



Life Group Study Notes

“Not This, But That”

Pastor James Lowe – June 30, 2019

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What are some things that people do which can be offensive to you?
- What are some things that you did that to you was perfectly normal, but to someone else very offensive?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Luke 14:1-20 One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. 2 And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” 4 But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. 5 And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” 6 And they could not reply to these things.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8 “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

The Parable of the Great Banquet

12 He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

15 When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” 16 But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. 17 And at the time for the banquet he sent his

servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' 20 And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

Jesus always told a parable in response to a particular situation. As Pastor James said in his sermon Jesus is trying to confront their mindsets.

"It's not this or that, it's not this way of thinking, but that way...It's not the law it's grace." - Pastor James Lowe

In this instance the Pharisees had invited Jesus as well as a man who was infirmed. They did this to see if they could find some cause to look down upon Jesus. Dropsy was a disease which caused the face to become bloated due to the buildup of fluids. Jesus being moved by what He saw as well as His desire to point people to the true way of God healed the man instantly. He then asked a question which none of the Pharisees could possibly answer which happened often. "Which of you having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on the Sabbath day will not instantly pull him out?" They could not answer because if they said they would not act then they would be heartless religious leaders, but if they said they would then they would be breaking their own traditions regarding the Sabbath. Jesus asked this question because he loved them, and knew that they were not heartless and cruel. This emphasize the problem with the current mindset which the religious leaders, and even all of Israel had. Jesus didn't condemn the practice of the Pharisees because they kept the law, but rather because they regarded the traditions of men to be equal to the word of God. Their Sabbath laws were not the actual laws which governed the Sabbath. As Pastor James pointed out in his sermon the Jewish people believed that someone's infirmity was the result of God judging a sin, but here Christ is demonstrating that this shouldn't keep us from serving someone. Jesus then goes on to tell these two parables found in Luke 14. The first one is about humbling ourselves, and not seeking to self-promote, but rather let God speak for your character. The second one is about affirming the dignity of all people regardless of where they come from, or whether or not they can benefit you in some way. The culture which Jesus lived in had customs regarding seating arrangements. There were seats of greater and lesser honor. The one who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

The second parable is about the invitation of the Kingdom. This is the gospel message. A great banquet is thrown, and many people are invited. We must ask ourselves, if this banquet is so great why aren't people coming? Each person brings forth their reason, but Jesus says these are really excuses. Their reasoning is just a smoke screen to hide the fact that they don't really want to come. If we go on to read the rest of this parable we find that Jesus begins sending out invitations to the crippled, the lame, and the destitute. This parable tells us several things. The gospel invitation is for everyone, and everyone is invited to the feast. For us this means we shouldn't pick and choose what kind of people we send the invitation out to. Some of us might regard the wealthy, or those who have the same ethnicity as ourselves. Jesus is saying not to have those kinds of preferences, but remember that the invitation is being sent out to everyone.

It's easy to get up in our traditions, and cultural norms. Christ is calling us to take on a greater perspective. Paul said "I have become all things to all people that I might win some to Christ." (1 Corinthians 9:22 ESV)

As a kingdom minded people our call is to reach the nations. To reach people who don't look like us, act like us, or think like us. We have been given the mind of Christ. His heart beats for all people. Does yours?

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- In what ways can we begin to serve people who may not share our cultural paradigms, or social status?
- What kinds of traditions or cultural norms do you follow that Christ might be calling you to forgo for the sake of the Gospel if any?
- In what ways can we humble ourselves rather than self-promote?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Pray that we would have the mind of Christ in regards to the people around us.
- Pray that the message of the Gospel would grow in our hearts.