



Good News

for all people.

The Gospel of Luke

Week 13 LEADER Discussion Questions

Week of 11/20/22

Text: Luke 14. *Each campus will again emphasize different sections of the chapter this week, so we recommend choosing questions from below that were part of the sermon you heard in Thornton, Boulder, or Erie. Also, feel free to take on questions from parts of the chapter that weren't covered in the sermon but that you read together in your group.*

Icebreaker: Are you the kind of person who loves to throw or attend a dinner party? If so, what do you like most about them? If not, what don't you like about them?

Much of this chapter takes place around a dinner party. You could modify this to ask a more specific question about the main Thanksgiving meal.

1. We've seen this before—Jesus again heals on the Sabbath, leading to conflict with the religious leaders. What does Jesus do to turn the tables on the Pharisees who “were watching him carefully” (v. 1)?

Jesus is on the offensive with the two questions he asks. In the first, it was a loaded question because there was nothing in the actual OT law that prevented healing on the Sabbath. The rabbis, though, had sought to add more specificity about the Sabbath and ended up distorting it. This has been a key issue in the prior healings on the Sabbath. In this case, it was only “legal” according to the rabbis to heal if it was to save a person's life. It's doubtful that this man's life was in imminent danger, so Jesus is likely violating the rabbis' instruction. With the second question, Jesus is pointing out the absurdity of categorizing these kinds of rescue as a violation of the Sabbath's purpose...although the rabbis had created rules for the rescue of animals as well.

Application: These first 6 verses are yet another reminder that Jesus was never caught off-guard by their schemes. How can this observation help us trust Jesus in our own lives?

Jesus isn't surprised or unaware of their schemes. Remember how this awareness is even more apparent when he reveals his knowledge of the details and timing of his crucifixion. Jesus never fell into a trap even though he did faithfully walk into them. For our own lives, we should find comfort in the fact that Jesus is just as aware of the details of our own lives. Others may seek to do us harm (and may succeed), but nothing escapes the notice of the Lord and nothing is outside of his ability to deliver us either from or through what we encounter.

2. What character trait or quality is Jesus calling for in verses 7-11? What is it about a formal social event, like a wedding feast, that might inspire someone to seek out “a place of honor” (v. 8)?

Simply put, Jesus is calling for humility. Events like this one are moments where human pride can take over. People may want to be exalted socially and publicly, and events like these can be the perfect opportunity to show how awesome we really are! 😊 It's all very juvenile, no?

Application: In what situations or settings do you see something like this play out in our day? What would it look like for someone to start off “in the lowest place” (v. 9)?

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How about in a LifeGroup?! It may not be a temptation to sit in the best spot, but maybe there's a temptation to display our gift of gab before we listen well to others. In this scenario, the "lowest place" might be to listen first and then speak...or, to encourage quieter people in the group to share their input first before waxing eloquent ourselves.

3. In verses 12-14, Jesus instructs the host to, in the future, invite those who can't pay him back. What reason does Jesus give and what does he mean by it?

Jesus says, "you will be blessed" and "will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." A passage like Matthew 25:31-46 connects actions toward those on the margins of society with actions toward himself. The blessing and resurrection both point ahead to a future repayment of whatever was done in this life toward those who had no means to repay us on this side of eternity.

Application: What do you think this looks like for us to follow Jesus's instruction here?

There could be a lot of ways to answer. It could mean literally having people over to our homes who don't have the means to repay us; however, it could also include taking part in ministries that reach those who are on the margins of society (care-based ministries, etc.).

4. In verses 15-24, what do you think of the excuses that Jesus describes from those who turn down the invitation? Why?

As "excuses," they don't really hold up. Why would someone need to go see their field or oxen rather than go to the banquet? Won't they still be available to be seen or examined after the banquet? Getting married is hardly excuse for missing the banquet as well. Couldn't the spouse come along or spend a bit of time away if there's no room for one more person?

Application: What kind of excuses are you familiar with that people use to avoid following Jesus faithfully?

5. In verses 21-24, the angry master of the house tells his servants to invite those who weren't on the original guest list—both in the city and then outside the city "that my house may be filled." What parallels do you see between this parable and the way the gospel has been spread throughout history?

The different progressions of this parable seem to express the movements of the gospel in history as Israel was "invited," yet frequently rejected what God was offering. Jesus's ministry also displayed this rejection and the work of the Church since the first century reflects this outward movement to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The word "compel" in verse 24 can sound forceful, but the entirety of the context helps offset this when we consider that it's a single servant who's engaging in the compulsion—hardly a scene of violently forcing others to act against their will! In this case, the servant likely represents the Church's singular collective witness of the gospel.

Application: Do you see yourself in any part of this parable? If so, where do you see your role depicted?

We should identify with this servant who is sent out to compel people who are outside the city to come to the banquet. It's a picture of our mission as witnesses of the work of Jesus and heralds of the gospel.

6. What overarching message do you think Jesus is communicating to the "great crowds" in verses 25-33? What purpose do you think Jesus has in these verses?

As one commentator puts it, "Devotion cannot be less than whole-hearted." Another writes, "Discipleship is not periodic volunteer work on one's own terms and at one's convenience." Jesus is shattering any misconceptions about the cost of discipleship. It's something that radically reshapes all of one's life into a singular pursuit. It's likely that

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some had minimized or not grasped the full requirement of discipleship. In such cases, Jesus would be providing a wake-up call about what it means to follow him.

Application: How does the description of these verses compare with your own experience of following Jesus? (Note: commentators explain that “hate” in verse 26 is a comparison and can mean “love less”)

This is an invitation to share what kind of struggles and costs people have faced in their relationships, social standing, and other areas because they are following Jesus.

Application: In your opinion and experience, do you think the cost of being a disciple is something that is emphasized or minimized today? Explain what you mean.

There’s not a right or wrong answer here.

7. Verses 34-35 make the simple point that un-salty salt (i.e. salt that has become so full of impurities) is of no value. How do you think this “salt [that] has lost its taste” is like a person who fails to account for the cost of following Jesus?

Jesus’s words in 34-35 help tie the bow on verses 26-33. A person who fails to understand or embrace the cost of following Jesus will not endure...like salt that loses its saltiness.

Application: What resources or opportunities do you have at Calvary that can help you “stay salty?”

It’s our hope and prayer that all we do—from Sunday worship services to mid-week LifeGroups—helps us to be disciples. Hopefully the teaching and preaching of God’s Word, the prayer, the fellowship, the service of others, and everything else has a way of clarifying what God calls us to, and equips and encourages us to endure in it. A loner, individual Christian who occasionally commits time and energy to the life of the Church is in a vulnerable position in light of Jesus’s description of discipleship.

8. This is a tough chapter! No one in these 35 verses gets off easy...with the possible exception of the man whom Jesus heals. What’s your main takeaway from the sermon you heard at your campus and the challenging words of this chapter?

This question intentionally emphasizes the “hard” parts of this chapter. The fuller picture, though, is that whatever cost we bear in Jesus’s name is far outweighed by the life-giving joy of following him! Every good and perfect gift comes from above, as James puts it. It’s good to have a reality check about the cost of what it means to follow Jesus, but that same reality check should not forget to also incorporate the incomparable and eternal blessings that await the disciple.