

Who's Invited to the Party?

When one of the dinner guests heard Jesus' remarks, he said to Jesus, "Happy are those who will feast in God's kingdom." (Luke 14:15, CEB)

So, what happens when you've invited people to come to a party you're hosting and hardly anyone shows up? You've gone to the trouble of cooking and cleaning and decorating and making everything festive. You're looking forward to sharing what you have with others to celebrate a special occasion.

One response would be to become upset or disappointed. You might feel like no one cares. That's a very valid feeling. A person feeling that way might choose to call the party off entirely, to send everyone home and sulk in the corner for a while.

A radically different response would be to broaden the invitation list. You've gone to the trouble of preparing for a fun time, so why not make sure that someone gets to enjoy it - even if it's not the people who were originally invited? This latter approach seems to be the one that Jesus is suggesting in his parable (**read Luke 14:16-24**).

When the originally invited guests gave reason after reason as to why they could no longer attend this special banquet, the host sent his servants out into the streets to invite anyone who would come and dine with him. Such is the invitation to the Kingdom of God. It is not limited to a select few, but meant for all.

In the days of Jesus and the early church, a major transition took place as people came to realize that Jesus had not come for the Jewish people only, but really for the entire world. Sometimes I wonder if we, the church of today, could learn a similar lesson as we think about who is on our guest list (the insiders) and who is not (the outsiders). Something to think about.

I'm looking forward to exploring more of Luke 14:1-24 with you on Sunday morning. Don't forget to change your clocks and "spring forward" this weekend!

Lenten Blessings,

Pastor David Rittgers