

PARABLES OF GRACE...

Grace Parables were often prompted by words at a dinner party, or a question from his critics. When Jesus came to dinner, **strange/holy things happened**. The **Issue** wasn't the **MENU**, or what was put on **THE TABLE**, but what's happening **AROUND THE TABLE**. He didn't focus on **good etiquette**, or **WHO SITS WHERE**, but on who was **ACCEPTED/LEFT OUT**.

THE TWO DEBTORS...

Luke 7

Simon's meal was a **DINNER PARTY GONE WRONG**. Few **Pharisees** invited Jesus to dinner, often hosted by **tax collectors/sinners**. Other **dinner guests** go **unnamed**, but they likely were **Simon's Influential friends** who'd **help him analyze Jesus**. Then, an **UNINVITED GUEST** **crashes the party**. Luke calls her **"A WOMAN OF CITY"** -slang for **sinner-** who **anoints Jesus' feet with tears**. He didn't **stop her**. He is distracted by **Simon's private snickering** about the woman. Jesus **disrupted Simon's party** as much as she did, just by **BEING JESUS**, and by not using **Rabbi protocol**.

What is going on? What upset Simon more: his own reputation or Jesus' kindness to the woman?

He doesn't **blast Simon** for **self-righteousness** but tells him a story of a creditor who **has 2 debtors**-one owes a **large sum**, the other only a small amount. When neither could pay, he **cancelled both debts**.

"Which debtor will love the creditor more"

It was a **"no brainer"** and Simon's answer reflected as much.

"Her sins, though they are many, have been forgiven for she has shown great love. The one to whom little is forgiven loves little"

It carries a lesson: those who **receive God's grace** should be **gracious**.

LUKE 14 PARABLES...Jesus is **"being watched"**. Pharisees escort him from **worship** to a **Sabbath meal**. By **their standards**, Jesus had **run up a big tab** of **Sabbath Violations**. As he enters, he sees guests **jockeying for position**, trying to **get seats of honor**. It prompts a **story**.

When you are invited by someone to a party, don't sit down at a place of honor, lest someone greater than you has been invited and your host moves you to the back. Go sit in the lowest place so when your host comes, you'll be told "Friend, move up higher"

What matters is **the host's promotion**, not **self-promotion!** Just in case **his host didn't get it**, Jesus **piles on a 2nd story**, and this one has a more **personal touch**.

When you give a dinner, don't invite just family/friends, or rich neighbors who can repay the favor; invite the poor, the lame, and those who have no way to repay.

GOD'S DINNER PARTY...

Luke 14:

Still in Luke 14, another guest, after **hearing Jesus' 2nd story**, declares **"Blessed are they who eat bread in God's Kingdom"**

We get Luke's version of **GOD'S PARTY**. Unlike Matthew, he doesn't call it the **"SON'S WEDDING"** There are no **KILLED MESSANGERS** or **UNDERDRESSED GUESTS**. Luke focuses on the **KING'S FLUCTATING GUEST LIST**, how he reacts to the **guest's excuses**. The **excuses Jesus lists** are flimsy at best.

No one buys property without inspecting it. Five oxen was a serious Purchase, worthy of thought. The 3rd is the worst: weddings were planned well in advance, no last-minute calendar blips.

Why would anyone not want to **attend God's party**? We aren't invited to his party due to **HOW MUCH WE KNOW** but how **MUCH WE ARE LOVED**. The list of **NO SHOW'S** isn't as stunning as those who do come. The **King's FLUCTUATING GUEST LIST** is a warning: one item that is **not on the menu at God's party is certainty**. With God, **mystery is required**. At his party, there will be **surprises**.

TWO MEN AT PRAYER...

Luke 18

Jesus has just healed **10 Lepers**. Luke prefaces the next parable with an **editorial comment...**

He told this story for those who trusted in their righteousness and showed contempt toward others"

Two men go the Temple to pray: one boasts and the other begs; the one reminds God of his status; the other pleads for God's mercy. The first man used religion to hold God at a distance and other people at a level below him. God wanted a place in his heart; he wanted to give God a place in his ritual.

Why did Jesus tell this story? What does it tell us about grace?

Grace is a **gift reserved exclusively** for the **undeserving**. In receiving it, a change occurs. We **recipients of grace** are to **live grace-filled lives**, to walk **humbly with God**, always knowing that there is nothing we can do to make God love us more/less. Just in case his audience didn't get his point, Jesus says it aloud

All who exalt themselves will be humbled and all who humble themselves will be exalted

We all come to God **EMPTY HANDED**. There isn't a **STAR AMONG US**. The Pharisees were as lost as **THE SINNERS** that they criticized Jesus for befriending. Being **honest with God** doesn't **disqualify us** or **distance us from his grace**; it actually draws us closer to him.