



All Are Invited!

(Leader's guide)

Author: Rev. Paul Muench Ph.D., Former missionary to Papua New Guinea and Russia

Opening Prayer: Dear Jesus, please open my heart and mind to be guided by the Holy Spirit to make choices pleasing to you as I witness. Help me not to reject a person because he or she is different from me. Help me to be open, inviting, and hopeful as I witness. Help me to trust that it is you working through your Word that changes people. In Your name I pray, Amen.

Opening Video: "Therefore, Go and Invite" from Pastor Fung Lo, MCN mission partner in Asia
(Please email churchpartners@missionofchrist.org for a secure link to view this video)

Read Together: Matthew 22:1-10

Opening Question:

- When in daily life do you interact with people who are not like you or do not have similar interests to you? How often do these people become friends or guests in your home?

Allow participants time to answer. Questions for follow-up: What things might keep you from interacting with people who are not like you? What things might keep you from developing friendships with these people?

Going Deeper:

Group One – The logical target group

*"² The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³ and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast."' ⁵ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them."
(Matthew 22:2-6, ESV)*

For an event like this large banquet, it was the custom to give a preliminary invitation so people invited to come would be prepared, similar to the way we send out wedding invitations. Then when the banquet was ready the servant went to say, "Come now."

Discuss: What kind of feelings have you experienced when a relative or friend did not come to an event which you felt strongly they should attend? Would you have been even more upset if the excuse they gave was very weak?



*Disappointment, worry, judgment, hurt feelings, slighted
This would certainly be a normal reaction. If it is important, then such a weak excuse
makes it feel even worse!*

If Jesus was talking about inviting people to come into the Kingdom of God, what might this part of the parable suggest?

The Jewish people had received the invitation from God and the promise of the Messiah long ago and yet they rejected the prophets over and over (even killed them!) and then rejected and crucified the Christ when He came. Many people still today reject the Savior and the invitation to the heavenly banquet for weak reasons, putting temporal things before eternal. Our rejection of God's invitation demonstrates our lack of understanding of our relationship with God and the purpose for which we were created by Him.

Read Luke 18:18-30. This account in Luke tells us of an official who was asked to follow Jesus.

Discuss: What prevented the official from following Jesus? What is the answer to the disciples' question, "Who, then, can be saved?"

The text focuses on his wealth, but it also describes his sense of self-sufficiency. He believed he was able to live within all the commandments through his own power. One implied answer is "no one." Another implied answer is, "everyone . . . through God."

Should we attempt to witness to rich and/or important people? Explain your answer using the text above.

Wealth and importance are not reasons to keep us from witnessing, but we should recognize that witnessing to such people can be particularly difficult due to their sense of competence and self-sufficiency. Jesus's disciples may have assumed the wealthy were more worthy of God's attention and more within God's favor because of their status, but Jesus tells them this is not the case. Jesus does not avoid speaking to the rich man. Jesus does not reject him. (In fact the parallel passage in Mark 10 tells us Jesus looked at him and loved him!) Jesus makes it clear that the rich young ruler would be welcome if he relinquishes trust in himself and his own success and relies instead on God.

"The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city." (Matthew 22:7, ESV)

Discuss: Why was the master angry? Does God become angry when people reject His invitation to come into His kingdom? How might God's anger be evident in the lives of those who reject God?



The people who had been invited knew that this was coming. They had time to prepare. They willingly turned from the invitation to their own priorities and rejected the generosity and hospitality of the master.

God grieves our rejection. Jesus's words on the cross are telling, as he advocates for grace even as breathes his final breath, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). So, too, upon a similar rejection in the garden, God seeks out Adam and Eve by asking "Where are you?". The anger of the master helps us understand the seriousness of the consequence of our rejection of the invitation. Ultimately God's anger at sin and our rejection of Him was borne by Christ on the cross as He drank the cup of God's wrath so we might be forgiven and accepted.

Some ways this rejection of God might be evident could be a refusal to acknowledge the continuing work of God in the world, the rejection of eternity as a reality for God's creation, the naïveté of saying that hell doesn't exist and has no relevance for them, or a refusal to submit to God's standards for morality and character.

How might you witness to someone who apparently has experienced God's anger?

First and foremost, with humility. This person has likely established a platform to stand on that is built with planks of self-righteousness. Speaking to their error will only cause them to add more height to the platform. Instead, focusing on the observable work of God in the world and the work of Christ on their behalf (thereby refocusing their vision from themselves to God's work) can guide their steps to the edge and down from that platform.

It is important that you listen to the person who has experienced God's anger in order to know how they react. If the person arrogantly continues to reject God, it is important for you to lovingly show them God's plan for humans, the law. If they are humbled by what has happened to them, they may be open to hearing the Good News about Jesus.

Group Two – The illogical target group

"⁸ Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' ¹⁰ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests." (Matthew 22:8-10, ESV)

The servant was faithful and did what the master asked. He went out to the roads and invited everyone that he found – the poor, the handicapped, the blind, and the lame, both good and bad.



Discuss: What is the implication for the Kingdom of God when we hear that the master wants the banquet hall to be filled?

The Kingdom of God is intended to be crowded. It is not a place of exclusivity, but of inclusion. God is not worried about running out of resources for His people.

What impact should this parable have on our plans for outreach? The master “stretched” his invitation plans. How might “stretching” become a regular part of your outreach plans?

We should be open to God’s work through us towards people that our human intellect and assumptions may judge to not be included in God’s plan for His kingdom and its disciples. We should reflect on whether our plans have limited our scope for relationship and connection from the breadth of God’s full Kingdom to instead focus too narrowly on a subset that we have targeted as worthy of our time and energy.

Each morning you might pray specifically to have a heart open to respond to prompts from people you meet throughout the day. While we prayerfully make plans as individuals or as churches for our activities and outreach, it is important to realize that the Holy Spirit will use us for unplanned purposes. We can prepare to be flexible in prayerfully discerning a response to those opportunities for changes to the plan. God’s ways are always higher and greater than ours!

“He (God) wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4, ESV) As servants of God working as missionaries for His kingdom wherever we live, we should honor God’s desire. We do this by not eliminating anyone from God’s invitation list. As we make our plans for the year, for the month, for the day, we should always try to expand our invitation list. Who have we missed? Why were they missed? What is the next group, category, culture of people we should be trying to invite into God’s kingdom?

Closing Video: [“Gospel Openings in a Taiwanese Classroom”](#) from Sarah Huhn, MCN mission partner in Taiwan

Closing Prayer: Oh, Lord, open my heart, my mind, and my eyes to see who should be on the invitation list you have asked me to carry out. Give me the wisdom, the courage and the endurance to constantly be stretching my list. Bless my searching, my speaking, my serving so that the heavenly banquet will be full. In Jesus’s name we pray, Amen.



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(Student Handout)

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