

# Into the Highways and Hedges

*Lesson # 29: (Lk. 14:1, 12-24; Acts 13:46-48; Isa. 58:5-11; COL 219-237)*

In our lesson today we will study the parable of the Great Banquet. Though there are some similarities between this parable and the one in Matthew 22:1-14 (see lesson # 23, “Without a Wedding Garment”), they are actually quite different. Let’s begin by taking a look at the historical occasion which led Jesus to tell this parable.

## The Historical Occasion

1. Where was Jesus when he told the parable of the Great Banquet? “Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the \_\_\_\_\_ to eat \_\_\_\_\_ on the Sabbath, that they \_\_\_\_\_ Him closely.” (Lk. 14:1)
2. How did Jesus take advantage of this situation to convey truth? “He accepted invitations from the rich as well as the poor, and according to his \_\_\_\_\_ He linked the scene \_\_\_\_\_ Him with His lessons of truth.” (COL 219)

**Note:** Jesus actually told the parable about eating bread from God’s table at the great final banquet while He was eating bread from the table of a Pharisee. Jesus always employed real life situations to convey spiritual truth.

3. What concept did the Pharisees have of the great final banquet in God’s kingdom? “The great feast at which they were to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, while the \_\_\_\_\_ stood \_\_\_\_\_, and looked on with longing eyes, was a theme on which they \_\_\_\_\_ to dwell.” (COL 219)
4. Immediately before telling this parable, Jesus told another to the same people in the same place? What was the parable and which central lesson did He seek to teach? “For whosoever \_\_\_\_\_ himself shall be \_\_\_\_\_; and he that \_\_\_\_\_ himself shall be \_\_\_\_\_.” (Lk. 14:11)

**Note:** As we noticed in our last lesson, Jesus expressed the same lesson with the following words: “So the last shall be first, and the first last.” (Mt. 21:16)

## The First Group of Guests

1. Who are represented by the first group of guests? “The Lord’s messengers had proclaimed to the \_\_\_\_\_ the advent of the Savior. . . . In the feast He had provided, \_\_\_\_\_ offered to **them** the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ that Heaven can bestow—a gift that is beyond computation.” (COL 222-223)

2. What standard did the Pharisee use to choose his banquet guests? “In choosing the guests for his \_\_\_\_\_, the Pharisee had consulted his own \_\_\_\_\_ interests.” (COL 220)

**Note:** It is clear that the Pharisee’s guest list included only dignitaries and luminaries, family and friends. His main motivation in preparing the banquet was to hobnob with the bigwigs.

3. According to Jesus, who should have been on the Pharisee’s guest list and why? “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy \_\_\_\_\_, nor thy \_\_\_\_\_, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy \_\_\_\_\_ neighbors, lest they also bid thee again, and a \_\_\_\_\_ be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be \_\_\_\_\_; for they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the \_\_\_\_\_ of the just.” (Lk. 14:12-14)

4. Was Jesus’ idea of a guest list a totally new and revolutionary concept? “Christ was here \_\_\_\_\_ the instruction He had given to \_\_\_\_\_ through Moses.” (COL 220)

5. What biblical text does Ellen White quote to prove her assertion in question # 3? \_\_\_\_\_.

6. Why had God imparted abundant spiritual blessings to Israel? “The spiritual blessings given to Israel were not for \_\_\_\_\_ alone. God had given the bread of life to them, that they might \_\_\_\_\_ it to the world.” (COL 221)

7. How did the guests react when Jesus suggested his guest list? “Christ’s words were a \_\_\_\_\_ to their selfishness. To the Pharisees His words were \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 221)

8. What did one of the guests do to remove the heat of Jesus’ remark? “Hoping to turn the conversation into another \_\_\_\_\_, one of them, with a \_\_\_\_\_ air, exclaimed, ‘Blessed is he that shall eat \_\_\_\_\_ in the kingdom of God.’” (COL 221)

**Note:** The Pharisee who made this remark wished to shift the subject of conversation from his present duty to “the remote time of the resurrection of the just” (COL 221) but Jesus would have none of it. He brought his mind back the subject at hand by telling a parable.

9. What was foremost in the mind of the Pharisee who changed the subject? “The Pharisee was not thinking of his own \_\_\_\_\_ for heaven but of what he hoped to \_\_\_\_\_ in heaven.” (COL 221)

10. What did Jesus say after healing a Roman centurion’s servant? “And I say to you that many shall come from east and west, and \_\_\_\_\_ down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the \_\_\_\_\_ of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness, there will be \_\_\_\_\_ and gnashing of teeth.” (Mt. 8:11-12)

**Note:** These words of Jesus were revolutionary. The “sons of the kingdom” are the Jews and those who come from east and west are the Gentiles. In the great final banquet there would be a reversal of roles!

### **Excuses, Excuses**

1. Three excuses were offered by the invitees to the banquet. Were any of them valid? “None of the excuses were founded on a \_\_\_\_\_ necessity.” (COL 222)

**Note:** All three invitees offered lame excuses. The land had already been bought, seeing it could have waited. The expression: “**I must** needs go” was an outright lie! The oxen had also been bought and the owner could have waited to test them (perhaps he should have tested them before he bought them!). The man who had just married a wife could have brought her with him to the banquet. It is obvious that the invitees simply did not wish to accept the invitation because they had other priorities in their lives. Coming to the banquet was on the back burner.

2. What did the words “I cannot come” really mean? “The ‘I cannot’ was only a \_\_\_\_\_ for the truth—‘I do not \_\_\_\_\_ to come.’” (COL 222)
3. What was the fundamental problem with those who excused themselves from coming to the banquet? “All the excuses betray a \_\_\_\_\_ mind. To these intended guests other \_\_\_\_\_ had become \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 222)
4. What is represented by the great supper and who is the provision? “By the great supper, Christ represents the \_\_\_\_\_ offered through the gospel. The provision [of bread] is nothing less than \_\_\_\_\_ Himself.” (COL 222)

**Note:** “In the feast He had provided, God offered them the greatest gift that Heaven can bestow—a gift that is beyond computation.” (COL 222-223). John 6 makes it clear that the bread which was provided at the banquet, symbolizes the life we receive when we partake of Jesus through a study of His Word.

5. What needed to happen in order for the Jews to accept the invitation to the gospel feast? “But in order to accept the invitation to the gospel feast, they must make their \_\_\_\_\_ interests subordinate to the \_\_\_\_\_ purpose of receiving Christ and His righteousness.” (COL 223)

**Note:** “He [Christ] cannot accept a divided heart. The heart that is absorbed in earthly affections cannot be given up to God.” (COL 223)

## The Second Group of Guests

1. Who was invited to the banquet when the first group of guests turned down the invitation? The master's servant was commanded to "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_." (Lk. 14:21)
2. **Thought Question:** What do you think is represented by the "streets and lanes of the city"? Which city is being referred to? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What did Jesus say to the chief priests and elders in Matthew 21:31? "Verily I say unto you, that the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ go into the kingdom of God before you."
4. What command did Jesus give to the disciples of John? "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see. The \_\_\_\_\_ receive their sight, the \_\_\_\_\_ walk, the lepers are \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ hear, the \_\_\_\_\_ are raised up, and the \_\_\_\_\_ have the gospel preached to them." (Mt. 11:4-5; see also, Mt. 15:30-31; Lk. 4:16-21)
5. Who remained in the temple after Jesus cleansed it the second time? "And the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ came to him in the temple; and he healed them." (Mt. 21:14)

**Note:** Jesus repeatedly attempted to reach the religious cadre of the Jewish nation. But when they persistently rejected His call, he spent most of his time ministering to the publicans, the harlots, the blind, the maimed, the poor, the lame, the lepers and those who were afflicted by evil spirits. The second group of guests represents the outcasts of Jewish society to whom Jesus ministered.

6. Did these outcasts of Jewish society, the "scum of the earth" so to speak, accept the gospel invitation? \_\_\_\_\_ (see Lk. 14:22)

## The Third Group of Guests

1. There was still room in the banquet hall after the lame, the blind, the maimed and the poor had been gathered in Who was compelled to come in next? "Go into the \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." (Lk. 14:23)
2. According to Ellen White, who is represented by this third group? "Here Christ pointed to the work of the gospel \_\_\_\_\_ the pale of \_\_\_\_\_, in the highways and byways of the world." (COL 226)

3. What instruction did Jesus give to the disciples when He sent them out to preach the gospel? “Go not into the way of the \_\_\_\_\_, and into any city of the \_\_\_\_\_ enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of house of \_\_\_\_\_.” (Mt. 10:5-6)
4. What instruction did Jesus give His followers immediately before His ascension? “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in \_\_\_\_\_, and in all \_\_\_\_\_, and in Samaria, and unto the \_\_\_\_\_ part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)
5. When the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia rejected the message of Paul and Barnabas to whom did they turn? “Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should \_\_\_\_\_ have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the \_\_\_\_\_. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, ‘I have set thee to be a light of the \_\_\_\_\_, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth.’” (Acts 13:46-47)

### Lessons for Today

1. Who is repeating, to a great degree, the errors of the Jewish nation? “The message to the \_\_\_\_\_ is applicable to Seventh-day Adventists who have had great \_\_\_\_\_ and have not \_\_\_\_\_ in the light. It is those who have made great \_\_\_\_\_, but have not kept in step with their Leader, that will be \_\_\_\_\_ out of His mouth unless they repent.” (Selected Messages, vol. 2, p. 66)
2. How do marital relationships sometime interfere with heeding Christ’s call? “Many there are who allow their \_\_\_\_\_ or their \_\_\_\_\_ to prevent them from heeding the call of God.” (COL 224; compare Lk. 14:26, 27))
3. What obstacle sometimes stands in the way of children accepting Christ’s call to the banquet feast? “The children’s hearts are impressed. They desire to \_\_\_\_\_. But they love their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and since these do not heed the gospel call, the children think that they cannot be expected to come.” (COL 224-225)
4. What is said of those who refuse the gospel call because they wish to keep the family peace? “All these who refuse the Savior’s call because they fear \_\_\_\_\_ in the family circle. They suppose that in refusing to obey God they are \_\_\_\_\_ the peace and prosperity of the home; but this is a \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 225)
5. What else frequently stands in the way of accepting the invitation to the feast? “Men declare that they cannot imperil their \_\_\_\_\_ prospects by giving attention to the claims of the gospel. They count their \_\_\_\_\_ interests as of more value than the things of \_\_\_\_\_. The very \_\_\_\_\_ they have received from God

become a \_\_\_\_\_ to separate their souls from their Creator and Redeemer.” (COL 224)

### God’s Final Invitation

1. What is God’s final call to the world before Jesus’ second coming? “Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of his \_\_\_\_\_ is come. And \_\_\_\_\_ him that made the heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” (Rev. 14:7)
2. How extensive will this call be? “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every \_\_\_\_\_, and kindred, and \_\_\_\_\_, and people.” “It is to reach all \_\_\_\_\_ of men, rich and poor, \_\_\_\_\_ and low.” (Rev. 14:6; COL 228))
3. What is the purpose of this end-time message? “It is intended to \_\_\_\_\_ them to a sense of eternal \_\_\_\_\_, that they may give heed to the \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord’s table.” (COL 228)
4. How will the final gospel proclamation be accomplished? “To a great degree this must be accomplished by \_\_\_\_\_ labor. This was Christ’s method. . . . We are not to wait for souls to come to \_\_\_\_; we must seek them out where they are. . . . There are multitudes who will never be \_\_\_\_\_ by the gospel unless it is \_\_\_\_\_ to them.” (COL 229). We are to **go** (Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15) not wait for people to **come**.
5. To whom must this message go first? “Men in business life, in \_\_\_\_\_ positions of trust, men with large \_\_\_\_\_ faculties and scientific insight, men of \_\_\_\_\_, teachers of the \_\_\_\_\_ whose minds have not been called to the special \_\_\_\_\_ for this time—these should be the \_\_\_\_\_ to hear the call.” (COL 230)
6. Are these great mean of the earth reachable? How can they be reached? “Many in high social positions are \_\_\_\_\_. And sick of vanity. They are longing for a \_\_\_\_\_ which they have not. . . . Many would receive help if the Lord’s workers would approach them \_\_\_\_\_, with a \_\_\_\_\_ manner, a heart made tender by the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ.” (COL 231)
7. Upon what does the success of the gospel message depend? “The success of the gospel message does not depend upon \_\_\_\_\_ speeches, eloquent \_\_\_\_\_, or deep \_\_\_\_\_. It depends upon the \_\_\_\_\_ of the message and its \_\_\_\_\_ to the souls that are hungering for the bread of life.” (COL 231)
8. What will happen when the human agent wrestles with God and prayer and works will all the faculties that God has given him?? “The Holy Spirit is provided as his \_\_\_\_\_. Ministering \_\_\_\_\_ will be by his side to impress \_\_\_\_\_.” (COL 232)

9. What is meant by the “byways and hedges” today? “Christ instructs His messengers to go also to those in the byways and hedges, to the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the earth.” (COL 232)

**Note:** Ellen White further describes these as those who are “pressed by suffering, want, unbelief, despondency. Disease of every type afflicts them, both in body and in soul.” (COL 233)

10. For what are many of these lowly people seeking and what does Satan offer them? “They long to find a \_\_\_\_\_ for their troubles, and Satan tempts them to seek it in lusts and \_\_\_\_\_ that lead to ruin and death. He is offering them the apples of \_\_\_\_\_, that will turn to \_\_\_\_\_ upon their lips.” (COL 233)
11. Who else is represented by those in the byways and hedges? “There are those who are living up to all the \_\_\_\_\_ they have, and are serving God the best they know how. . . . They are longing for an \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of God, but they have only begun to see the \_\_\_\_\_ of greater light.” (COL 234)
12. What is meant by the expression “compel them to come in”? It does not mean that we should force people to accept the message. “But it denotes rather the \_\_\_\_\_ of the invitation and the \_\_\_\_\_ of the inducements presented.” (COL 235)
13. What will happen with many of those who have had great opportunities but have not prized them? “Many will come from the \_\_\_\_\_ error and sin, and will take the \_\_\_\_\_ of others who have had \_\_\_\_\_ and privileges but have not prized them.” (COL 236)
14. How does the Holy Spirit work to constrain people to come to the feast? “Heavenly \_\_\_\_\_ are still working in co-operation with human agencies. The Holy Spirit is presenting every inducement to \_\_\_\_\_ you to come..” (COL 237)
15. What is all heaven waiting for? “The hosts of heaven are waiting, ready to strike their harps and sing a song of \_\_\_\_\_ that another soul has \_\_\_\_\_ the invitation to the gospel feast.” (COL 237)