

WEEK 5: GOD'S OPEN INVITATION

Parable of the Great Feast

For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. – Luke 14:11

Read: Luke 14:7-14; 17-24

It's easy to show kindness and grace to our friends or those who we consider important or admirable. But how do we treat those who have nothing to offer us? Are we just as kind to the homeless person we pass on our way into the gas station? Or the person who cut us off on the freeway? Or the person on the opposite side of the political spectrum from us?

In the parable of The Great Feast, Jesus tells the story of a host who invited many powerful and important people to his banquet. When the time came for the banquet, all the VIP guests made excuses for why they couldn't come. So, the host instead invites "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame" (v. 21).

Jesus continually challenges all our notions about what and who are important! Here he is reminding his followers that God's Kingdom is not just for the important people or the religious ones. It's for everyone, even those society deems unimportant and unwanted.

It can be easy in our status-obsessed culture to forget about what's really important. Do I treat people equally regardless of what place they hold in society or in my life? Do I show preferential treatment to people who can offer me something I want? These are hard questions, but they are ones we need to think if we really want to follow Jesus' command to love everyone.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. How would it have felt to be an "outsider" who got one of the last-minute invitations to the fancy banquet? Have you ever experienced something like that? How did it feel?
2. What does the invitation to the outsiders tell you about God's heart? About his Kingdom?
3. Who are the "outsiders" in your sphere of influence? What might God be calling you to do with and/or for them?