

Feasting on Sundays  
*Jesus and the Outsider, Pt. 5*  
*Luke 14:15-24*

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## I. PRAYER

- i. Mother's Day
- ii. I pray that our time together as we meet together, as we sing, as we pray, and as we read your Scriptures would be a fully satisfying meal that would give sustenance to our faith and satisfaction to our souls.

## II. INTRODUCTION

- a. The other day I read an interesting article in Business Insider about the unprecedented success of Chick Fil A.
  - i. See, Chick-Fil-A generates more revenue per location than any other fast food restaurant despite being closed one day per week.
    - An average Chick-Fil-A brings in \$4.4 million per store per year.
    - The fast-food chain that came in second when it comes to per store revenue is...Whataburger.
      1. At \$2.7 million per store.
    - Chick Fil A is way far out ahead despite that fact that all the other chains are open seven days a week and have more locations.
      1. "Chick-fil-A generates more annual revenue than dozens of other chains that have more than twice as many US locations, including KFC, Pizza Hut, Domino's, and Arby's."<sup>1</sup> – and are open seven days a week!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.businessinsider.com/why-chick-fil-a-is-so-successful-2017-8>



- ii. The financial success of Chick-Fil-A is amazing despite the fact that they close one day a week.
    - And many figure that if Chick-Fil-A would just open on Sundays, they would bring in that much more revenue!
      1. It does seem to be the case that every time I crave Chick-Fil-A, it is a Sunday...
  - iii. But, the founder of Chick-Fil-A, Truett Cathy, is famous for saying:
    - “Our decision to close on Sunday was our way of honoring God and of directing our attention to things that mattered more than our business.”
  - iv. See, we all prioritize the things that we value.
    - Truett Cathy is saying that there is something that he and his company values more than revenue.
      1. We value giving our employees one day off to worship or do whatever else they do.
      2. Therefore, it is prioritized more than revenue.
      3. And clearly, it’s not hurting them.
- b. But we all prioritize what we value.
- i. It’s something we do all day, every day, whether we are aware of it or not.
    - When your alarm goes off in the morning, in that moment you prioritize what you find more valuable.
      1. Maybe that’s exercising, maybe that’s spending some time with God, maybe that’s hitting the snooze button for a little extra sleep.
      2. No matter what you decided, you prioritized what you value most in that moment.



- If you worked downtown in the city, and I called you up and said: Hey, we haven't caught up in a while. I'll come downtown and let's grab some lunch.
  1. You might say: Hey, sorry, I'm slammed at work. I just don't think I can carve out the time.
  2. But if I called you and said: "Hey, I scored some tickets to the afternoon Nats game, got seats right over the dugout, let's go!
  3. You're probably going to say: "Alright, well, I could work late tonight, move a few meetings tomorrow...Yeah, let's do it!
  4. You're prioritizing what you value more. And you're willing to affect various parts of your life and others lives in order to have that priority.
- ii. And if you want a fun exercise to do in your life to determine what you truly value, spend some time thinking about the different decisions you made throughout your day and ask yourself why you made those decisions.
  - What did you say yes to and what did you say no to.
  - You will very quickly discover what/who you value and what/who you don't value as much in your life.
  - Because we prioritize what we value.
    1. Chick Fil A has not caved into the potential revenue by opening up on Sundays, because they actually value being closed on Sundays more than money.
    2. They're consistency has proven what they truly value.



- c. And I bring this up because Jesus talks about this in a conversation he was having over dinner with some Jewish Leaders.
  - i. And Jesus was revealing the fact that although we might say that we value the things that God values, our priorities might point to a different reality.

### III. LUKE 14:15-24

- a. I want to read you this parable from Luke 14.
  - Parables were these fictional stories that Jesus would tell in order to make a point about something or to teach someone a lesson.
  - i. And in Luke 14, Jesus is having dinner with what the Bible says (14:1) are some leading Pharisees – the Jewish leaders of the day.
    - And in the midst of this dinner, someone makes a very pious, what seems to be religiously appropriate comment to Jesus...and we'll see that Jesus responds with a parable.
- b. **Read Luke 14:15-24.**
  - i. Now, I want to look at this parable from three different lenses this morning.
    - First, what was Jesus trying to communicate to these religious leaders that he was eating with.
      1. What was his point in this particular context?



- Second, how do we then take what Jesus was trying to say to these religious leaders, and apply it to the church today?
  - But, lastly, I want to spend time zooming all the way in and asking how this applies to Grace Hill Church today?
- c. But, first, let's start with what Jesus was communicating to these religious leaders.
- i. This parable by Jesus was sparked by someone at the table saying: "Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the Kingdom of God."
- Now, this is significant.
  - We read earlier from Isaiah 25 which is this picture of this Messianic Banquet that the Jews were looking forward to.
    1. They were waiting for the day when God would send the Messiah who would defeat God's enemies and establish the Kingdom of God.
    2. And the way that the Scriptures describe the Kingdom of God is like a great feast.
    3. It's a beautiful description.
    4. One of eating rich food, drinking well aged, bold wine.
    5. A place where there are no more tears.
    6. A place where death does not exist.
  - Oh, Isaiah 25:4-6 is one of my favorite passages in Scripture.
    1. And this Pharisee who was reclining with Jesus makes reference to this banquet that they were waiting for.



2. But, the moment is full of irony.
  3. The very Messiah, whom they were waiting to bring the Kingdom of God, was reclining at their table with Him, and yet, they have all rejected Him.
- ii. So, Jesus launches into this parable...and of course...this story is about a master who had prepared a banquet.
  - Immediately, the reader knows that although this is a parable, that although the facts of the story are fictional, it is indeed a true story.
- iii. A master had prepared a banquet and finally the banquet was ready. The food was on the table. The wine was poured into the glasses. The Messiah had arrived!
  - But see, we talked about earlier that we prioritize what we value.
  - When all of the invited guests had heard that it was time for the banquet to begin, some more valuable opportunities had come up.
    1. One person needed to go look at a field he bought. One person needed to inspect some oxen he bought. One person got married.
    2. None of these things are bad. All of them are good and productive things.
    3. But they all took priority over the banquet.
- iv. See, Jesus Christ had arrived and he went to His people, the Jews, and he announced that the banquet was ready, the kingdom of God is at hand, it's time to come to the table.



- But His own people, the invited guests rejected Him and rejected the banquet.
  - The very people who had memorized the Scriptures and could piously and impressively say things like: “Blessed is the one who will eat bread in the Kingdom of God.”
  - Yet, it was those very people who missed it.
- v. So, the master gets angry and he decides that instead of his invited guests enjoying the banquet, he will open it up to the rest of the city and the people outside of the city.
- It’s almost as if Jesus is saying to the leaders around the table...
    1. You guys should have been the first to come into my banquet and enjoy the Kingdom of God.
    2. But you have prioritized other things.
    3. And so, I am sending my servants to go invite the rest of the city...the rest of the Jews into my banquet.
    4. And because there is still room, I am sending my servants outside the city, to the gentiles, to the non-Jews, and they are going to enjoy my banquet.
    5. Just because you have decided to prioritize other things, doesn’t mean that my banquet hall will be empty.
- d. And so, when we take this parable and begin to apply it to our current context in the age of the Church...





- i. We see that this is what Jesus commissions the church to do and this is what we have been talking about in our current sermon series: “Jesus and the Outsider.”
- ii. After Jesus went to the cross and rises again from the dead, he goes to his disciples and he gives them a mission.
  - That mission was to start the church and make disciples of all nations.
  - Begin in Jerusalem but go to the ends of the earth proclaiming the gospel and inviting people to come in to the banquet.
  - Go after the outsiders and bring them into the Kingdom of God!
- iii. See, in our context today we can see ourselves in multiple different places in this parable.
  - If you are a follower of Jesus, you were the one on the street – the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame – and you were invited into the banquet.
  - Someone came to you and shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with you.
    1. They shared that you are dead in your sins and that your sin had separated you from God, and made it so that you were not welcome in the Kingdom of God, you were not an invited guest to the banquet.
    2. Yet, God in his love and grace made a way, through Jesus, that you could be forgiven of your sin and invited into the Kingdom of God.



3. He sent Jesus to be the Messiah. To be the one who would cleanse us from our sins on the cross.
  4. And in the same way that he was resurrected from the dead, we have the promise that we will be resurrected from the dead into eternal life...into this banquet...with the rich food, the well-aged wine, and where tears and death are no more.
  5. And if we would just trust in Jesus, if we would believe that he is the Lord, he is the Messiah, and we would accept this invitation.
  6. Then we would be saved and welcomed into the banquet.
- iv. But, once we have been welcomed into the banquet, we also become one of the servants in the parable.
- We're given a mission because the banquet hall is not yet full.
  - More need to be brought in. We need to go further and further outside the city to find people to bring them in.
  - We have been given the gospel to declare to the outsiders so that they may be brought into the banquet.
- v. Listen, we are the poor and lame that have been invited to feast at the banquet and we have been sent out to bring more people into the banquet.
- You know...many times when people find out what my profession is...they all of the sudden get very self-conscious around me.



1. They watch their mouth and they're very guarded about what they share with me.
  2. Or, they will apologize to me a lot as if because I am a pastor I cannot be in the presence of sin.
- How sad is it that so many in our culture have this view of the church as these smug people who are righteous and cannot stand to be in the filth that is the world.
    1. But, that's not the church.
    2. The church isn't filled with all of the invited guests.
    3. The church is filled with those who were brought in from the streets.
    4. That's who you and I are.
    5. Those who at first didn't belong but were brought near by the blood of Christ.
  - The church should be the most gracious place on planet earth.
- e. But, reengaging the Parable, let's zoom in a little further. How does this parable apply specifically to us here at Grace Hill Church?

#### **IV. GRACE HILL CHURCH**

- i. If all of us here, who are followers of Jesus, have been invited in to feast on this banquet and have also been sent out to bring more people into this banquet, what does that practically look like?



- b. You know, there is a reason why one of the things that Jesus instructed the church to do was to gather together regularly, break bread, and drink wine...(in our case grape juice).
- i. There is incredible biblical imagery going on when we do this.
    - When the church gathers together on Sunday mornings for worship...
      1. This isn't just some routine.
      2. This isn't our Christian calling card.
    - This is the appetizer. This is a foreshadow. A picture. A taste of the feast that we will enjoy in God's Kingdom for all of eternity after this life.
  - ii. Just like a group of loved ones gathers at a table to enjoy a meal, the church gathers together on Sunday mornings.
    - We do it so we can be together. Encouraging one another. Comforting one another. Laughing together. Helping each other press on in this life and to keep believing and trusting in Jesus.
    - We do it to worship our God who has saved us. Who rescued us. We sing songs to him. Pouring out our hearts to him like we'll do for eternity.
    - We humble ourselves underneath our King's Word and his instruction.
      1. We sit under the preached Word of God.
    - And we share a meal together.



1. We break bread and it reminds us of how the body of Jesus was broken so we wouldn't have to face the judgement of God.
  2. We drink wine and it reminds us of how we have been cleansed from our sins by the blood of Christ.
- And this meal reminds us of the feast we'll enjoy in Heaven.
- iii. In fact, when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper just hours before he was arrested and crucified, he instructed his disciples to gather together regularly for this meal for this purpose...he raised a glass of wine and he said:
- "I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." -Matthew 26:29 (ESV)
  - When we gather together as the church on Sundays, when we sing, when we hear preaching, when we come to the table...we are partaking of a taste of the feast we'll enjoy for all of eternity.
- iv. The gathering of the church together regularly to feast together is essential and non-negotiable to your joy in Jesus.
- We do not have a faith that thrives on a diet of podcasts, books, live streams, and community service.
    1. Those things are not bad for us.
    2. But in the same way that I cannot live nor do I want to live on a diet of just protein bars.



3. Our faith cannot thrive without coming together and feasting together regularly, consistently, and expectantly.
  4. We need rich food full of marrow and well-aged wine....to use the imagery of Isaiah 25.
- v. So, this morning, using this parable and the Biblical Imagery of the feast, I have three challenging questions that I want all of us to examine ourselves with.

c. Question #1 – Do I prioritize feasting on Sundays?

- i. Do I value gathering with the church every single Sunday?
  - And the way that we can test this in our lives is to look at our priorities.
    1. We prioritize what we value.
  - So, if we were to examine our lives and ask the question: what do I give priority to over gathering with the church regularly?
    1. What would we come up with?
    2. What weekend activities or circumstances would easily be prioritized over gathering with the church?
- ii. See, not only can we see ourselves as the poor and blind who have been invited into the feast in this parable, not only can we see ourselves as the servants going out to bring people in, we can also see ourselves as the ones who are making excuses.



- The ones who have found something that is more valuable than the feast.
- iii. And if you look at this parable and the examples of excuses made...none of these things are bad things.
- All of the examples...getting married, purchasing property....are good, productive things!
  - But you know what, they are things that belong to this world.
  - And when the church comes together for this taste of the feast that we'll do for all of eternity, for a moment we are transported from the temporary kingdom of this world to the eternal Kingdom of God....where we truly belong.
- iv. Why is it considered radical...legalistic...to have a mindset that says:
- Yeah, I'm traveling this weekend, but I'm coming back Saturday night to be with the church on Sunday morning.
  - Of course, I want my kids to be involved in sports and other activities, but we're not going to prioritize that, to value that, over being with the church.
  - Yeah, it has been a busy/tiring weekend, but I'm still going to make time to be with the church.
  - Of course, I would love to go to this event or that event, but Sunday mornings is when I feast with the church.
- v. And I'm not saying there is never a reason or never a good excuse to miss church.
- C'mon, y'all know me....you know I'm no legalist.



- I'm simply talking about our mindset.
  - Asking the question: where does this rank on the list of things that I value?
  - Do I really believe that this is essential to my joy in Christ?
- vi. But this inevitably leads to our second question...

#### d. Question #2 - Do I expect Sundays to be a feast?

- i. This is why I love this imagery of the Messianic Banquet from Isaiah 25.
- Imagery of rich food full of marrow (meat) and well-aged wine.
  - Have you ever been to a Brazilian Steakhouse? Where they just keep bringing you all you can eat meat?
    1. How do you feel after that?
    2. You feel full. You feel a little tired because your body is digesting all of that.
    3. You feel satisfied until it's time to have another meal.
  - Do we expect Sundays to fill us up with faith and bring satisfaction to our souls for the week ahead?
- ii. And I think why we might tend to not have this expectation for Sunday morning is because we partake of an unbalanced diet on Sunday mornings.





- In our culture, we have very much emphasized the singing and the preaching as the main components of our meal together on Sunday mornings.
    1. And those are essential components of the meal, for sure.
  - But, the part I think we tend to not value as much is the “being together” part.
  - You know, sometimes I think you can measure the health of the church, not by how many people are in the service, but how many people come early to see one another and stay late to encourage one another.
  - It’s interesting how many times you hear people say that its hard to get to connect with people in the church and find time to get together.
  - But we all are here on Sundays!
    1. When you invite friends and family over for a meal at your house, you invite them to come before the food is on the table.
    2. You have drinks and appetizers.
    3. You finally sit down for the main course.
    4. Then you brew some coffee, get some dessert, play games, hang out till it’s way too late.
- iii. See, we’ve been taught that church is good for us because you’re supposed to learn a lot from the sermon.



- That's a part of it. But church is good for us, because we need to feast with one another over and over again...encouraging one another, coming when we're on the mountaintop, coming when we're in the valley, coming when life is mundane...reading God's word together, singing together, breaking bread, drinking wine, and rehearsing the truth of the gospel.
  1. And it is before/after the actual worship service where this happens best.
- Faithfully prioritizing that in your life and your family's life over the long haul will do more for your joy in Christ than any one spiritually-euphoric experience.
  1. We've become convinced that what best feeds our soul is spiritually-high moments...not the consistent diet of being with one another.

### e. Question #3 – Do I Invite People to the Feast With Me?

- i. Clearly, if feasting together is not a high priority and if I don't really even expect Sunday to be a feast, then what is compelling about what we're doing that we would want to invite outsiders to join?
  - What is compelling about what we're doing that outsiders would actually want to join?
- ii. We all have been called to feast together and invite outsiders to join us for that feast.



- And I am convinced that the quality and the joy of this regular feast is so important to the effectiveness of our mission here in Northern Virginia.
- Our world is longing for sustenance that will feed the soul...and we gather together every Sunday to partake of it.
  1. And we have been sent by our Lord to the streets to invite people in to taste it as well.

## V. CONCLUSION

- a. So, Grace Hill, here is my exhortation to all of us.
  - i. Let's feast well, together.
    - Let's prioritize being together.
    - Let's have a culture here on Sunday mornings that we are so excited to invite outsiders to.
    - But that takes, weekly faithfulness on our parts to come here on Sundays expecting a feast.
  - ii. And so, if you are a follower of Jesus this morning, I want to invite you to the table where we have the bread, that represents the body of Christ, and the juice, that represents the blood of Christ. (Fence)
    - But if you know Jesus, I want you to come and feast on the gospel.
    - Feast on the truth that no matter how this past week went.



1. No matter how frustrated you got with people.
  2. How lazy you were. What you did in secret.
  3. If you were happy or depressed.
  4. If you were feeling self-conscious, anxious, out of control, or just bored.
- You have a seat at the table in God's Kingdom because of what Christ has done for you.
    1. So, I encourage you, this morning, to remember the death of Christ.
    2. Come, and let your soul be filled to tis satisfaction and be encouraged.
    3. This table cries out, that you are loved, you are wanted, and you are valued.

## **VI. PRAY**

