

Party Like Jesus

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Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0 : 00] Thank you so much, Richard, for sharing that. I love that song. If you have your Bibles, turn to Luke chapter 14. Luke chapter 14, and some of y'all are going to look at the title of my sermon and say, preacher, that's inappropriate.

I figure there's pools of people planning on meeting after the service to talk about the radical preacher. And if you think that, I have to say to you, what kind of party have you been going to? Apparently, you ain't partying appropriately. That's what it sounds like to me. Because Jesus did go to weddings, and Jesus did go to dinner parties on several occasions, and we have some of those in Scripture.

And in our passage this morning, Jesus was invited to eat at a main Pharisee's house, and the whole crowd had their eye on him, watching him to see what he would do.

And upon arriving, there was a man with dropsy. That is an old-time word for bad edema. It's the kind of swelling that congestive heart failure can cause.

[1 : 19] And he was dealing with that, and Jesus healed him. And then asked, is it all right that I do that since it's the Lord's day?

And healing is considered work. Do you help somebody out if you can on the day of rest, or do you let it go until another day?

That was the dilemma here. Jesus helped the man. That was his decision, and that was controversial. Some didn't like that. By the way, somebody's not going to like it when you go out of your way to help somebody else in the name of Christ.

Somebody's not going to like it. And that didn't stop Christ, and that shouldn't stop you. God opens a door, and he leads you to do it.

You do it. Let it fall where it may. But I'll tell you what happened with this. It set the mood of the party, and Jesus, as only he can do, takes advantage of the opportunity and teaches us and them how to party like him and how to party for him.

[2 : 45] Luke chapter 14, beginning in verse 7, and I'm not going to read all this passage right now. I'm going to read it as we go along, because it's a lot to digest. It says in verse 7, it says this.

Now he told a parable to those who were invited. When he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, When you're invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor.

Let someone more distinguished than you be invited by him. And he who has invited you both will come and say to you, Give your place to this person.

And then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, Friend, move up higher.

Then you'll be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

[3 : 48] First rule of party is enter humbly. Wherever you're going, whatever gathering you're in, every kind of party you frequent, you enter humbly.

Because it's not about me, and it's not about you, it's about him. And you say, well, preacher, what are we talking about? Are we talking about church? No, no, no, I'm talking about life.

I mean, if you have surrendered your life to the Lord Jesus Christ and committed your life to Christ, your life is about him. It's not about me.

It's not about you. It's about him. So wherever we venture and whatever we go into, we ought to enter it humbly.

His example to us was to take the lowest place of the servants. He was washing feet. He was washing feet. And then he was telling folks, do as I do. In other words, take the lowest spot.

[4 : 55] Do what needs to be done to minister to folks. For years, I attended a football banquet, a high school football banquet, because I was the PA announcer, and I was also the chaplain.

So I saw those guys right when school was over, and I spoke to them and used some scripture, some Old Testament battle scene to tell them to go win the fight and give their heart to Jesus while they're killing the man next to them.

Then we'd eat a meal together, and then I'd try my best to influence and still follow the rules from the box, the booth.

And I'm trying to do the same thing now for the Pickens Blue Flame. And every year, they'd have me, they asked me to go to the banquet, and every year they'd put me at the head table, but they didn't have the spots marked.

And so there were several wives, I mean, excuse me, there were several coaches that would sit, all the coaches would sit at the head table. Many of them had their wives there, and their wives would sit at that, and there were a select number of seats.

[6 : 04] And you could tell when you walked in the room that it was a select number of seats. I came alone to those things. I was not sure where I was to sit. So I did not go to the head table.

I just sat down. Just found a spot and sat down. Someone would come, and I'd say, what are you doing sitting out here? You need to sit up there at the head table.

And I'd get up and go to the head table and sit at the head table. The next year, they'd invite me back. I'd come back. I'd walk in the room. I'd see the head table there.

I also served on the school board during this time as well. So they invited board members to come. And so I'd sit down just somewhere out here.

I didn't really care to sit up there, honestly. The reason they had me up there was not because I was a chaplain, not because I was there, because they wanted me to pray so they could eat. That was what it didn't amount to. But I'd find somewhere else to sit.

[7 : 04] And then somebody would come and say, Preacher, what are you doing sitting out there? You need to sit up here. You need to come up here. And year after year after year, I never sat down at that head table. One time after they moved me up there, another school board member came in and sat down beside me.

And I was thinking, you done messed up. You ain't read your Bible. Because everybody knows football coaches don't like the board.

They're not going to invite the school board, you know. It's not going to sit at the head table. And sure enough, when they came up, they didn't have to tell him. He figured out. He said, what are you doing up here? I said, I'm praying for the meal. He said, oh.

And he got up and left. And went and sat somewhere else, you know. I didn't want to be that guy.

And I don't want you to be that guy. And more importantly than what I want, Jesus don't want you to be that guy.

The atmosphere that Jesus walked into was one that culturally had a horseshoe set of tables with about three at each table.

[8 : 13] Sound like a good old Baptist function, don't it? But that's typically the setting. And the center of each table set the guest of honor at that table.

And the closer the table to the center, the closer, I mean, the higher up you were. So, I mean, we're talking about, you know, making sure you sit at the right table, you know.

I mean, making sure you don't mess up. The further from the head table, the lower the place. And the host would sit in the lowest place.

Part of hosting, get this, part of hosting is to be at service to others. And when Jesus witnessed this scurry to find the best seats and to sit in the best spot, there was such an effort led that some people were embarrassed because they messed up.

They sat too high up. And, you know, and the whole time, it's like a middle school kickball game, you know. I mean, they're picking who sits where, you know. And, oh man, they didn't pick me, you know.

[9 : 25] Well, nobody's left. You sit at the last one, you know. It's one of those kind of situations. And Jesus is watching all of this take place. What a blessing it is to see somebody walk in such a room as that and not be wrapped up in any of that.

I like the way G. Campbell Morgan put his old-time commentator. He said, Those who are willing to play second fiddle make beautiful music indeed in the symphony of life. You don't have to be the

main thing.

Let me let you in on something. You ain't. And nor am I. It's not about us. It's really not. And to take the seat of honor is not only to elevate yourself, but you are devaluing everyone else in the room. And when you upgrade yourself, you actually downgrade. But if you degrade, and you also degrade everyone else. And we need to keep that idea in the kingdom of God.

Jesus didn't stop there there. He went on. And it says in verse 12, He said also to the man who had invited him, When you give a dinner or banquet, don't invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid.

[10:49] But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you'll be blessed because they can't repay you. For you'll be repaid at the resurrection of the just.

The second rule of partying like Jesus is invite others. Invite others. Let me first tell you what Jesus is not saying.

I want to be clear about this. He's not saying that there's a problem with eating a meal with your friends. That's not what he's saying. That's fellowship. Fellowship. And fellowship is sweet.

And Jesus did that very thing. Mary and Martha and Lazarus invited him over and he ate a meal with them. And the whole neighborhood wasn't there with them. They ate a meal together.

And there's nothing wrong with that. You can just invite the preacher as long as you cook good. That's all you have to do. However, what he wanted this Pharisee to know that was eating with friends at a dinner party is this.

[11:59] That's not ministry. That's not ministry. Labor Day Sunday was a great day in the life of this church.

It was a great day. I mean, I don't know what y'all used to, but I had a good time. That was the way I liked to party, you know. Because you cooked your best, fixed your best, did whatever, and fixed a bunch of it.

I mean, I do work the room usually while people are lined up. And I will sneak and get those little chocolate oatmeal things because you can do that without making a mess. And there was an éclair I grabbed a bowl for.

But typically, I kind of work the room and go through that line almost last. It's not trying to be, I just want that time with the family.

And usually when I go through potluck lines, there ain't nothing left, you know. I mean, it's somebody who rushed out that morning, got something stove-bought, you know.

[13:06] It's almost a sin against God. But anyway, but, you know, I mean, I'm eating cupcakes, I've been sitting at the grocery store for a week, you know, and whatever that potato salad is that don't have no taters in it, you know.

I mean, it's that kind of stuff. And whatever the meat that the church provides, you know, that's what I eat. But that meal was not like that at all. I mean, somebody took all the fried okra.

And I'd like to know who. We're setting up new cameras and stuff like that to fix all that. But there was bunches and bunches of food.

I mean, when you thought you were done, you got to the elbow of the table, you know. And then you went, whoa, I done filled up my plate, you know. There were profane things said at the corner. It's interesting how that happened, you know.

Because people were going, man, I want that. And yet I've hogged myself so much that I ain't got room for it, you know. It's a great fellowship. It was not ministry.

[14:15] Nothing wrong with a fellowship meal. But eating fine food with all your friends ain't ministry. It's just fun.

It's just an opportunity to fellowship together. Ministry is when you invited somebody to come to that dinner. Want them to be a part of that. They don't have to bring anything.

They can just come on and be a part of that. It's not ministry to have supper with your friends. It's ministry to do something for someone else that they can't do for you.

That's what ministry is. Invite people that won't invite you back. That's when you impact lives.

David's best friend was a man named Jonathan. King David, his best friend was a man named Jonathan. And Jonathan was the son of Saul who David succeeded. But Saul was a nemesis to David.

[15:20] I mean, David could play the harp. And he'd come in and play the harp. And Saul was soothed by that until he wasn't. And then Saul would chunk a spear at him while he was playing,

you know.

I mean, that's not a good gig for a harp player. Saul was like that. David spent much of his life running from Saul because Saul tried to kill him. And when David had the opportunity to kill him in a cave, he didn't do it.

He cut off a corner of his robe just to show that he gave evidence that he had let him live. But then he felt guilty because he had touched who he called God's anointed because he shouldn't even mess with his robe. I mean, it was a fascinating situation.

And Saul would rage and try to kill him. And in 2 Samuel chapter 9, David wants to honor his friend Jonathan's memory.

Jonathan's been killed. And he wants to honor Jonathan's memory by finding a relative of Saul and giving him a place of honor.

[16:24] And Mephibosheth was mentioned to him. Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan and was only five years old when his daddy was killed in battle.

And when Jonathan was killed, a nurse that cared for Mephibosheth was afraid that after they had killed Jonathan, they would come after his family.

And they would come after his child. And so she ran to get away from the child. And in the running, she fell and she dropped the child. And that accident from falling crippled Mephibosheth.

So when David called for a living relative of Saul to come so he could honor him, a living relative of Jonathan so he could honor him. So when David called, he brought a handicapped grandson of his arch enemy to his own dining room table and gave Mephibosheth the family property that had previously been Saul's.

And when David called Mephibosheth, Mephibosheth didn't feel worthy of that. And he knelt before David and said, what is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?

[17:47] Mephibosheth was humbled by just being recognized by the king, just by being honored by the king.

He could, because Mephibosheth could do nothing for the king. And typically because of his physical condition, would never have been invited to such a setting because of the cultural aspects of that day.

He had nothing to offer, yet here he is sitting at the king's table. That, my friend, that's what Jesus is talking about.

Jesus is talking about inviting others. Serve those that cannot serve you. Be a part of a caring ministry. And we have those types of ministries.

We have those type opportunities from time to time. And those times will become more often in the future because we're looking for opportunities to minister to our community like that.

[18:48] And as God moves in us, just watch. Watch. Ask God to open a door for us to minister our community. You'll watch. We will.

And as he meets our needs, we'll want to reach others. Whether that be backpacks that we gave out before school started.

Or whether that's the Samaritan's Purse Christmas boxes that we collect supplies for every month of the year so that when Christmas rolls around, actually before Christmas because they want to get up to them for Christmas, we can fill those shoeboxes and send those out.

And I will tell you, I followed the story of those shoeboxes. Those kids get the gospel with those shoeboxes. Not in any kind of manipulative fashion, in a good old gospel way.

And when they want to know more about Christ, they're sent through a discipleship program to teach them of what it means. They don't have to go through that to get the box. But with that box comes the story of Jesus and the invitation and the opportunity.

[20:04] That's what Jesus does. And we're to be like Jesus. And every time we have a meal together, we get the best of both worlds. By the way, that's why we have meals together, okay?

I mean, it helps that people can cook good. But the reason we have meals together is so we have a chance to fellowship with friends and we have a chance to make new friends.

That's what it's about. So think of someone to invite. Invite them. And then when you invite them, meet them here. Jesus challenges us to do that.

But it does not stop there. He don't stop there. It says in verse 15, it says, when one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

But he said to them, a man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet, he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, come for everything is now ready.

[21 : 15] But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, I bought a field and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused. And another said, I bought five yoke of oxen and I go to examine them.

Please have me excused. And another said, I've married a wife and therefore I can't come. Wow, there's a message there. So the servant came and reported these things to his master.

Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame. And the servant said, sir, what you commanded has been done and there still is room.

And the master said to the servant, go out to the highways and hedges and compel people. Compel them. Compel people to come in.

That my house may be filled. For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. Third rule to party like Jesus is don't make excuses.

[22 : 29] Don't make excuses. When the Lord invites you to get in on something, please don't make excuses.

Because these people had initially said they'd go. I mean, when they got the Facebook invitation, they checked, I'm going. And then they didn't show up. When the time came, they backed out. They let other matters come in the way. Sometimes our business gets in the way. Isn't it amazing how you always have time for what's most important to you? But when something comes up for the Lord, sometimes it's hard to find the time.

The first excuse, these are interesting excuses, the first excuse is that it gives, the man buys a field that he's not seen. He bought it online. online. Some of y'all want me to tell the truth.

Okay, they didn't have online sales then, okay? Just in case you didn't. Somebody will call me out, you know. Is there a reason why looking at the field that he's already bought could not wait until after the banquet?

[23 : 45] He was putting off what the man who invited him wanted. You've been invited. Don't put off what God wants. The next one bought oxen sight unseen.

Listen, don't look a gift horse and a mouse, but if you're paying for it, you better take a peek at it, you know. I bought a car one time sight unseen.

We were looking to replace our vehicle and we, I was, I was out of town. I was at a meeting and I took a lunch and after lunch I stopped by a dealership and did not see what I was looking for and the guy said, that's not a problem at all.

We own a thousand lots across the country. I can find whatever you want and so I said, well, I'll tell you what I want and I called my wife to find out what I wanted and then I gave him the description is a used vehicle and it had this and this and this and this and this and he said, I found it and we'll have it in, I don't remember, five days.

I was 160 miles from home and so I went back to my meeting and I went on home and I mean, we did the contract and the whole bit. I said, what if I don't like it?

[25 : 07] I mean, what if it gets and I said, well, if you just don't like it, then, I mean, you're stuck but if there's a problem with it, if it's not what we said it was, then, then, you know, you don't have to buy it.

Okay, good. So I went home and they called me and we rode 160 miles to go get this car and I got in the car and we rode across the parking, the guy was driving, excuse me, the guy was driving. We drove across the parking lot, got in the road and the pandemic roof started vibrating and I know it's a panoramic but it started making all kinds of racket and I knew it wasn't going to cut it and I was just saying, Lord, don't let her hear it.

It didn't cut it so I said, dude, this ain't going to work. I said, it wasn't supposed to be in this condition. Oh, no, it's not a problem, not a problem. So he turned around and went back. They took it back in the shop.

Okay, I'm not a guy who could buy a car and sit in the booth and wait on them. Okay, I sold cars one summer. I asked God for forgiveness and so I know the strategies that go with that and I don't, I don't sit there.

[26 : 24] I don't like it and so I went looking for my vehicle that I done bought. Sight unseen, guaranteed and I walked back in the shop and they are wiping some type of silicone on the gears of that of that sunroof to try to get it to be quiet, you know and I heard one of them say, well, I don't think she's that worried about it.

I walked up behind them. They didn't know I was standing there. That's the kind of guy I am. I walked up behind them and he said, I don't think she's that worried about it. So I walked back in. She's sitting in the lobby and I said, they don't think you're worried about it.

That changed the whole atmosphere. I promise you and so we got the car back and took it in the parking lot from here to the front door and turned it around and I said, I want you to shred every document that I signed the other day because you didn't do what you said you did.

You said you'd have it clean. There's a coffee stain on the back seat that could be wiped. I can lick it off if I wanted to. I said, but you didn't do what you said you were doing. You sold me a bad bag of goods.

I don't care how many car lots you want. I don't want nothing to do with you. They said, we'd love to fill up your tank and we're sorry. They shredded everything. We'd love to fill up your tank.

[27 : 46] We're sorry. I don't want your gas. It might have water in it. I'll be fine. We drove home and bought another car. I don't buy them unseen no more because it didn't work.

This man bought something unseen, but that's what this man did and that made a great excuse not to be a part of a banquet that he was invited to. Now, let's be honest.

He didn't want to go. He didn't want to go and we miss out on what the Lord wants us to do so very often to be honest because we don't want to go. We don't want to do it.

And I'm just telling you when God gives it to you, it is not simply an invitation. It's a commission.

He's charged you to share, to compel the world to come to Christ. He said it. He don't offer suggestions.

[28 : 47] And we miss out on so much because we're so busy. The next one said I'm married and I can't go.

And there's a lot I could say about that but there's a sermon on marriage that I don't want to touch because I've spent a week moving into a new house and spent the last night, last night we spent the first night in that house and we don't camp but that must be what camping is like.

Where do we put that? Where is that? I will say this. Spouses never get in the way of your spouse serving the Lord.

Don't do it. I am thankful that God gave me a wife that knows that need calls at any time and we've been rerouted on occasion and I've never heard a complaint.

Don't let your spouses legitimately say I can't serve this way because of my husband or because of my wife because in God's kingdom we shouldn't have any excuses.

[30 : 10] so let's get on and party like Jesus. Don't do a party don't do a party what he wouldn't do and that may be a whole other sermon too and don't go to a party where he wouldn't be welcome you've got a testimony you've got a reputation and a responsibility and if you're a child of God you have a responsibility to win the world of Christ you don't have to look like him to win him to Christ and if you look too much like him you will not be saw you will not be light hear me church don't go to a party where Christ ain't welcome if he walked in would you be embarrassed don't do things at a party that would dishonor him instead party like he does enter humbly invite others to join you and quit making excuses because if

Jesus is your Lord and Savior we got a lot to celebrate and I think as long as God gives us breath we ought to stay after it and party like Jesus with every head bowed and every eye closed if you're here this morning and you don't know the Lord Jesus personally there's never been a time in your life when you've surrendered your life to Christ and ask him to cleanse you and to change you and to renew you I want you to know that today we extend that invitation we don't do it on our own today is the day of salvation and Jesus is the same yesterday today and forever he's always there ready and willing he'll lead you and when you respond he'll save you we'll stand in just a moment and we'll sing but more important than that is that you follow what God would tell you to do anything step in the way maybe you're here and you know you've done that but you've never acknowledged that publicly salvation to you is a private matter the reality is

Jesus shows us and proclaims that we are to let others know what Christ has done in us maybe you want to join this church today and let people know that you're a child of God and come by baptism

we'd love to guide you through that process if you have questions along the way we'll answer them we'll guide you there maybe God's drawing you to this congregation you know that God would have you to be a part of this congregation we invite you to come if there's questions along the way we'll deal with that you just obey God and do what God would have you do maybe you're here this morning you just need to get some things right and you can do that where you sit and where you'll stand in a few moments or you can do it at this altar you can do it with a pastor praying for you makes no difference to me my burden is that you do exactly what God tells you to do I had somebody last week tell me God told me to do this during the invitation and I just didn't do it don't let that be your story when

Christ invites you respond no more excuses heavenly father I love you and I thank you for the opportunity that you give us to be together today God will you give us the strength and the boldness and the obedience and the fortitude to do exactly what you tell us to do nothing more nothing less right now oh God I pray in Jesus name Amen you