

# A Compelling Call to All

By Jeff Noblit

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**Bible Text:** Luke 14:16-24  
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Amen. Let's take our Bibles and let's go back to the gospel of Luke this morning. Luke 14. Let's go there, a quite familiar parable with quite familiar truths that I hope will stir afresh in us the great mission and the great passion of our Lord about reaching the lost, and for you this morning who are under the sound of my voice and do not know Christ and have not trusted in him fully as your Lord and Savior, may this be the day that you do just that because I can promise you this, if you will turn to him in faith, he will save you. If you will turn to him, he will save you.

Luke 14. Let's begin in verse 16 and go through verse 24. Jesus is speaking this parable which is a story to illustrate a truth. Verse 16,

16 But He said to him, "A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; 17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.' 19 Another one said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.' 20 Another one said, 'I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.' 21 And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

Let me stop right there and tell you in the, in the cultural historical context who's being pointed out here. The first group that was invited is most likely the, uh, acceptable, if you will, among the Jewish establishment, the religious authorities and those who considered themselves religiously, ceremonially clean and ready for their Savior and acceptable to God. And then the second group out in the, uh, the highways, how does he word it there? Uh, the streets and the lanes, the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame, in ancient Israel their teaching was that physical ailments probably meant you were unclean before God, you weren't acceptable. So these are the outcasts among Israel, these are the non-acceptable, those deemed as not being worthy to come before God and come to God. Then we come to a third group, verse 22,

22 And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' [what a phrase] 23 "And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.

Now that last group is those in Gentile darkness, the, the, the wretches of the society according to a Jewish understanding, those out in pagan darkness who are not acceptable to God in the ancient Jewish understanding. So he says, "Get all of those and tell them they can come too." Verse 24,

24 'For I tell you, none of those men who were invited [that's the first group he is referring back to] shall taste of my dinner.'"

"A Compelling Call to All" is what this is. A compelling call for all to come to Christ. We Reformed guys need this message. We need to be remembered that our gospel is for everyone. Everyone.

Notice, first of all, I, notice the great dinner. Now, again, this is a fictitious story and the Lord used many of these, we call them parables. It's just a story to illustrate a basic spiritual or we could say biblical truth. And verse 16, the Bible says this man had this big dinner and last phrase of verse 16, he invited many. Many. That represents the big heart of God. The invitation to come to God's bountiful dinner and the big dinner is the spiritual nourishment of salvation, the spiritual food of salvation which is the Lord Jesus Christ. And this big-hearted God invites this invitation out to all of these people free of charge and the provision is boundless. It's a big dinner because of the greatness of the God who prepared it, and literally the whole earth is invited to come. Did you hear me? I'm not saying the whole earth will come but God wants the whole earth to come. In five books of the New Testament, uh, the Lord Jesus gave to his leaders that he left on the earth this type of command, it's worded differently but I believe this is what it is, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." It's a big dinner and it's a big invitation, and it comes from the heart of a great God.

Now it's a big dinner because of the company that will be present. When we have that final supper with our Lord in the glorified heavens, the marriage supper of the Lamb, God the Father will be there, God the Son will be there, and God the Holy Spirit will be there, and the multitude of glorified angelic hosts will be there, and all the saints of all the ages of time will be there. It's gonna be a great supper. It's a big supper and it's big because those present have been purchased with a great price, not with silver or gold or perishable things are we purchased but with the precious blood of the Lamb, the blood of Jesus Christ paid our ticket that we might come and feast of the, the dinner that is Jesus Christ.

It reminds me of that old gospel song. I don't know if, I guess it was a hymn. I don't know that we've ever sung it. Maybe we have, I know it's been done as a solo, "Come and dine, the Master calleth, come and dine. You have feast at Jesus' table anytime. He who fed the

multitude, turned the water into wine. Come and dine, the Master calleth, come and dine." It gives me chill bumps. Have you come to dine at the feast of Jesus Christ? All can come. It's a, it's a big dinner.

Now it's big also because of its exceeding excellence. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:9, "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, and have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him." Brothers and sisters, listen to me, don't marvel over this world. Don't be intoxicated with the good things of this present world. Now these things are the gifts of common grace and God gives us so many good things to enjoy and don't begrudge them or think of the, the blessings of this life as all evil. That's not what I mean, I just mean they are not even to be compared. The men of God wrote in the word of God, "I couldn't even show it to you with your eyes because your mortal eyes can't take in what's waiting for you with God in heaven. I can't even tell it to your mortal ears because your ears can't take in the wonder, the greatness and the glory of what's waiting for you in the heaven of heavens. I can't ask you to take it in your mind and heart and contemplate on it because, listen, brothers and sisters, it's glorious because, because your heart would burst if you took in the wonders and the glories of heaven." That's why when we get there, the Bible makes us like him. The Bible says we don't know what we're going to be like but we'll be like him. Why? Because we've got to have a new heart and a new set of eyes and a new set of ears to take in the glories of heaven, and even then we won't take it all in until eternity stops and eternity doesn't stop. It's just so good and so wonderful, it'd take that long.

Well, in this parable he says it's a great dinner. He invited many. Notice secondly: everything is ready now, he says, verse 17, "and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.'" You know what that means? It means in the original Greek, everything is ready now means that everything is ready now. It means there's nothing else to do. There's nothing else to provide. There's nothing else to be performed. All that is, that needs to be done has been done. There's nothing more to do except for you to come and dine. Come and feast at this table.

Now when sometimes friends will invite us over, or you'll invite a friend over for dinner, and they'll say, "Well, what can I bring?" And what do you always say? "Nothing, just come." Well, that's what God says. You don't need to bring anything. "Well, can I just bring a dessert?" Are you kidding me? Jesus made this meal. How preposterous, how arrogant of you to think you'd bring anything that could even compare to what he's gonna offer in this meal. Just come, it's all ready.

You see, the Father prescribed this meal already. He's laid out exactly how it's to be. He's laid out exactly how it's to work. The Father prescribed this meal. The Son has already provided this dinner. He went to the cross and there on the cross he took the holy wrath of his Father that ought to have fallen on us. He's provided for us to feast of himself and the gift of eternal life. The Father prescribed, the Son provided for it, and now the Spirit pronounces that the meal is poured out and everything is now ready so all you need to do is come. If you're here this morning, you may be a church member, you may be an ethical

person, you may be a good neighbor, you may be a decent parent, I don't know what you are but have you come to Christ and eaten of his table?

Well, it's, it's, it's a big dinner. Notice secondly in our text, notice the blind and busy rejecters. The blind and busy rejecters. Here we have it in verses 18 through 20. The Bible says, first of all, note, "But they all alike began to make excuses." Now they didn't make the same excuse, the idea they all did basically the same thing, they misjudged timing and they mismanaged priorities.

They misjudged the timing. "Now can I go a little bit later? I've got some things going on." No, you've gotta understand something, when the Master lays out the dinner table, you come. You don't, you don't, you don't try to put it on schedule and that's where some of us are today, even those of us who are saved are trying to schedule the things of God into the world. You're backwards. You schedule a little bit of the world, not the evil part, but a little bit of the world into the things of God.

They had misjudged the timing and they'd mismanaged the priorities. One basic thing influenced all of them to the end of disregarding this invitation and that is a preoccupation with this world. That's why people don't come to the dinner. Look, are you listening to me? I am, I don't put much clout in what's called Christian apologetics. Now I think there's some good brothers who do that and I thank God for them in a sense, but let me ask you something: apologizing for what? Explaining what? There's one reason why men don't come, they love this world and they love sin. That's it. It's not because they're brilliant. It's not because they're well-educated. It's not because they're intellectual and can't grasp it. It's because they love sin. That's why they don't come. Oh, now they love pseudo-scientific intellectual conversations and, uh, uh, uh, passing, or, or, or like shirking the subject to get around it in all these word salads that the intelligent among us might be able to put out there, but the reason they don't come is sin. And notice what this does to our Lord's heart. Look at verse 24, he says he was angry, first of all. Well, let's see, that's up in verse, um, uh, well, he was, trust me it's in there. He said, "None of them will be invited to My supper." Use all the arguments you want, none of them will sail with Almighty God. This happens in every age, many come but many do not. It was true in this first century, it'll be true down through all the centuries and it's true in the century you and I are living in today.

They're just saying, in effect, "It's just not right timing for me right now. I have a hindrance. I, I, I will come later at a better time." Now listen, these folks are basically, in effect, acknowledging that it's right to come, they're basically acknowledging that it's good to come, and they're basically acknowledging that we have a duty to come. We may not speak about that and preach about that much but we ought to. You have a duty to come to Christ. They just say, "I just can't come now." The heavy yoke of worldly lust makes men slaves to earthly things and these otherwise innocent earthly concerns become evil in that they blind us to the priority of heavenly things.

Can I charge you, those of you who know the Lord this morning, draw a line in the sand in your heart this morning and say, "I'm gonna seek first the kingdom of God and His

righteousness and all those things could be added on later." How many under the sound of my voice this day will still blindly sacrifice salvation for this world? They barter, rather, eternal heaven for the brief and hollow enjoyments of this earth. The Lordship of Christ precedes all other devotions.

Look how strong this is, just continue on in our text. Look at verse 25 and we'll go down through verse, uh, 27.

25 Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,

Now he sees all this throng coming around him and he knows so many of them are just interested, just want free meals, or whatever it might be. Verse 26,

26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. 27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

You see, that's what these guys didn't want to do. Now when it says you've gotta hate your own family, it means in compared to my devotion to Christ, they're way down here. I love them dearly, I'd give my life for my babies and my wife, but compared to Christ my devotion to them is down here. Jesus said, "That's the way you come. You put everything else behind you and when I invite you, you come. You come and feast and take this nourishment and follow Me."

3. We talked about the great dinner. We've talked about this blind and busy rejecters. Now let's talk about the great invitation, verses 21 through 23. "And the slave came back and reported this," that's reported all those who said we have other things to do, we can't come, "to his master. Then the head of the household became angry," there it is, told you it was there, "and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor, the crippled, the blind and lame.'" Can I just say something about the fact that this text brings out... Now here's Jesus talking and Jesus is saying, "It angers Me when I go to the cross for you and I invite you to full and free salvation, and you push Me off." The, the idea here, the Greek text means a growing anger, a moving anger. It's going forward. It's increasing.

Brothers and sisters, God is real. God is alive. He's a living being. He's never still. God is always active. He's active in love and in grace and in mercy, freely forgiving and securing for all eternity those who repent and place their faith in Jesus Christ. But this is Christ talking. We find out that he's also angered in his, or rather active in his anger and in his commitment to retribution and wrath on those who will not come. Psalm 7:11 reminds us God is angry with the wicked every day. God has anger against those every day who do not trust in him. You say, "Why is that?" You see, here's the problem: we don't preach enough on who God is so we don't grasp what an abhorrent evil it is to dishonor him, what a radical injustice it is to not obey him. You see, we've, we've

dumbed God down to being a lot like us but just a little stronger, a little cleaner. No, he's, he's, he's transcendent in holiness. But thank God his love and mercy is as great as his anger and retribution.

Now he's not yet fully exposing and executing his anger, however it is building and it multiplies against unbelievers every day. It's like water that builds up behind a dam until it reaches that place that it bursts through. You want to see what it like, it's like when God's anger finally bursts over and bursts through the dam of his restraining love that's out... You think bad things are in the world right now, God's restraint is on right now. You want to know what it looks like when God's anger is unleashed? Read the book of Revelation. Read the book of Revelation. It's unimaginable. Why? Because he's that holy and our sins are great dishonor and righteous or unrighteous plague compared to his holy and righteous standing.

Well, verse 21, "the slave came back and reported this," now referring back again to the first group that wouldn't come, "the slave came back and reported this to his master." I thought about that, reporting back, and I thought that's the job of the minister of God, in effect, that he's to share the gospel, he's to urge others to come and repent and believe, and then he just reports back to the master, "Master, I told them." I don't know how it's gonna be on the day of judgment, but could it be that you will be there before the holy bar of God's justice and God might summons Jeff Noblit to the witness stand and say, "Pastor, by the grace and the ability that I give you, did you charge those people to turn and trust in Me?" And I'll say, "Yes, Lord, I did. I'm reporting back." And you'll be without excuse.

Well, verse 21, he, last part of that verse, he says, "Well, that first group is not interested, then go out and bring in the poor and the crippled and the blind and the lame." Line before that, "out into the streets and the lanes of the city. Those outcast areas. Find those that are the community outcast, those whom the established religious community considers inferior and beneath the dignity to come to God's house." He said, "Bring all of them in here." I love God's great gracious invitation, don't you? "Bring them all in here." I think among other things what we're gonna find when we get to heaven is not so many of those of the religious elite establishment made it there. A lot of those out in the highways and the hedges or the lanes of the city, the outcasts will be there.

He says to bring them in. That phrase in verse 21, "bring them," is the same phrase that we used when the Bible says "they led Jesus away to crucifixion." It has a, it has a strength to it, a persistence in it. It, it's more than an invitation but a persistent effort to do anything we can to bring them to the Savior.

Verse 22, "And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done,'" so now there's the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame all in there eating the dinner and the picture the word paints, and the slave said, "Master, we're, we've got a bunch of them in here but there's still room." You know what? There's always still room. You can't exhaust the grace of God. You know why there's still room? Are you listening to me, sir? There's still room so that you today can be saved.

Jesus says, "My love is so great, bring in everybody you can," and yet there's still room. What a statement. That phrase "there's still room" is a truth. It's a truth that exposes those who refuse as inexcusable. There's no valid excuse because there's room for you if you'll come. If you'll turn to Christ, he will take you. So those who reject, you are without excuse.

Secondly, it's a truth that encourages the hesitant to come. "But will He take me? In the eyes of men I'm an outcast. In the eyes of men, figuratively speaking at least, I, I'm the poor and I'm the blind and I'm the crippled and I'm the lame." And in ancient Israel they often looked at those people as being spiritual unclean and religiously unacceptable. They were cast out to the outer edges of the city. But Jesus said, "Let them come in and eat My dinner. There's room for them. There's room for them."

That phrase "there is still room" exhorts the ministers of God and the Christians to keep on keeping on telling the old, old story. Listen brothers and sisters, there's still room. Don't give up on that spouse. There's still room. Don't give up on that child or grandchild that's wavered from God. God may work on their hearts and they'll come to Christ because there's still room. Don't give up on that aunt or that uncle or that grandmother or that granddaddy. Don't give up, there's still room. Don't quit. We're gonna start our small groups up here in about a month and it ought to be on your hearts who can we enroll in small groups, at least bring them in here and love them and welcome them and let them know they're welcome, and show them Christ and show them the gospel. Why? Because there's still room. There's still room. The provisions for the dinner are infinite because the dinner's host is the infinite God. There's still room.

Well, verse 23. This is the third group now. So since there's still room, verse 23, "the master said to the slave, 'Well, go out into the highways and along the hedges,' now this is an even worse group, "and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled." This is the Gentiles, the non-Jews, those out there in pagan darkness, those that didn't have the law of Moses, those that didn't have the ceremonies and the ordinances that pointed them to the coming Savior, the Messiah Jesus Christ, those that involved themselves in the vilest of immoralities and impurities and perversions, and gloried in it. Jesus said, "I want all them to come in to My dinner." Oh, what grace God has. This is the hardened spiritual wretches of the day.

Ephesians 2:12 speaks of these, these Gentiles in darkness. He says basically they're "separated from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." At least the Jews could say, "We know who God is. We've got the law of Moses." But the Gentiles were without that. They didn't have anything. And in the parable, the Master Jesus says, "Go get those folks and bring them in here. I want them in My house. I want them at My dinner. They may be the darkest of the society, they may be the lowest of the culture, they might be the most vile," and by the way, there's nothing wrong with that definition and that description. That is true of all men who do not know Christ. But the outcast of the outcast, at least they appear that way in men's eyes, they're to be invited in.

Now even more than that, verse 23 uses another Greek word here. In the earlier verse he said, "bring them in," now he says, "compel them to come in." I think there's a reason for that. Now it doesn't mean physical force. I remember in the old days when we unintentionally perhaps but nevertheless gave the impression during revival meetings at the end of the services, if you could walk down to the front, God would save you. And I've seen people literally thrown out into the aisle. I mean, literally I've seen wives almost take their husbands and drag them out to the aisle as if God's out in the aisle. God's not in that aisle anymore than he's in that pew, and God's not at these steps. And by the way, can I say this for the one thousandth and one time? This is not an altar, these are steps. Catholics have an altar where you have to go and participate in the superstition of the priestcraft in order to "find God." We don't have that. You know why? Because wherever you are, repent of your sins, believe on Jesus Christ and that is the altar of God. He'll save you in an old Ford pickup truck. He'll save you in a '72 Cutlass Oldsmobile driving through Columbia, TN. That's me. That was my altar. I'm glad somebody hadn't told me I had to go to a Baptist church and walk down the aisle, I couldn't find one that night. The only one I could see was a Methodist church. I'm telling you the truth, I'm driving down the road, I'm converted listening to a preacher on the radio and that was my altar and that's where God saved me, and I was looking around for a church and I saw this Methodist church off in the distance and I almost stopped and went in and told them what had just happened. It would've blown their minds.

"Compel them," he says. Church, listen to this. Perhaps and I believe it's true, the reason why he uses a different word here is because it means convince them, "Yes, God loves you too." Convince them, "Yes, God will save you and He'll forgive you." "Pastor, you don't know what I did last night? You don't know what I did this morning, Pastor." Listen to me: I don't care as far as Jesus saving you, he will take you. He will take you. Those out in the vile darkness of wickedness and paganism, he says, "Go get them and persuade them they can come in." It's to be an urgent persuasion. The idea is to be a consistent persuasion. The idea is to be a confident persuasion. It's to be an enthusiastic persuasion because a lot of those kind of people just are uninterested because they feel like they're not welcome. We've got to tell them, "You're welcome. You can come just like you are, warts and all." If you'll repent as a sinner, and that basically means I turn from every other concept of coming to God except Jesus Christ, every other thought of how God will love me, I throw that away and I turn exclusively to say, "Christ, I believe in You." I don't care where you are in this world, if you'll come, Christ will take you and we will take you. They're full of fears and full of doubts so sometimes we have to persist and we have to keep talking, we have to keep encouraging, we have to keep reminding them until their fears and our silence and all the objections are pushed away and they come. They can come and they must come.

The Lord said, "compel them to come in. Now are you listening to me? They need to come without preparation. You see, that's the great lie of the enemy. "Well, you know, if you just get this in line and just get this fixed up, if you just, just dot these i's and cross these t's." No, he just said, "Go out and get those folks and tell them to come." Just come like you are and eat of the dinner and he will save you. If they will just come to Christ, he



will prepare for them the dinner and, listen, he's already made a reservation for them and he's paid for it with his money and he's put it in his name.

I can't tell you the number of times I've gone to preach in another town, in another city, and after a year and a couple of months, the lay, I'm planning on doing that at the end, the end of this month, and I'll go into the hotel where they've made me a reservation and the lady or the gentleman there will say, "Do you have a reservation? What's your name?" And I'll give them my name, and many of the times they'll look at me and say, "There is no reservation under that name." I've learned, though, and I'll give them, then I'll say, "What about this name," and I'll give them the name of the pastor and a lot of times it's under his name, and they'll give me a room. Sometimes I have to give the name of the church, "Oh yeah, they've got an account here." It's reserved under their name. Brothers and sisters, when we get to heaven and we go up to the gate of heaven, the gatekeeper may look and say, "Do you have a reservation here and under what name?" And if I go to the gate of heaven and the gatekeeper says, "Do you have a reservation here and what is the name?" And I say, "Jeff Noblit." They will look and they'll say, "You know, I have no reservation under that name." But then I'll think for a moment and I'll think, "Well, you know, my elder brother, Jesus, He's already come ahead and paid for the room. Would you check and see if it's under the name Jesus Christ?" And they'll pull that up and they'll say, "Oh yes, He's already paid for it. The reservation is done. Welcome in."

Jesus has made a way for you. Come, come, come. Come now. Come without delay. Come without excuse. Come and he will save you. "For as many as received Him, He gave the power to become the children of God even to those who believe on His name."

Can I say something to you? It's not a coincidence that you're here this morning. God's worked the events of your life so that you would be here. I was in my study this week knowing that I'm, had another week before I was starting 2 Timothy and I just prayed and said, "God, what could I preach to these people?" And it's almost like a divine hand. Do you know how many sermon files I've got? Divine hand went down in there and this just popped up before me and the moment I read the text, my heart leaped. I knew this was the message for today for you. If you're a Christian, let's go invite them in. If you're not, come and dine. Come and dine.