanted to be seen by everybody and prayed, “God I thank you I am not like other men, even like this tax collector.”

The tax collector, who was a Jew, was off in the corner of the temple, not even looking up to Heaven, but simply asking and praying, “God have mercy on me, a sinner.”

That Jew was in the streets and the alleyways, when Jesus called him. He heard the invitation. He believed the invitation. And those Jews who believe have eternal life in Heaven.

But, there is more than just that, because Jesus said, “*There is still room at the great banquet of eternal life in Heaven.*” And so, praise

God, the invitation of eternal life has also come to us, who are Gentiles. That is Jesus going out into the countrysides, out into the highways and byways. **That invitation has also come to you!** Yes, salvation is for the Jew, but it is also for the Gentile. And today, we are so thankful, so appreciative that the invitation of eternal life in Heaven has come to us, as well. God wants His House to be full. He wants every seat at the banquet to have a person there. How do we know that? Scripture tells us,

“God wants all to be saved  
and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

God wants everyone to come to repentance. But, it is unfortunate that people today sometimes even use those same excuses that the Jews in Jesus' day used. Remember the excuses they used? “I bought a field.” “I bought five yoke of oxen.” “I just got married.” It is like saying, “I just got a piece of property.” “I have possessions.” “I have family that is more important.” Those are all excuses that people use, that maybe you hear, that pastors hear. I have heard an excuse based on every one of these. “I can't come to the mini banquet (which is church) in preparation for the great banquet, because I have a cabin up north, or I have a trailer in the woods.” “I can't come to the mini banquet in preparation for the great banquet, because I like to ride my motorcycle every weekend.” Somebody even once said, “I can't come to church on Christmas Eve, because my family is in town. I can't come to church to have a taste of that mini banquet, in preparation of that great banquet of eternal life in Heaven.”

Our property won't last forever. Our possessions won't last forever. Even our family won't last forever. Even our Christian marriages won't last forever, because it is “Until death do us part”.

But, the invitation to the great banquet of eternal life in Heaven  
is one that lasts forever.

I have some invitations in my hand this morning. This is just a few

of them that came to my mailbox at home, or laid on my desk, here at Holy Cross. I have received invitations to Confirmations, graduations, year end parties, and weddings. But, this morning, these are not the invitations I am talking about or referring to. A great invitation has been extended to you from God, the Father. That invitation is to enjoy the great banquet of everlasting life, with Him, in Heaven.

In time, God's Son, our Savior came. Jesus lived a perfect life for you and for me. Jesus took that perfect life to the cross where He has made full payment for all of our sins. Your sins are forgiven. Jesus says, simply receive the invitation God has given. Believe the invitation God has given and you will have everlasting life with Me in Heaven.

Yet, today too, we recognize we can't even come to faith on our own, which makes the work of the Holy Spirit so important. Listen to what our Catechism says, in asking this question and giving the answer.

**What has the Holy Spirit done to bring you to faith in Christ?**

Notice the answer ties in with our text for today. The answer says, **“To bring me to faith in Christ, the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel.”** That is, He has invited me. He has invited me to partake of the blessings of Christ, which are offered in the Gospel. Dear fellow redeemed, how awesome it is that God the Father has given an invitation to you. How awesome it is that God the Son has lived a perfect life in our place. He died on the cross. He has paid for our sins. The Holy Spirit even comes to us through Word and Sacrament, telling us about that invitation, and saying,

**“Come, for all things are now ready.”**

One of the hymns we sang this morning, right before our sermon was a hymn in a section known as The Invitation Section. Look at hymn 337 in Christian Worship. This also is a hymn in that same section, the section of The Invitation. I want to read through, as our

closing this morning, the first verse and the fifth verse.

*Delay not, delay not,  
oh sinner draw near.*

*The waters of life are now flowing for you.*

*No price is demanded.*

*The Savior is here.*

*Redemption is purchased.*

*God's promise is true.*

*Delay not. Delay not.*

*Why longer abuse*

*the love and compassion of Jesus your God.*

*A fountain is open.*

*How can you refuse?*

*Come wash and be cleansed in His pardoning blood.*

Amen