



Sunday Teaching Guide

Five Directions, Week 2

August 13, 2023

Bible Texts

- Luke 14:1-4
- Luke 14:12-22
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15;17-21

Important Terms

- Captivate: attract and hold the interest and attention of; charm.

Sermon Notes

- Jesus was at a party hosted by a Pharisee, a respected religious teacher. This party was taking place on the holiest day of the week, and debate occurred on how one was supposed to act on the Sabbath. Any kind of work was frowned upon, but how you defined that work was up for debate. Jesus used this tension to teach the guests a lesson by healing a man, showing that compassion, mercy, and love don't take a day off.
- Parties in Jesus' day were out in the open. Because of that, villagers didn't just know you had guests; they also knew who wasn't invited. The man Jesus healed wasn't invited to this party; he was an outsider in full view of those inside. It is easy to invite people to a party that we are comfortable and familiar with. But Jesus's command is to invite those on the outside, and to it he ties a reward: because of God's grace, there is more room than we could possibly imagine.
- Jesus says that the reward isn't the banquet; it is the grace of the invitation. The reward is seeing things in a new way and recognizing that God's grace is bigger than any one of us and enough for all of us.
- No matter how many people invited to the banquet, there is still room. The same thing is true with the Kingdom of God. There is always room.
- Christ showed this world in all its ugliness of sin was put to death at the cross. Jesus showed on the cross what humanity is willing to do when it is confronted by the full extent of God's love, grace, and mercy, as it was in the life of Jesus. But the story didn't end there because in the resurrection, we see God take what the world called death, that only he can turn into life. And through Jesus's life, death, and resurrection we see that nothing is outside of God's power to transform, to restore, and renew.

Reflection Questions

- Think about a time which you felt excluded from "the party." What is that feeling like?
- Have you ever hosted a party and people did not show up like you thought they would?
- Why do you think we have a tendency to only invite people we are comfortable and familiar with? What do we lose by only inviting those we are comfortable and familiar with?
- Why is it hard to continue to keep inviting? Are there times in which resting from inviting is appropriate?
- How comfortable are you with inviting other people to church or faith-related activities?
- Is there any relationship work that you believe is important to do with a person before inviting them to church or faith-related activities?

Prayer for the Week

- Almighty God, in your goodness, you provide for the needy. Remove from us the pride of place and the pursuit of power that mocks humility. Open our hearts in generosity and justice to the neglected and lonely, that in showing esteem for others, we may honor and please you through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Additional Readings

- 1 Peter 4:9
- Matthew 5:46-48
- Romans 15:7