

Readings

Scripture

¹² He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

¹⁵ 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!" ¹⁶ But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷ 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.' ¹⁸ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' ¹⁹ And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' ²⁰ And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹ 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.' ²² And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' ²³ And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'"

- Luke 14:12-24 (English Standard Version)

Reflection

"The life of Jesus Christ creates unique communities of disciples rooted in grace that worship their risen Lord and find themselves compelled to give that life away."

"A disciple is someone who gets the life of Christ, experiences the life of Christ with others, and obeys Jesus' command to give the life away."

And yet just because it is a book about both the sublime and the unspeakable, it is a book also about life the way it really is. It is a book about people who at one and the same time can be both believing and unbelieving, innocent and guilty, crusaders and crooks, full of hope and full of despair. In other words, it is a book about us.

And it is also a book about God. If it is not about the God we believe in, then it is about the God we do not believe in. One way or another, the story we find in the Bible is our own story.

- Frederick Buechner, *Beyond Words* (p. 43)

Sermon Outline

A Great Celebration

Luke 14:12-24

The Rooted Experience

Brad Anderson

The great celebration will be filled with unexpected guests... (Luke 14:12-13)

The guests will experience profound generosity... (Luke 14:15-24)

The guests will experience profound care... (Luke 14:15-24)

The guests will experience profound conversion... (Luke 14:15-24)

Reflection Questions (excerpted from the Rooted Experience, used with permission)

- If you were in charge of planning a reunion banquet for your school, where would you hold the banquet? What would you serve as the main course? What would you plan for entertainment?
- And if the invited guests didn't show...?
- How has your approach to hospitality and preparations for hosting changed over these recent days?
- How does Jesus address the presumption of the man recorded in Luke 14:15? How does this parable expand on the previous story in Luke 14:12-14?
- Who are the invited guests in this parable? Why don't they come? Who are the ones who eventually come? What happens to the original invitees? On what basis is one invited to the banquet?
- In sum, what does this parable teach about the kingdom? What keeps people out? What enables them to get in?
- From your own experience, how do you explain why so many say, "No" to God's incredible banquet? What would it take for those outside to sense God's loving invitation to table fellowship?