

What Shall I Tell My Master

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Scripture reading this evening you can find in the Gospel according to Luke 14 and we'll read beginning at verse 15 through verse 24. Luke 14, beginning at verse 15.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: 17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. 22 And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Here ends the reading of God's word.

Dear congregation, it is not what people profess but what they possess that will make the ultimate difference when this earth is finally done and the new earth will come. People's true standing before God is not a matter of what they say but rather a matter of the heart and many people can say many things but they don't have in their hearts what is necessary to back up what they say. And in our text tonight, we meet such a man, at least we have every reason of assuming that this is a man who has a lot to say but whose heart is empty of the divine life.

Christ is in the home of a Pharisee and presumably there are many other Pharisees here with him. Christ has been speaking about true humility while taking the lower place, learning to abase ourselves and waiting for another to say, "Friend, come up higher."

While the Lord is speaking, some proud man has to break in and he says this, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Now, what he says is true but how he says it, undoubtedly, is part of the problem and it is at this moment then that the Lord Jesus Christ speaks the parable that we see before us today in order to expose this man's heart but also our hearts tonight with respect to the Lord, with respect to his Gospel, with respect to his kingdom and with respect to his claims. And with the Lord's help, we wish to look at this parable under the following title "What Shall I Tell My Master?" What shall I tell my master? We will discover 3 things. First of all, the open heart of the master. Secondly, the hard heart of the excusers. Thirdly, the heart work in the true guests. What shall I tell my master? The open heart of the master. The hard part of the excusers. Thirdly, the heart work within the true guests.

So first then, the open heart of the master. Verse 16 says, "A certain man made a great supper." Before the Lord uncovers any of the hearts of anyone, he first reveals his own heart and the Lord Jesus Christ here especially is revealing the heart of his Father. What a mercy this is, just off the bat here, that the Lord Jesus Christ who was in the bosom of the Father from all eternity has come down here to this world among people like you and me who will not have the Lord's way and that he sovereignly and freely and mercifully opens up the heart of his Father to people like us. Well, he is so qualified to do this, isn't he? Because we read in John 1, "No man hath seen God at any time but he that was in the bosom of the Father. He hath declared him," and so he does it in this parable.

Listen, "A certain man made a great supper." Now, this word here refers to a banquet feast, a great meal and notice that he says "a great supper." And it's great not simply because a lot of people are invited to it but most definitely it is great because of the abundance of the provision that is prepared in this supper. It's not the kind of supper where you and I could come and bring something. No, this supper is so great it is lacking nothing. Everything a soul could need and want truly is at this supper.

There is no doubt that this man in our supper, this "man" refers to God himself from all eternity. There in the stillness of the never begun eternity, the Father, the Son and the Spirit undertook a supper to be revealed in time at which sinners, rebels, enemies, would sit together with the Triune God and partake of his bounty of life, of provision. We read in the book of Isaiah 25:6 where the Spirit of God says these things, "In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." And this feast that Isaiah is speaking of is the same feast we have here in this parable, it's the great Gospel feast that provides for the deepest needs of the souls of men. Man by nature is lacking everything, isn't he? He is empty. He is undone. He doesn't have any provisions for his soul. In fact, he has cut himself off from God and therefore he lives out his life hungry and thirsty and not knowing at all what he is missing until the Lord brings it to his mind and to his heart.

But here is a feast, congregation, with all sorts of glorious things. Things that have never entered into the mind or heart of man to conceive. There on this table that God spreads in the Gospel, there is peace and pardon. There is reconciliation with Almighty God. There

on his table is the new heart, new life, fellowship with the Triune God. There are comforts for mind, for soul and for body. There is an abundance there. Life ever more. There is joy. There is every conceivable need met there at the table that the Lord has spread in himself.

Really, congregation, do you know, can you imagine anything greater than the supper that God has prepared? Think of it. God, the Almighty, the glorious potentate of potentates, the glorious God of all eternity, all sufficient in himself. He has determined and decreed to make a great supper in order to give himself away sinners. To wretches. To miserable offenders against his holy law. People dead in sins and trespasses. People like you. People like me who have entered into this world enemies against Almighty God. He sets a table, a great table, a great feast.

How important it is to realize, congregation, that the Gospel does not call people to a life of drudgery as so many think and imagine. To a life of misery and want. Oh, I know we feel it in ourselves but that is because of who we are and what the Lord unmasks to ourselves, in ourselves but that's not because the Lord has not provided a great supper. He calls his people out of themselves, indeed, he calls them to liberty and to joy and to all manner of provision in himself through Jesus Christ.

"A man made a great supper." The greatest reason I think this is a great supper is when you think of the guests around that table. Rebellious men. Hostile men departing from the ways of God. Can you understand it? That God would do anything save cast out that man for evermore in that great banquet that you can read of in Revelation 19 where all manner of vultures and horrible fowl will be present and they will eat up men and all the rest of it. That is what we deserve. Don't you see how great this Gospel supper is and that it opens up something that is in the heart of God that he has decreed and he has determined from all eternity in the Gospel, in his Son, to reveal himself as just, yes, but also the Justifier of sinners, of the ungodly. It has not entered into the mind of man.

Congregation, you have heard of this supper many times. It has been set forth before you in the Gospel I don't know how many times, countless times I'm sure to most if not all of you. Here you've come from the world that is serving up so many dainties and so many things that we go after and our hearts are at the table that the world sets before us every day. And here in places like this, the Lord sets for us such a different table, such a glorious table in the Gospel, in the preaching. Or do you see how I say here that in the first place this opens up the heart of God?

But secondly, the Lord Jesus Christ not only opens up the heart of the Father and the heart of the Triune God but he also opens up the hard heart of the excusers. Look at verse 17. We read there this man "sent his servant at supper time." Now, you need to know something here: the Lord Jesus Christ is using the custom of that day where if some great master would set up a feast, he would send out an initial invitation, an initial call to people inviting them to come to the banquet and then just before the banquet, a few hours maybe the same day as the banquet, he would send a second invitation, a reminder and he would say, "Everything is ready. Come to the banquet." And this is exactly what

happened. In verse 16 he sent this initial call and exhortation, this invitation to come to the banquet. Then in the next verse, verse 17, he sends his servant again to the very guests that he had invited before and there is no indication that any of these guests had declined, any of them had said, "No, we won't come. We can't come." No, from all indications, they had agreed to come. They had given indication of their interest and even their readiness to come.

Congregation, spiritually speaking, there is that general invitation, that Gospel call that comes far and wide of which our Canons of Dort speak that it ought to be preached indiscriminately, far and wide. Repent ye and believe the Gospel. A broad general call unto all who will hear it. And indeed, there are many that scoff at this call and they will not be in churches today but there are also others who give every indication that they are interested in this Gospel supper, that they are interested in partaking of it. They have, in a certain sense, complied with it. They have given every impression that this Gospel supper has an attraction for them, that is, as long as the invitation was indefinite and vague and general. But remarkably when this second invitation comes and is very specific, "Come; for all things are ready," we see something so very different, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The point is they are making excuses. There are no real reasons here why they should not come but they give feigned reasons, pretend reasons, reasons to cover the real reasons.

Let's look at some of these reasons. The first man says, "I have just bought a parcel of ground and I really need to go and take a look at it now. I'm a man who is responsible for my possessions. I take life seriously. I've just bought this piece of ground and I can't be distracted. I can't be delayed. I need to take a look at it right now. It demands my attention and my time right now." Well, you wonder, first of all, why this man didn't see the parcel of ground before, why he bought it sight unseen. But apart from that, what is this man saying? He's saying that his possessions, the things that he owns, that he has his name to, they need his full attention and whatever supper or banquet there may be, even if he has given indication that he is interested in it, it will have to wait. "I cannot come. I pray thee have me excused." There was another man, he too has an excuse, "I have bought 5 yoke of oxen and I am on my way to break them in. I can't interrupt my plans, my priorities. I can't come to the feast at this moment. It's not convenient. I have things to do." Then there is the third man, he has just married a wife, he says. In other words, "I have this new relationship." We have no idea why he doesn't take his wife along or whatever it might be but his point here is, "I have a new set of circumstances in my life. I'm just married. I have this new relationship and whatever you are asking me to do can't interfere with that and so have me excused."

Now, congregation, I want us all to see that these things are all legitimate things. There is nothing wrong with possessions. There is nothing wrong with work, even hard work. There's nothing wrong certainly with marriage and with family responsibilities and other relationships if they are proper and in line with the Scriptures. All these things can be legitimate and innocent things in and of themselves but, congregation, here's the point: many, many people go lost not because they want illegitimate things, people liking

murder or adultery or theft. Oh indeed, there are people like that, but so many countless souls are lost for a never ending eternity because of very legitimate concerns.

Congregation, what legitimate things are in your life that are keeping you from complying with the Lord's demands? You know, when you take a look at these 3 people, these 3 sorts of people, what the Lord is doing here is he is lifting the veil on their hearts and he is showing how these are preoccupied people. Their hearts are preoccupied with the things of this world, with their possessions, with their priorities, with their relationships. And if the supper needs to wait and if the Gospel needs to wait, then so be it. And if the Lord of the Gospel must take the back seat, then so be it. These things have their hearts.

Congregation, do you recognize yourself this evening in these excusers? And do you see what a contrast there is between the open heart of the Father or of the Triune God on the one hand for sinners and the closed heart of man with respect to God? Where he fills up his heart with all sorts of things. Anything and everything can have his affections all to keep himself from the Gospel.

Congregation, this evening I am required to go back to my Master and to give him an account. I'm here to tell you about the great Gospel supper. I'm here to speak the words of our text which open up the heart of the Father unto you as well just like unto these excusers. And what must I tell my Master? For after all, he is calling you tonight in the Gospel, whoever you are. He's saying in the Gospel just like he said to these people, "Come; for all things are ready. All things. I have sent my Son in the fullness of time made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those under the law. Christ, the bread of life has come. He has given his life a ransom for many. All is done. Nothing more needs to be done. Nothing more can be done. Come to the Master. Come to his table. Come to the Gospel supper." Do you see the condescension here of the Master? That he speaks these words even to these excusers, "Come for all things already"? What must I tell my Master tonight regarding you? Take stock of your heart tonight. What legitimate things are filling your heart?

Oh, my dear unconverted friend, you come to church, you sit here and you give indication in a measure just like these excusers that at least from a distance you're fine with this invitation. You're fine with this idea of a supper. You're not like the worldlings of the world who have no time even to hear about it, who scoff and who mock. No, from all indications, in a certain sense by your presence here, you're giving indication, aren't you, that this has some interest in your heart and in your mind? This first invitation, this general invitation is such. But no, you don't say, "I won't have anything to do with it. Don't even dare come back to me. Don't tell me again. I don't want to have anything to do with it." No, not at all. You like orthodox preaching. You like to hear about this Gospel supper that has come up within the heart of God from all eternity. But when the Gospel comes and it's not just out there and it's not just general but when it makes you examine your heart and see where your true allegiance is and when it calls you away from your land and from your hobbies and from your work and from your religion and from your piety and from all these things that have your heart, oh then you come up with so many

excuses. Oh pious sounding excuses. Orthodox sounding excuses. But the Lord has one word for them, it's excuse.

Congregation, don't you see your danger? We are not here on this world forever. The Lord is going to have this banquet. He's going to have this supper. And the time will come when this earth will be rolled up like a scroll and when the table will be spread and it will either be that great and glorious Gospel supper for all eternity or it will be what I referred to earlier, that horrible vulture, fowl ridden supper forever in perdition where the souls of many churchgoing people, where the souls of these excusers will be there at that banquet. Oh, what a terrible banquet that will be and all they will be able to say is, "I wanted my land. I wanted my oxen. I wanted my relationships. I wanted my life as I knew it and as I wanted it," and forever the worm that does not die will gnaw at them. Ye would not.

Yet today the Lord is unveiling hearts and if he is unveiling your heart tonight in this parable and if you have to say in all honesty before him and I pray the Spirit convinces you of sin and of righteousness and of judgment, tonight if you have to say, "Yes, that is me." Oh, my excuse-making friend, you cannot go on. What will it be to meet spurned love that day? To meet the Triune God who has given you so many overtures and so many calls, so many entreaties, time and time again? Sent you so many servants, the one after the other and nothing but excuses? Oh, heed God's word today. The Lord says, "Kiss the Son lest ye perish in the way when his anger is kindled but a little."

Congregation, in our text we read that the master was angry when he heard of these excuses. He was angry. This master who spread in love such a Gospel feast, he was angry when he heard of these excuses. This is the anger of spurned love. It's the anger that one day will burn in hell. What will that be to have sinned against love? Overtures of love against grace? The hottest places in hell will be reserved for those who have sinned, time without number, against love. Oh, may the Holy Spirit burn it into your hearts today and not leave you alone. And he was angry. And he was angry. And he was angry. Oh, kiss the Son today.

But will the house of my master be half full? No, it cannot be. What shall I tell my master? We have seen the open heart of the master, the hard heart of the excusers and now, thirdly, and lastly, the heart work within the true guests. Congregation, the rest of tonight we'll be going out into the highways and the byways, into the streets and lanes among the hedges and highways for my master has said to me, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in hither the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind, for the Lord's house must be full," and the Lord will do all to fill it.

Congregation, look around you tonight. We're not in palaces right now. We're not in fine houses where things look so beautiful. Where people are buying land and oxen and are celebrating and are preoccupied with all their possessions and all that they can do. We're out in the cold. We're out with the outcasts. Are there any poor, blind, maimed and halt present here tonight? The Lord is sending me to invite you, whoever you are. This is part of the Lord's work. He first drives a people out of themselves. He makes it so that they

believe their comfortable places where they can pride themselves in all that they possess and can occupy themselves in all that their hands find to do and he makes them to go over this world homeless with respect to their souls. Is there anyone here who cannot find a place for the soul of their feet?

How the Lord needs to loosen us, doesn't he, from our places where we are so safe and at peace? And not only, if this is you, has the Lord made you such an outcast but you have also been made spiritually poor and disabled, haven't you? So much so that you can no longer trust your own devices, your own efforts, and your own wit. It's instructive here to see the pictures that the Lord paints for us. He speaks specifically of 6 kinds of people and let's look at each of them in turn in order to learn what kind of heart work it is that the Lord does in those who will be his true guests.

First of all, there is the poor. The poor. These are not just physically poor people without many possessions, though there are many in this world indeed who are poor and who are yet rich with respect to eternity. But these are people whom God has made poor in spirit. They have lost all their spiritual riches. They have lost all the things that they used to trade with and count on, their false spiritual bank accounts. They become bankrupt before God. They don't have land to buy and oxen to try out. They have nothing to lean on in this world. The Lord has made sure of that and there they are, deprived of all these things, going around whether they will have to go into a never ending eternity without so much as a dime, a spiritual dime to their name. Poor one, there is a Gospel supper. And I have been sent you tonight to invite you to come. I know you can scarcely believe it that there would be a place set up in this world where a master has invited you to partake of a great supper filled with every provision that your heart can ever need or ever want or ever imagine. Poor one, there is a great supper the Lord has spread.

But secondly, the maimed. A maimed person then as well as today is someone who has had to lose their legs or their arms and cannot do what they used to be able to do. They cannot go to places that they need to go and so too spiritually there are people who have through the working of God's providence or the working of his law, they have been disabled with respect to the demands of the law. They see that they have lost their ability to earn their way back to God. They are unable to move so much as a step back towards God like this man at the pool of Bethesda. There he is lying there unable so much as to move a step. "I have no man," he says, "to carry me to the pool." Is there anyone here tonight who fits this description? Maimed? Unable to move? It seems like everyone around you can do things so easily, so readily, and there you are, you try spiritually but no, you are maimed. Today, I'm here to tell you that there is a Gospel feast. There is a Gospel supper and the host of that supper has a heart of love. Come to this supper. I know you can scarcely believe it would be for you but he has told me, "Invite the poor and the maimed also to my supper."

Then there is the halt, thirdly. The halt. Who are these? These are those who maybe used to be able to walk quite well but now though they can walk they sort of stumble along. Think of Jacob and the night where the Lord came against Jacob and wrestled with him there through the night and touched the hollow of his thigh and he went halting from that

point on while the sun rose up that day over Penuel. Oh congregation, there are among the true guests many who halt. Oh no, they don't halt on 2 opinions though in a certain sense I'm sure they would acknowledge that as well but no, they have been made limpers and stumblers. They watch so many people run ahead of them but they trail behind. They can't seem to keep up. They can't be at the front of the pack. Is there anyone halting today like that? My Master has told me specifically to come and invite you to come to this supper. This Host has an open heart of love and yes, you can scarcely believe that it might be for you but my Master has said, "Invite the halt."

Then fourthly there is the blind. These are people who perhaps used to be able to see fine, certainly as the world sees, but through the Lord's work in their life they realized how blind they were with respect to the things of God. Like Saul of Tarsus, they have been cast down and they are no longer able to even so much as feel their way forward. Darkness is over their life. They live in the shadow of death. Is there anyone here tonight who fits this description? Blind? Oh, I know you can scarcely believe it but my Master has said specifically to invite you to come to this supper. He has spread out a free and sovereign grace. It's the table of his love.

The Lord goes on to speak about 2 more groups. The fifth group are those in the highways. Now, back then in the time in which Christ lived, the highways would be far from the city and here's where the untouchables would find their dwelling, whatever holes they could carve out for themselves. Then oftentimes as we know from the Scripture, the highways were also for those who had wandered far from home. Think of the prodigal. When he had left home so confidently with all his father's goods, his inheritance, and he had gone down the highways far away from his father as he could, living it up in the world and only reaping famine and unhappiness and a swine's existence.

Congregation, those in the highways are those who are far from home and from their rest and yet the Lord tonight invites any and all who are in the highways of their own self-chosen existence, the Lord specifically has sent me to call you and as we find in Jeremiah 31:8, "I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them." I'm coming to you today at the behest of my Master. There you are on the highway of life. There is a great table that is set for people like you. There is a Host with a heart filled with love. I know you can scarcely imagine it, scarcely believe it would be for someone like you, but the Lord calls the poor, the maimed, the halt, the blind and also those in the highways.

Congregation, there is one group left and I do hope and pray there is someone like that here tonight, those in the hedges. Well, the hedges were places where homeless people would seek for some temporary shelter, some temporary refuge from the wind and the cold and the storm. But what is a hedge when it comes to shelter? Are there any here who have found some temporary shelter? Maybe in some outward, some formal religion? Maybe in some convictions perhaps? But like any shelter that is not a true shelter, it is at best a thorny, a prickly, and uncomfortable shelter and it won't protect you in the day of

days. You need much more than a hedge for shelter. Oh, I know the Lord has said about his people that he will hedge them about with thorns but it's in order that he might come and allure them and tonight I have come with a message from the Most High: are you in the hedges tonight seeking for some shelter and all you have is some bristly, prickly kind of hedge that cannot give you any true comfort? Oh come, for there is a feast of fat things spread by the most glorious Host ever conceivable and he has an open heart of love also for you. Oh, I know you can scarcely believe it but it's true, he has sent me. Not only for the poor, not only for the maimed, not only for the halt and for the blind but also for those in the highways and the hedges.

Perhaps someone says tonight, "I do recognize myself, at least to some extent, with what you're saying. I am an outcast. I feel it. In my soul I am disabled. I cannot and I will never be able to please the Lord. Do you think this Host would want me at his Gospel table?" My dear friend, if that is you tonight, the Lord has not only bid for you, he has not only beckoned for you, but he has told me tonight, "Compel them to come in." And oh, I cannot force you physically. I cannot even force you with my words. Nothing I say will make any difference in your life unless the Lord, the Holy Spirit, compels you. But I pray with God's blessing that the Holy Spirit would even tonight take you by heart and by hand and bring you in. And allow me just to interact briefly with whatever arguments might fill your mind. Perhaps you say, "Don't you see, I am outside of it all? I am outside this Gospel feast." But indeed, that's the very point. Why stay outside of it all when you can be inside with this Gospel feast that has everything you could possibly need or imagine or want? Where there is a Host whose heart is filled with love, filled with pardon, filled with peace, filled with all that ever you might need? But perhaps you say, "But I have sinned too much. I'm so ugly. I'm disabled. I will never amount to anything. Don't you see me, I'm maimed? I'm halt. I'm blind." Ah, but this Gospel supper is for the exact people that you are describing. You see, this Gospel Host hasn't chosen the best of this world but the worst, the most vile, the most wretched, the most poor, in order that he might shower his love upon the most empty, the most wretched vessels and glorify his great love in the likes of you. But you say, "I can't bring anything to this Gospel supper. I don't have anything. I can't bring anything." Ah, but my Master has said, "Come; for all things are ready." To bring something would be offense to him. It would be like saying, "Thou has not done enough. Thou hast not enough and so I must bring something." You cannot and you may not bring anything but your vileness, but your wretchedness, but your sin. All things are ready.

"But don't you know I am lame? I am maimed? I am blind? I can never find the way to this Gospel supper." Do you think that this Host has not thought of that? Do you think that this will surprise him? That he has thought of everything but he hasn't thought of the ways and means to get you to this supper? Zephaniah 3 says, "I will save her that halteth and gather her that was driven out and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame." Congregation, there unto he has sent his Son as we heard this morning into the deepest valley wherever the most wretched and vile sinner, the most lame, the most maimed sinner will find him or herself. And like the shepherd in the next chapter, he can take you, lame on both feet if that be so. He can lift you up and put you upon his shoulders and take you all the way to the Gospel supper until he set you

down and he says to his Father and to the angels and to all there, "Rejoice with me for this my sheep was lost. It was perishing. It was destroying itself but I have brought it back."

Perhaps someone has one last argument, "Oh, but I don't have any appropriate garments to wear for such a feast as this." Oh, dear friend, this Host has a Son and this Son is telling this parable and he went on to weave a most glorious garment of the finest needlework and it can clothe vile sinners like you and of you it can be said what we read in Psalm 45, "Her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework." Do you have more arguments? Every one of them can be answered from out of the love of this Triune God.

Oh congregation, I must return to my Master and what will I say to my Master? Must I tell him of excuses? Must I say I went to this people and they had land they needed to see, they had oxen they needed to try, they had relationships they were preoccupied with? Oh, the anger of spurned love. Don't send me back to my Master only to report excuses, excuses, excuses. Oh, that the Lord would break your heart tonight. Oh, there is nothing, nothing that can stand against his love.

Oh congregation, his thoughts are so much higher than our thoughts. I don't know tonight what is the greatest wonder of all these wonders. Is it the wonder of his heart filled with love for wretched sinners like you and like me? Surely that is a wonder it will take an eternity to plumb the depths of that wonder. But how about the wonder of this gracious work he does in hearts of sinners like you and me who are bent on their own destruction and how he stops them on their ways and takes their heart and, yes, by his providence and, yes, by his law but especially with his Gospel, he woos and he wins them and he allures them and he brings them lame or maimed or halt, whatever they are. He brings them like Mephibosheth to the table of the Lord. That is a wonder that it will take an eternity to plumb the depths of, don't you agree? Me, that the Lord had thoughts of love for me.

But congregation, there is one more wonder and I don't know how to explain it. It's the wonder that with such a Host and with such a Gospel and such a Lord Jesus Christ, that there would still be those with excuses. Can you understand that? Oh, I know it's true and I know why it's true but with such love to go lost. With such love. That too will take an eternity but a horrible eternity to understand that. May God keep us from that and may he bring us tonight to the Gospel of his Son. Amen.

Oh, Almighty Lord, thou hast told me to compel them to come in but I have failed. I cannot bring in a single one and so I lay it back before thee tonight, O Lord. Do what I cannot do. Do what no mortal can ever do, compel thou them by thy gracious and effectual Holy Spirit to come to that banquet in order forevermore to wonder, "Why me? Why me?" Dismiss us, O Lord, under thy hands of blessing. Help us not to go back into this world with its land and its oxen and all the things that it's beckoning to us to occupy ourselves with and to head headlong into eternity. Stop us, Lord, and gather out the blind, the lame, the maimed and the halt, those in the highways and those in the hedges

and bring glory to thyself that thy house may be full. Pardon all our sins in the Redeemer's name and for his sake alone. Amen.