

The Church of the Servant King
Survey of the Bible Series
The Gospel of Luke

SB_LK14

Healing on the Sabbath (14:1-6)

This is the fourth time that Luke records a controversy regarding the Sabbath (see 6:1-5; 6:11; 13:10-17), therefore this was a big issue between Jesus and the religious leaders. Dropsy is a symptom and not a specific disease. It is a condition in which water is retained in the body, leading to swollen limbs. Jesus detected the trap of the religious leaders and once again cuts straight to the heart of the matter thereby shifting the burden of proof to the opposition. He turns the issue back to them and preempted their accusation of Him (see 6:2, 9). His question of “is it lawful” is an open question and allows the religious leaders to answer from the standpoint of the Mosaic Law or Rabbinic tradition. Of course, they could not answer since it is likely that most of them had at one point in their lives performed such an action on the Sabbath.

Take the Lowly Place (14:7-14)

During the period of time in which Jesus ministered, the guests at a formal dinner reclined on couches, several on each one, and they leaned on their left elbows. The seating was according to status. The head of the table was the couch at one end with other couches extending from it and facing each other like the arms of a U. The places of honor (v. 8) were those nearest the head couch position. If an important guest came late, someone might have to be displaced to make room for him (v. 9).¹ The principle of the parable in verse 11 that whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted is similar to the principle Jesus taught in 13:30, i.e. that the first would be last and the last first. Also, verse 13 illustrates Luke's emphasis upon Jesus' concern for the poor and oppressed (cf. 4:18; 6:20-21).

Jesus' teaching in verses 12-14 illustrates the principle of grace that only a spiritual believer can appreciate. The man or woman of the world is not concerned about those who are unable to benefit them. Rather the man or woman of the world is only concerned about those who can advance their wealth or social standing and it is those to whom they show favor. The grace oriented believer has a spiritual perspective on life and sees through that façade. The grace oriented believer understands the value of the soul that lacks the accouterments of the world, but who is humbly seeking the Lord. This is indeed a precious thing. It is important to note that Jesus is not equating poverty or adversity in life with a spiritual life for there have always been poor people who do not possess a humble spirit and who are extremely bitter.

The Parable of the Great Supper (14:15-24)

Invitations to a feast were sent out in advance of the actual meal. On the day of the feast, servants would announce the start of the meal. Luke's record of this parable is slightly different than Matthew's version recorded in Matthew 22:1-14. The table below provides a comparative analysis.

Passage in Matthew	Description	Passage in Luke	Description
22:2	King arranges marriage for son	14:16	“certain man” arranges a “great supper”
22:3	Servants sent to call those invited to a	14:17	Servants sent to call those invited to the

¹ Frank E. Gaebelin, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998).

	wedding feast		supper
22:5	Those invited make light of the invitation and go their separate ways	14:18-20	Those invited make excuses
22:6	Some invited kill the servant messengers	Na	Not mentioned
22:7	The king kills the murderers and destroy the city	Na	Not mentioned
22:9	Servants commanded to go to the highways to invite	14:21	Servants commanded to invite the maimed, lame and blind
22:11-13	King sees a man without a garment at the wedding feast	Na	Not mentioned

Summary of the meaning of this parable: The subtle difference between the two Gospel writer's accounts is very significant and very much related to the overall purpose of each respective writer. **Matthew's focus** was to the Jews, thus his rendering focused upon the Jewish aspects of the parable, i.e. that those who had rejected the invitation to enter the kingdom of heaven (i.e. the Messianic kingdom) through the message of the gospel of the kingdom (preached by Jesus and His disciples and John the Baptist) would be destroyed by the armies that attend Christ's Second Advent prior to the establishment of the Messianic (Millennial) kingdom [e.g. Matt 24:29-31; 25:31]. Any unbelievers (the man without the wedding garment) will be destroyed and ultimately cast into the Lake of Fire at the Last Judgment. **Luke's focus** is to the Gentiles, thus his rendering focused upon the Gentile aspect of the parable, i.e. that Gentiles represented by the maimed, lame, and blind (those excluded from full participation in Jewish worship – Lev 21:17-23) and the poor (the social outcasts who were humble enough to respond to the invitation) would be invited and attend the great supper (i.e. the Messianic kingdom). Both accounts focus upon different aspects of the Jewish rejection.²

Some other points of interest related to these two accounts of this parable include the following:

- The "king" and the "certain man" represents God the Father
- The "son" in Matthew's account is Jesus Christ.
- The "marriage" and the "great supper" is the uniting of all believers on earth under the rule of the Messiah. Believers of prior dispensations rule and reign with Christ during this period [Heb 12:22-24; Re 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6] and Israel has a very prominent position among the nations once again [e.g. Is 2:1-4; 11:11-16; 44:21-28 among many others].
- The "servants" are the prophets and Jesus' disciples who proclaimed the Messiah's arrival, but who were rejected by the religious of Jesus' day. See also Matthew 21:33ff.
- The "wedding" is the same as the "marriage supper of the Lamb" [Re 19:9] or the "wedding feast" that pictures the Messianic kingdom after the Second Advent of Christ.
- The "armies" are angels that will attend Christ's Second Advent and defeat His foes [Re 19:14].
- The "murderers" (verse 7) are those unbelievers during the last seven years of the Age of Israel (Dan 9:24ff) known as the Tribulation who will persecute believers (even to the point of death for some [Re 20:4]).
- The "wedding garment" is the righteousness of God possessed by every believer as a result of trusting in Christ as the Messiah (Age of Israel) or trusting in Christ's death as the payment for sin (Age of the Church).

² For a more extensive analysis of Matthew's account of this parable, see the notes from the Survey of the Bible Series – Matthew taught during 2000-2001.

- The man without the wedding garment is an unbeliever within the Age of Israel (specifically the Tribulation) who is discovered during that period between the Second Advent and the establishment of the Messianic kingdom of God on earth (Millennium). It is during this period that the Jewish believers are gathered to form a believing nation of Israel and Gentile believers have the privilege of participating in the joys of the Messianic kingdom.

Leaving All to Follow Christ (14:25-33)

It is important to note that if one looks to the Gospels for conditions necessary for salvation and doesn't make a dispensational distinction between being a disciple of Jesus and becoming a Christian or a believer, one encounters numerous difficulties. Joseph Dillow does an excellent job of presenting the difficulties encountered in such a case. I agree with Dillow that such difficulties are not just a paradox (as John MacArthur states), but they constitute an irreconcilable contradiction. An excerpt follows.

Now if being a disciple and being a Christian are the same thing, as some Experimental Predestinarians maintain, then are they not introducing a serious heresy into the gospel? In order to become a Christian, one must not only believe in Christ, but he must also (1) hate his father, mother, wife, children, and his own life; (2) carry his cross; (3) be willing to follow Jesus around Palestine; and (4) give up everything. Can any amount of theological sophistry equate these four conditions with the simple offer of a free gift on the basis of believing? Being a disciple and being a Christian cannot be the same thing! If we are justified "freely," how can the enormous costs of being a disciple be imposed as a condition of that justification?³

When Jesus referred to hating his father and mother, he was being rhetorical. A decision for Jesus as the Christ or Messiah in the context of Judaism could mean rejection by one's family and even persecution to the point of death. The person who feared disapproval by family or persecution desired family more than Jesus. Thus, Jesus was emphasizing the necessity in some cases to forsake family if they were at odds with one's belief in Jesus as the Messiah.

Taking one's cross refers to a commitment to the extent of being willing to die for something. Of course, in most cases where believers take up their cross, physical death is not the result. Rather, the death that occurs is death to self and the world. This is true regardless of the dispensation.

Following Christ is not something the believer should do on a trial basis. The going will get tough and the committed believer will be sorely tested. This is what Jesus was referring to in verses 29-30. Dishonor results from not completing the task of taking up one's Cross and following Christ. For the Jew, it was the dishonor of not entering being a part of the Messianic kingdom. For the Church Age believer, it will be the dishonor of loss of rewards at the Bema Seat Judgment. Such a commitment requires serious consideration prior to entering into it (verses 31-33).

Salt That Has Lost Its Savor is Worthless (14:34-35)

The believing Jew was a part of a distinct nation in God's purpose. The Jewish believer and the Jewish nation were to draw the Gentiles to God through the blessings that God was able

³ Joseph Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Haysville, NC: Schoettle Publishing Company, 1992), 154.

to pour out on His people due to their obedience to His laws and ordinances which were designed to set them apart. Their obedience to His laws and ordinances could have only arisen from a heart that loved Him. Salt is not only a preservative, but it also creates a thirst. The Jewish believing nation was to create a thirst on the part of others to know more.