

The Power of God's Transforming Table

Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Nov. 23rd

Last week we discussed Jesus' instructions on how to turn our worry into Worship by using our: Practical Reasoning (Mt 6:19-25); Personal Observations (Mt 6:26-30); and then Following his practical directions to realign our Perspective and Priorities. (Mt 6:8-11; 33)

While Jesus reminded us that God is the one who provides for our needs, his care overflows into something much deeper...Community! Consider all the things that occur around a table.

Stories are told, Experiences shared, Wounds healed, Hope restored, and Relationships formed or fixed. (Remember the Prodigal in Luke 15:23?)

Throughout Scripture, the table provides a powerful image of God's kingdom — an invitation to belong, to be seen, and to be transformed by His presence.

What's so special about God's Table?

1. It's a Place of Belonging. Heb. 13:1,2

A. It's not just about provision; it's about people!

1) It's about creating a place for others to feel seen, welcomed, and valued. Heb 13:1,2 *"Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."*

B. Consider all the times Jesus talked about, or ministered from a dinner table.

Mt 26; Lk 6; 7; 14; John 2; 7; 12; 13; etc.

1) It wasn't just about food, but fellowship!

2) He turned the table into a place where Outsiders became insiders; Dignity was restored; and Walls (class, wealth, status, etc) came down.

C. Examples: Matthew's celebration party. (Mt 9:9-13); Zacheus Story. Luke 19:1-10

God created us to belong! (Gen 2:18) That's why He prepares a table for us and calls us His children. Not because we deserve it, but because we belong to Him! (Song: "Who am I")

Eph. 1:6 tells us we're saved *"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he's made us accepted in the beloved."* It's when we begin to live from this truth that we find ourselves more willing to pull out an extra chair for someone else. Grace and Gratitude grows when we remember that God made room for us, and generosity flows when we make room for others.

2. It's a Place of Healing. (Luke 14)

A. The devious temptation. Vs 1-6

1) A chief Pharisees invited Jesus to a sabbath dinner, with a sick man present.

Va 3 Jesus asked: *"Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?... 4 And he took him, healed him, and let him go"*

B. Jesus' personal Observation. (7-11)

1) They chose the best seats for pride/ promotion. He used their practice for a parable.

C. Jesus' radical application (12-15) *"But when you make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: & thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection"*

1) Most of us knows what it feels like to carry wounds into a room — (rejection, failure, or loss)

2) When someone looks us in the eye across a table, really listens and shares with us, hope and healing begins. That table transforms from a piece of furniture to a place of ministry.

(Mt 10:8) *"Freely you have received, freely give!"*

3. It becomes a Place of Extending God's Kingdom. (Lk 14:14-24)

A. Jesus tells a Kingdom Parable about a feasting table.

- 1) The Invitation Vs 16-18 *"A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant ... to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready."*
- 2) The Excuses: Vs 20 *"And they all with one consent began to make excuse..."*
- 3) The Servants explanation vs 21a *"So that servant shewed his lord these things."*
- 4) The Master's Reaction & direction. Vs 21-23 *"the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."*

B. Which of the story's characters most accurately reflect you?

- 1) Self Centered citizens?
- 2) Sorry (poor) subjects?
- 3) Faithful Servants?

Conclusion:

Sharing a table with others were important to Jesus:

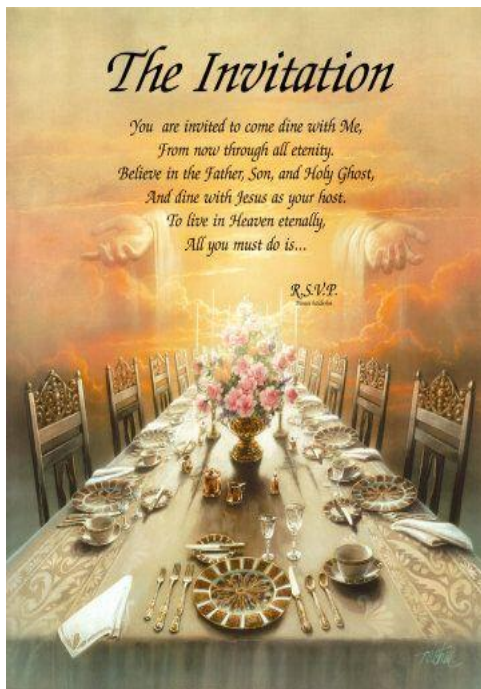
- 1) Jesus started his miraculous ministry at a wedding feast. (Jn 2)
- 2) During the passion week he told at least two parables about a wedding feast and ended his last public messages with a wedding feast theme. (Mt. 22 and Mt 25) In one of those parables in Mt 22 he explains that the dinner is a wedding feast for the son of the King!
- 3) The last scene the Bible records in heaven just before Jesus returns to the Earth as the *"King of Kings and Lord of Lords"* Rev. 19:16 Is His actual *"Heavenly Wedding Feast!"* Rev. 19:7-10 *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." * (From hetoimos: adjusted, prepared)*

Are you making yourself "ready"?

- 4) The final invitation recorded in the Bible is about a feast. Rev. 22:7

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Who will be there because of your invitation?



Application:

- 1) Are we willing to see our "tables" as extensions of God's "table"? (Kingdom)
- 2) If so, they'll become about more than a meal: They become about a mission.
- 3) Whose names belongs on the guest list at our tables? (Both physically and relationally)
- 4) Who has God placed in your life that needs belonging, healing, or an invitation to His table?

Don't underestimate the power of a meal,
Or a seat at your "table";
because when God is at the table with you,
anything is possible!