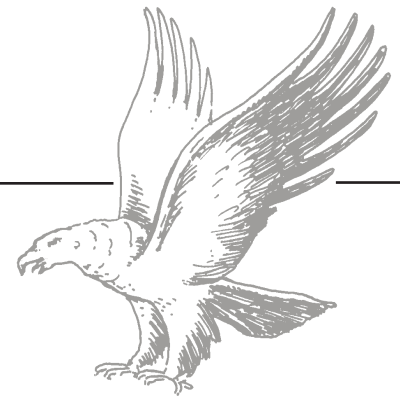


# Wings

*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."  
Isaiah 40:31*



October 29, 2017

## Making Excuses

The life of service to which God calls us is an opportunity to participate in the greatest enterprise available to humanity. When we neglect it, we rob ourselves of a great honor.

*"A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses" (Lk. 14:16-18).*



This parable was spoken to a group of guests enjoying a feast at the home of a prominent Pharisee (v. 1, 7). One of the guests used the occasion to remark on the privilege of feasting in the kingdom of God (v. 15). His statement prompted this story from Jesus.

The guests who heard this parable would instantly recognize the setup: "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many." Lavish banquets like this were a way for rich men in that culture to secure their status in the community. To be a guest at the rich man's table incurred an invisible debt, but one that most people were glad to accept. Indeed, to be invited to such a social event was a great honor not to be taken lightly.

But in Jesus' story, the invitees spurned the honor. They "began to make excuses" as to why they couldn't come.

The reasons they offered involved legitimate activities relating to property, business, and family matters. But none were so urgent that they could not be rescheduled. This was a rare opportunity to share the hospitality of their host, and they were turning it down.

To Jesus' listeners, this string of lame excuses came across as an affront to the host's generosity. They could not help but catch the message: These men were too wrapped up in their own petty interests to be bothered with the banquet. They were trading a chance to be honored at the rich man's table for more trivial pursuits. How foolish!

The outcome of their rejection was predictable: "None of those men who were invited shall taste my supper" (v. 24). This was not unjust of the host. These men had insulted him, and in doing so, they forfeited their place on his guest list.

Like all of Jesus' parables, this little story is more than a lesson in social etiquette. It goes directly to the heart of our relationship with God. God has invited all of us to dine with Him in an eternal

kingdom. It is an honor that we do not deserve, and could not purchase at any cost. Yet God has bid us all to come and enjoy His bounty. Who could pass up an opportunity like that?

Actually, a lot of people pass it up. Some turn away because they don't recognize the majesty of the One extending the offer. But even among those who do claim to know God, many fail to accept His invitation because they are too busy with their belongings, their careers, their families, and a host of other earthly matters. Their thinking is so small, so narrow, they never taste the pleasures of the kingdom that are available to them.

Oh, we tell ourselves, we'll get serious about this later, when life slows down. What we fail to realize is that this feast is not some future event in a far distant land. It is going on *right now*. When we neglect opportunities to serve those in need because we're too busy with our own personal affairs, we are robbing ourselves of a chance to dine in the kingdom of God. Our excuses betray a heart that has no interest in what truly matters. And God is taking note.

– David King



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