

May I Please Be Excused?

When Good Things Keep Us from the Best Thing

Luke: All Things New



Series Goal

That Mercy Hill Church would be made new as we follow the One who is making all things new!



Sermon Text

Luke 14:15-24



Big Idea

Good things can keep us from the best thing. The gifts of God can keep us from the kingdom of God. Those things we are unwilling to surrender to God in love and trust will ultimately be the instruments of our undoing. But if we can lay them in His hands, all is put to right.

(1) A Surprising Threat

With regard to the invitation to this banquet, all three of these men initially accept but finally refuse. When the time comes for the banquet, the invitees' true colors are shown. They are interested so long as it is convenient, so long as it fits in their schedule, so long as it doesn't demand they sacrifice or surrender other areas of their life. When it becomes obvious that the kingdom and its banquet will clash with their worldly pursuits and goals, they "kindly" decline. Their heart is not in it. They have other more pressing things to attend to. Here we begin to understand that it is not merely the externals that make a thing good or bad but what we are doing with the thing in our hearts. Is it wrong to have property or possessions, or an occupation with responsibilities, or a spouse and family? Certainly not. But if your heart attaches to these things in such a way that they become ultimate for you, and more of a priority in your life than even God Himself, well then look out. We might say it like this: A good thing becomes a bad thing when it becomes an ultimate thing. And you know it's become an ultimate thing when it's an unsundered thing—when you can't let it go, when you can't bear the thought of God changing the course of it, or getting His hands on it, when you don't trust Him with it.

(2) A Fundamental Love

Your fundamental love is your deepest attachment, your ultimate allegiance, your supreme treasure. It's the thing you love more than anything else. You think life, joy, pleasure, identity, etc. will be found there so you are willing to let all else go to get it and to keep it. You can only be fundamentally allegiant to one thing. You can really only have one fundamental love. And that love will necessarily shape and influence everything else in your life—for good or for bad.

(3) A Compelling Invitation

There is no more important matter you will have to decide on than whether or not you will attend this banquet. There are two sides that emerge as you begin to weigh this out—a negative and a positive. On the negative side, we could talk about how you perceive your own need. How desperate do you think you are for grace? Are you dead in sin and justly condemned by God because of it? Are the fires of hell but an empty threat to you or are they an imminent reality? On the positive side, we could talk about how you perceive the provision of Christ and the pleasures of God that are made available to you in Him. Do you see the One who was put forward as a propitiation for your sin—the One who drank the cup of wrath that had your name on it? If you do, what are you waiting for? Come in to the feast!

Reflection Questions



- Do you trust, desire, crave, treasure, love anything more than God? How has your inclination towards such a thing necessarily shaped and influenced other areas of your life for bad? How does returning to Jesus as first place reshape everything else for good? Think deeply. Get specific. Why are you drawn to the idols you are? What are you hoping to get from them? Why are you afraid to surrender them to God in love and trust? What are you worried He will do with them? What can you do to take a step towards the banquet this week?