

Empire Church of the Brethren  
Sunday Service Sermons

03 March 2024

Sharing the Good News with no Excuses

Our theme for March is the sharing of the Good News of salvation as we live our life for God.

We should be about the work of Jesus each day of our lives.

As we approach Easter we will be looking at who Jesus is and what he has done for us and is willing to do for anyone who will turn to him in faith and accept his leadership.

You might say our over all theme is, "That All Might Believe through Him".

Today we are considering that we have no excuses to not be about the work of Jesus sharing the Good News of his love and redemption.

The Text for today is: "Jesus replied, a certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests." *Luke 14:16*

This parable from *Luke 14* highlights excuse making.

The three who sent their regrets had probably told themselves these excuses so many times that they finally deemed them to be valid reasons.

People can tell themselves a lie so often that at last they will accept it as the truth; however, a lie is a lie, and an excuse is always an excuse.

The invitation from God is spiritual.

Excuses are usually based on the material.

There is nothing wrong with buying land, working, or getting married, but it is wrong to place these things above the invitation of God.

The excuses of the people in Jesus' parable were foolish in the light of so gracious an invitation.

Yet they are no more foolish than the excuses given in our day.

Let us consider some of our excuses.

I am too busy.

The three people in *Luke 14* that were too busy were busy with oxen, land and marriage.

Which is more important in the long run: land, new equipment, romantic love, or eternal salvation?

When you compare heaven and the world, this world is worth much less than a life in heaven.

It is not right to spend our time with the world and be too busy to give any time to heaven.

Beware that you don't sell your life for cut glass when God is offering you rare jewels.

I do not understand enough.

The master who gave this banquet did not expect those who were invited to know everything about it.

He did not expect them to understand all about the food that was being served or about the entertainment.

However, he did expect them to come to the banquet.

The supreme function of reason is to show humans that some things are beyond reason.

With all our knowledge, there are still some things that even the most brilliant person cannot understand.

God does not expect anyone to understand all the mysteries of his kingdom.

However he does expect us to come to Jesus Christ and confess him as Savior.

If people understand enough to realize that sin has separated them from God and that God sent Christ to bridge the sin gap, they understand enough to be saved.

The great number of denominations is confusing.

As long as people are people, there will be differences of opinion.  
As long as there are differences of opinion, there will be differences of denomination.  
The Bible does not forbid different denominations, although it doesn't promote them either.  
It does forbid rejection of Jesus Christ.  
God is not so concerned about what denomination you join as he is about whether or not you join yourself to Jesus Christ.  
*John 3:16* states: "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."  
People at church don't suit me.  
Some claim that church members are unfriendly and cliquish.  
It takes a while to become a part of the church family.  
It does not happen immediately.  
Our first concern is that we are acceptable to Christ and the church family will accept us as they get to know us.  
Some people new to the church feel uncomfortable that they do not have or dress like the other church members.  
Out of respect for God we do dress appropriately.  
The master in the parable did not put stipulations on what kind of clothes were to be worn.  
Neither does God care whether we come to him in a tuxedo or a T-shirt.  
It is not the clothes we wear that count; it is who we are on the inside.  
Some argue that there are hypocrites in the church.  
Or that the members are not perfect.  
That answer is that there will be one more like that when this person joins the church.  
We are all sinners before God, no one is perfect.  
But when we give ourselves to God through Jesus The Christ we are redeemed and forgiven.  
We seem to function just fine in a world full of sinners throughout the week.  
Why not join in the fellowship of sinners who are redeemed and headed to a full life in God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?  
The fact that there are sinners in the church is not a reason to refuse to come to Jesus Christ and accept him as your personal savior and join the ranks of the redeemed.  
I am a good person, God will probably accept me as I am.  
We all have dealt with some really good people.  
And our prayer is that they will come to realize that they still need Christ to be all that God created them to be.  
Remember: it is not by works that a person is made acceptable to God; it is by faith in Jesus The Christ, the Son of the Living God.  
All must turn from their sins and come to him in faith to be saved.

I am too wicked, it is too late for me.  
A person who feels this way is ready for the Gospel.  
Their confession of their sin is the open door to accepting the gift of salvation from God through Christ.  
We all should have that conviction before God.  
"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." *12 John 1:9*  
When one is ready and willing to confess their sins, God is ready to forgive them.  
I am too timid.  
Some people are more timid than are others.  
Those who are timid need to heed the warning in *Revelation 21:8*.  
The Bible sees timid and fearful as excuses and those people are guilty of sins just like those who have committed atrocities against God and others.  
Timid is no excuse for not coming to God as savior.  
I am not ready.

Those in our parable who refused the master's invitation to the banquet took the invitation too lightly.

However, the master considered their response very important.

Luke implies that those who rejected the invitation would never have another opportunity to be invited to the banquet.

Putting this decision off is very dangerous for several reasons.

It is dangerous because of God's impending wrath that hangs over the lost.

It is dangerous because one's heart may be hardened.

Each time a person says no to Christ, it becomes easier to say no the next time.

*Hebrews 3:7-8* says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

To say no to Jesus is dangerous because of accidents and death.

How far away is death?

It could be just one breath away, one heartbeat away, one malignant cell away, one car accident away.

*Proverbs 27:1* says, "Do not boast about tomorrow for you do not know what a day may bring forth."

Now is the time of salvation.

If the Holy Spirit is calling someone, help them to answer in the positive and join in the life that leads to everlasting life here and in heaven.

The banquet is prepared, the invitation is sent forth, who will respond?