

# The Great Banquet

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[ 0 : 00 ] I want to ask you to take your Bibles and turn this morning to the Gospel of Luke again, but Chapter 14. And I want to look this morning with you at the parable Luke gives of the great banquet in Luke 14.

I believe this parable, which in Matthew's version of it is called the parable of the wedding feast. I believe these parables, the parable of the banquet, parable of the wedding feast, are a prophetic teaching of Jesus that pictures, in some sense you could say, the entirety of redemptive history and the transitioning ministry of the Gospel from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

In Luke Chapter 14, Jesus is at a dinner on the Sabbath day. The minds of many at the dinner on that Sabbath day were in the wrong places.

The Pharisees were there watching whether Jesus would do anything on the Sabbath day that didn't follow their standards of Sabbath keeping. Their minds were on critiquing and examining everyone else.

I don't know if you've ever been in a situation like that or been in a worship community like that where you feel like you're under examination. There were people there who were focused on getting the honored seats, making sure they got the biggest cookie or the best portion.

[ 1 : 31 ] I don't know if you've ever been in a family meal like that where, you know, the kids rush to the table and one kid yells out, I licked that plate, that's my spot. Even the host of this dinner was focused on the quid pro quo, the credit he was going to get and the networking opportunities he was going to have because of this dinner.

And these were religious people, but they were religiously presumptuous. They took their religion and their salvation for granted while their real hopes and dreams and thoughts.

What they really valued was somewhere else and not focused on spiritual things. And yet Jesus, on this Sabbath, at this dinner, is focused on spiritual things, on the kingdom of God, on the hope of salvation.

Not just the dinner they were eating, but the future and ultimate banquet of God. And in verse 15, one of those at the table, probably catching something of the temperature of the room and the criticism that Jesus was making, he throws out a platitude.

He says, blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God. He thought it was a nice thought that everyone could agree with. But Jesus basically turns around and asks them, but do you really believe that?

[ 2 : 52 ] That blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God. And does it make any difference in your life? And so he tells them a parable.

In Matthew's version, Matthew 22, Matthew calls it a parable of the kingdom, meaning it's a story that gives a picture of the new kingdom Jesus is bringing. Now, our focus this morning, as we read through this, is going to be on the end of the parable.

This parable has a main point that we're not going to talk much about. It has a secondary point that's going to be our main focus. The main point was a warning to the Jews.

You could say those who were originally invited to this feast, but didn't value it, didn't understand it, didn't prepare for it, and wouldn't ultimately come to the feast. But what I want to do this morning really is focus on the second part of the parable, that the kingdom of heaven is an invitation to all the world to come to the feast.

And it's a command for God's people to go out and compel the world to come in. So would you follow along as I read Luke chapter 14 starting in verse 16.

[ 4 : 07 ] A man once gave a banquet, a great banquet, and invited many. 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.

But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, I've bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Another said, please have me excused. I don't know why you would buy a field without seeing it first.

Another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused. Would you buy a car without examining it first?

Another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. I think your wife would be looking forward to a banquet that she didn't have to make. So the servant came and reported these things to his master.

Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.

[ 5 : 18 ] And the servant said, sir, what you have commanded has been done, and still there is room. And the master said to the servant, go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in that my house may be filled.

For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet. This is God's word. Let's pray and ask God's blessing on our study of it together.

Father, we thank you for the reminders that we've already been given this morning of your holiness and your justice, but also your grace and your mercy to us as sinners in your Son, Jesus Christ. And we pray this morning that as we consider the banquet that you have promised for your people, that we would be those marveling that we, of all people, have been invited, and that we would come, and that we would also go and tell others of this great banquet that you have invited us to. Give us ears to hear and hearts and minds to understand and apply your word. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Well, the last part of this parable really is a prophetic picture of the spread of the gospel to all the world.

[ 6 : 45 ] And it was something that had been anticipated and promised in the Old Testament. In Isaiah 49.6, the father says to the son in Isaiah 49, it is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel.

I will make you as a light for the nations that my salvation may reach the ends of the earth. God had promised in the Old Testament that one day all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

That one day he would reclaim all the nations as his inheritance. Those had been given over to darkness, but one day he would reclaim them and make them his own. He had said in Isaiah chapter 26, 25, excuse me, on this mountain, the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food.

Jesus wasn't making up these images when he was speaking to the people. These were images from the Old Testament. The Lord will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined, and he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil spread over all nations.

He will swallow up death forever and the Lord God will wipe tears away from all faces. And so in the New Testament, we come to this parable and we see that promise and command pictured here.

[ 8 : 16 ] And then later in Christ's ministry, his resurrection, we see it lived out in the lives of his disciples. We see Jesus' command to his disciples in Matthew 28, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations. And so that is what Jesus pictures here at the end of this parable. And I really want us to just ask one question this morning for you to consider.

The question is, why does God command evangelism and missions? Verse 23, you notice he says to the servant, go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in that my house may be full.

You'll notice there's only one servant there. In Matthew's version of the parable, he says this to servants, plural. And so some commentators think maybe Luke is more focused on the Holy Spirit and Matthew's more focused on the disciples.

But the implications are the same. God has commanded his servants to go out to the roads and invite to the wedding feast, as many as you find, Matthew 22, 9, or here to go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in.

[ 9 : 34 ] Why does God command the work of missions and evangelism? That's our question from the second half of this parable this morning. And I want to suggest to you four parts of an answer.

And the first answer really is the glory of the feast. God has provided a feast, a banquet. In Matthew's version of the story, it's actually a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. And he says, Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen, my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast. Why does God command missions? Because he is a king who has prepared a glorious feast to honor his son.

Now, our church a year or so ago had a string of weddings. I don't know if you've probably had weddings that you've gone to. You can imagine a family preparing a wedding for their beloved son or beloved daughter and going through all the arrangements and coming up with a guest list and sending out the invitations and then paying for this bloated thing that we call a wedding.

[ 10 : 55 ] And you can imagine on a human level the embarrassment on the day of the wedding as the bride steps out or the door opens at the back and the groom is there in the front and the bride starts to come down the aisle and the chairs are only a quarter full.

It's a special day for the bride and groom. They're looking at each other and yet there is something diminished because so many of those invited didn't come. It's a beautiful day and right off the bat their special day is dishonored. And on a human level you can maybe feel what that would be like. And we should say that's a little bit of an analogy that breaks down with God.

God is not an insecure and embarrassed guy who's going to be hurt the same way. We know His will is not going to be thwarted in the same way. And yet there is a transcendent truth there that that is how people treat God. People don't value God. They don't value eternity. They don't value their relationship with God. They don't honor God.

[ 12 : 06 ] They come up with all kinds of mundane excuses not to give their lives into God's hands, not to come to church even.

And if spurning a human couple at their wedding would be a dishonor, what would it be to dishonor the feast of the King's Son?

Some of you know the quote from John Piper that says missions exist because worship does not. Missions exist because worship does not. People are not worshiping their Creator. And their Creator is being dishonored. And God will not be dishonored. He will not have His house be half empty. God has provided a glorious feast for His Son and He will have His Son be glorified. And when you think about it too, what really is this feast that's being pictured?

[ 13 : 14 ] Well, it's a feast of salvation. It's a feast of forgiveness. It's a feast of reconciliation with God. That's the picture the Bible gives from the Old Testament to the New Testament that God is inviting people back into a relationship with Himself.

And you think about the Old Testament, the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. People would go through all of these sacrifices and yet the goal of the sacrifices, the final sacrifice, was the peace offering and the fellowship meal which signified a restored relationship with God. And if you think about it, the New Testament ends up the same way. You look in the book of Revelation and what you have is a glorious feast and wedding for the Son. It's a feast of reconciliation and forgiveness and relationship with God. And so you understand that this feast was costly, right? Think about the cost of this feast. What was the cost of reconciliation and forgiveness? Well, it was the sacrifice provided for us by the Son Himself, by His blood.

[ 14 : 29 ] How beautiful then is this feast? Think of the price and cost of the feast that God has prepared. Not by making you pay the penalty of sin, but Him paying it and Him offering it to you. This is an incredible feast. Amen? Psalm 34 says, O taste and see that the Lord is good. How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him. O fear the Lord, you His saints. For those who fear Him have no lack. The young lions suffer wanton hunger, but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing. You fear the Lord. God has given you a feast. Taste and see it. How can such a feast go to waste? And then think also of the graciousness of this feast. God didn't have to offer you this feast. He didn't have to send out the invitations. You were His enemies. And yet it's by grace that He opened the door and said, go and compel them to come in.

[ 15 : 36 ] You don't deserve it. He didn't have to offer it. But He is offering it. This is a glorious feast. A feast to honor His Son. A feast that was dearly purchased.

A feast that is graciously offered. And because of the glory of this feast, His house must be full. Why does God command?

Why does God command? Missions and evangelism. Because there is a glorious feast that must be honored. Now that leads us to point number two, or answer number two this morning.

And that is the, I'm going to call the heart behind the feast. And this may go slightly beyond the exact scope of this parable, but I think it's something that's seen all over Scripture, and so it's something we have to emphasize, that in God, in sending out this invitation, He has His heart behind it.

In Isaiah 55, God says, Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. You who have no money, come buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk.

[ 16 : 48 ] Without money and without price. Why do you spend your money on that which is not bread, and your labor on that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

So this is the invitation seen throughout Scripture, that God invites people out of compassion and love. This is the world He described.

It's a world that's hungry. It's a world that's thirsty. And it's a world that's wasting their lives, trying to satisfy themselves with things that will not ultimately satisfy.

And God sees that. God sees people wasting their lives, and He appeals to them out of a heart of compassion and love, Come to me, you who are thirsty.

Why are you doing what you're doing? Now I think this is important for us to emphasize, especially as Reformed churches, because I think there's been a growing confusion, especially among Reformed churches, to deny something of this point.

[ 18 : 02 ] People will, some Reformed people will admit there's a concern for the glory of the feast, but they do not believe that there is a heart behind the invitation. And so what I'm talking about here is something called the doctrine of the sincere, or well-meant offer of the gospel.

And I believe that there's a sense in which that doctrine is being undermined by some today. As Reformed churches, we emphasize things that are biblical like election, predestination, God's sovereignty.

But on that basis, some people will use that to say that God only chooses to save some, and therefore the gospel is only meant for some.

It's not meant for everybody. There are some who we may call hyper-Calvinists, who say that God does not love everybody, and God does not intend to save everybody.

The gospel was not intended to save everybody, and so the gospel is not really offered to everybody, and there is no duty for sinners to repent and believe. Now there's some other Calvinists who don't deny that we preach the gospel to all, but they don't believe that there's any sense in which we could say God loves sinners because God hates sinners.

[ 19 : 31 ] And they so emphasize the doctrines of sovereignty and predestination that they believe you go out and you preach Christ, but you don't really offer Christ to people.

You can't say that Christ's death is there for them, there to save them. You command them to repent and believe, but you don't really know whether God has a heart for them or not, and so you don't say God desires you to be saved.

The Apostle Paul can say, it's my heart's desire that my people be saved. Can the Apostle Paul have more tender a heart of compassion than God has?

I think that the Apostle Paul's heart was merely a reflection of God's heart. Some people can say, some people say we can't talk about God's desire that way.

God doesn't desire things that he, his desires aren't thwarted, and so we can't say that God desires the salvation of all sinners. But that's not the way the Bible talks.

[ 20 : 46 ] And that kind of preaching, I believe, allows people to preach a cold message that doesn't have a heart behind it. And it excuses your heart from not having a heart for the lost because you know your father doesn't have a heart for the lost.

And the point is that doesn't match what Scripture says. There's a mystery here. The Bible says that God, in one sense, desires to save all, and in another sense, God chooses specifically to save some.

Robert Dabney uses an illustration to explain this from history, and he tells a story of George Washington having to pronounce a sentence on a man named Major Andre who had been a friend of Washington but who had been a traitor to the cause of the American Revolution.

And so Washington was tasked with this duty of carrying out a judgment on this man for being a traitor who had been his friend. And Washington's biographer says, perhaps on no occasion of his life did the commander-in-chief obey with more reluctance the stern mandates of duty and policy. And Dabney writes, Washington had pity that was real, but his pity was restrained by superior elements of motive.

[ 22 : 17 ] Washington had the power to release the criminal, but he didn't have the sanction of his wisdom and justice. Thus his pity was genuine, and yet his will not to indulge it free and sovereign.

In other words, God can look upon the wicked with compassion and agree and say, I have a desire that they be saved and at the same time have a superior desire, not in any way contrary, that says for my greater purposes of justice and righteousness, I will show mercy to some and not to some. And there's no contradiction there. God is capable of having those distinct thoughts. And God expresses that clear heart for the lost throughout the Bible.

Let me just read to you several verses. Deuteronomy 5, verse 29 says, Oh, that they, my people, had such a heart to fear me and keep my commands.

The word there, oh, oh, that they had such a heart is what's called an optative. It's an expression of desire. Psalm 81, oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways.

[ 23 : 32 ] Isaiah 48, 18, oh, that you had paid attention to my commands. Or Jesus himself, Matthew 23, 37, oh, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who were sent to it.

How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings and you were not willing. Or consider Matthew 5, verse 43.

Jesus said, You've heard it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.

If you want to be like your Father, you have to love your enemies. For He makes His sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and unjust.

Therefore, you must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. This is a reflection of God for you to do this. Luke 6, 35, love your enemies and do good and lend expecting nothing in return and your reward will be great and you will be sons of the Most High for He is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

[ 24 : 53 ] God, the Bible makes clear, has a love for all the world. He has a special love for His people, but God has a common love for all the world.

He says, Ezekiel 18, verse 23 says, Have I any pleasure? This is a verse that actually could be translated, Could I desire to desire?

Have I any pleasure? Could I desire to desire the death of the wicked? Declares the Lord God. And not rather that He should turn from His way and live. I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord God.

So turn and live. Ezekiel 33, Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from His way and live.

Turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel? Do you ever wonder whether God wants to save you?

[ 26 : 02 ] Maybe some of you here have never been saved. And you kind of wonder whether it might be God's fault that you're not saved.

It's not God's fault. Do you think God wants to save you? The Bible, in the Bible, God is telling you, I want to save you.

2 Peter 3, 9, The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise, at some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

You are not dead yet. You are not in hell yet. You are not judged yet. And so right now, you know that God is being patient towards you.

His patience is an opportunity and a sign to you that God is being good to you. He owes you no good right now. He doesn't owe you breath. He doesn't owe you kindness.

[ 27 : 08 ] He doesn't owe you blessing. Yet He's being kind to you. He's showing you blessing. He's being patient with you. And this is a sign of His heart for you. There is something in God that does

not wish you to perish, but to bring you to repentance.

1 Timothy 2, This is good, is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 2 Corinthians 5, We are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us.

Whose appeal is it? Is it our appeal? It's God's appeal. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. John 3, John 3, John 3, John 3, For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Can God be more clear? Why does God invite the world? Because God desires sinners to be saved. Third, third reason God commands evangelism and missions is the sufficiency of the feast. In verse 17, He says, Say to those who are invited, Come, for everything is now ready. Verse 21, He says, Bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.

[ 28 : 40 ] And part of the point of the message to the poor, the crippled, the blind and lame is that their poverty and their weakness and their brokenness doesn't prevent you from coming. You don't have to do anything because the feast is already ready.

We will sometimes sing, Come ye sinners, poor and wretched, weak and wounded, sick and sore. For Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity, joined with power.

He is able, He is able, He is willing, doubt no more. Come ye needy, come and welcome, God's free bounty glorify, true belief and true repentance, every grace that brings you nigh, without money, without money, come to Jesus Christ and by.

Come ye weary, heavy laden, bruised and broken by the fall. If you tarry till you're better, you will never come at all. Not the righteous, not the righteous. Sinners, Jesus came to call.

Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream. All the fitness He requires is to feel your need of Him. This He gives you. This He gives you.

[ 29 : 56 ] 'Tis the Spirit's rising being. God commands you to come and God provides everything. You say, I feel unworthy.

I feel dirty. I'm not ready. God says, I will take off your filthy rags and provide you with my robes of righteousness.

I will provide the wedding garment. Now, you do need a wedding garment. And in Matthew 22, it talks about a man who came to the wedding feast who didn't have a wedding garment on.

But part of the point of the Scriptures is that the wedding garment is provided by God. And so if there's a man there at the wedding who doesn't have the wedding garment on, it's because he didn't have enough honor and respect for the king to want to put it on.

He was just there for the food. He says, I want the good stuff, but I don't really want to honor the king. You need a wedding garment, but part of the point of the parable is that God provides everything you need.

[ 31 : 02 ] There is a sufficiency in the Gospel for everyone and every sinner. The Synod of Dort, which is where we sometimes get the five points of Calvinism, they wrote this during the Synod of Dort.

He says, This death of God's Son is the only complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins. It is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world.

Moreover, it's the promise of the Gospel that whoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be announced and declared to all nations and people to whom God in His pleasure sends the Gospel. However, that many who have been called by the Gospel do not repent or believe in Christ but perish in unbelief is not because the sacrifice of Christ offered is deficient or insufficient, but because they themselves are at fault.

But all who genuinely believe and are delivered are saved by Christ's death from their sins and receive this favor solely from God's grace.

[ 32 : 26 ] Charles Hodge used to say that no man dies for want of an atonement. No one can say there is not an atonement offered for me.

There is an atonement offered for you. The death of Christ is sufficient for everyone in the world. And on that basis, on the basis of the sufficiency of the Gospel, the Gospel should be preached to all the world.

Christ is what you need. And Christ has in Himself everything you need to be forgiven. You don't need to go anywhere else. You don't need to add anything else.

If you refuse to come and repent, it's not because Christ wasn't enough. It's not because His death wasn't sufficient. It's on your own head for not coming.

This is the sense in which Christ is sufficient for the sins of the whole world. In John 2.2, when it says, Christ is the propitiation for our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

[ 33 : 34 ] This is what it means. It's not saying that God's wrath is truly propitiating for everyone in the world. It's saying that He is the one offered to the whole world as the only sufficient sacrifice for sins.

I don't know if you've ever thought about this, but if God was only going to save one person, if God was only going to save one person, do you know what it would have taken to save one person? The death of the Son of God. It's not about how much Jesus suffered. It's about the quality of the man who suffered.

If God is going to save more people, Christ didn't have to suffer more. If Christ was going to save less people, Christ didn't have to suffer less. Christ is what the whole world needs. Does that make sense?

You can go to the whole world and say to them, Christ has everything you need. Thomas Boston says, a prince may give a commission to a qualified person to be physician or a doctor to a society. [ 34 : 55 ] And that prince's commission constitutes him the physician of that society, though many of them should never employ him, but call other physicians, yet still there is a relation between him and them.

He is their physician by office. Any of them may come and be healed. In other words, the king can say, here is the doctor of the people. He is there for you. People can say, eh, I'll go somewhere else.

It's not because he's not their physician. He is the one offered to them by the king. Malcolm Watts says, none of the sons or daughters of Adam the sinner are excluded from this salvation when the gospel is preached, but only those who exclude themselves by stubbornness and unbelief.

In view of that, let the good news be preached worldwide and Christ offered to all. God does not name certain sinners as if only some are warranted to believe. He gives to every hearer an all-sufficient ground for believing.

Ralph Erskine says, how shall I know whether I have a warrant to take and accept? You may be sure of this. If these two things occur, namely, if God is offering and you are needing these things, if you want and if he has and is saying by the gospel, come and share, you can come and share.

[ 36 : 25 ] When the feast is this glorious, when the offer is this sincere, when it's this sufficient, why don't you come? It's not because of anything in the gospel.

So let that humble your heart to come to Christ. What is being offered to you is Christ.

It's a wedding feast. When you marry the son of the king, you get all that the king has. He becomes yours. You become his. He has everything for you.

That is what he is offering. Why does God invite the whole world? Because his feast is sufficient for the whole world. And the whole world has warrant to come.

And we need to declare to them to come. The last point I want to make, though, this morning, is that the feast is not optional.

[ 37 : 25 ] It's not just an invitation. It's also mandatory. It's a command. I mean, there's a sense in which you have an option, but it's not a good option.

2 Thessalonians 1 says, When the Lord Jesus is going to be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus, they will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints.

John Duncan, another Calvinist, says, The gospel does not say there is a Savior if you wish to be saved, but, sir, you have no right to go to hell.

You can't go there without trampling on the Son of God. Now, you may go there, but because of the glory of the Savior, because of the heart behind the invitation, because of the sufficiency of the feast, you really have no right to go there.

Christ is offered to you. Why would you turn this down? Luke 24 says, Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead and that repentance for the forgiveness

of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations.

[ 39 : 08 ] And this is what is proclaimed, that the forgiveness of sins is offered to you in Jesus Christ. Believe it. Come to it. Accept it.

Bank on it. Do you believe that Christ's death is sufficient for you, offered to you, and worthy for you to praise and know your God?

2 Corinthians 5 says, Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others. Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others.

the love of Christ controls us because we have concluded this, that one has died for all, therefore all have died, and he died for all that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. All this is from God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

[ 40 : 16 ] In Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ.

God making his appeal through us, we implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. Do you believe that we have reasons to go to all the world and tell them and compel them to come in? Do you see the glory of the feast that God must be honored? Do you see his heart behind the feast that God desires the salvation of the wicked? Do you see the sufficiency of the feast that he's provided in Christ the perfect satisfaction for sins?

All that you will ever need, a bridegroom who will die for you and cover you and give you new life. I want to close with one of my favorite stories I read in a book several years ago.

You may have heard it before, but it's a story of a man named John Harper who was a preacher and evangelist. And John Harper led an interesting life.

[ 41 : 47 ] He almost drowned in his life several times. When he was a child, he fell into a well. When he was a teenager, he was swept out to sea in a rip current.

When he was in the Mediterranean at age 32, the ship he was on almost sunk. Those would be some brushes with death that would get your attention.

It confirmed him and his zeal for evangelism. And so he was invited to preach many places and one time invited to speak at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago.

And so he boarded a ship to cross the Atlantic with his only daughter who was six. And what happened on that journey over we only know from two sources. One from his daughter who died at the age of 80.

She remembered being woken by her father two nights into their journey and told that their ship had struck an iceberg. And Harper told his daughter that another ship was about to rescue them that as a precaution he was going to put her on a lifeboat while he would wait for the other ship.

[ 42 : 55 ] And the rest of the story is a tragedy many of you know well. His daughter survived but the ship they were on was the Titanic. And the only way we know what happened to John Harper is because several months later in a prayer meeting in Ontario a young Scotsman stood up and told the story of how he was converted.

And he explained that he had been on the Titanic. and when the ship had sunk he clung to a piece of debris in the floating waters and that night a wave brought a man near to him John Harper who was also holding to a piece of wreckage and John Harper called out to him man are you saved? And this young Scotsman said no I'm not he replied. And Harper shouted back believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. And the waves bore Harper away but a little while later he was washed back beside him again and Harper cried out are you saved now?

No I answered. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. And then losing his grip John Harper sank.

He said there alone in the night with two miles of water underneath he says I trusted Christ as my Savior I am John Harper's last convert.

[ 44 : 34 ] John Harper believed there was a glorious banquet. he believed that God's heart was to invite all the poor and lame and crippled and needy of the world to that banquet.

He believed that that banquet in that banquet was a covering for sin and a welcome to God and a righteousness that was sufficient for everyone.

and he preached until his dying breath believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved.

Does God desire you to be saved?

Believe it. He cries out to you from the word itself don't go to hell.

My heart is for you. my invitation is to you. Come to me all the earth and you will be saved. And that's the message that we go out.

[ 45 : 45 ] That's why we are told. Why he speaks to us. Go out and compel them to come in. Amen? Amen. Let's go to our Lord in prayer. Amen.

Our Father, I thank you for this picture that Jesus has given in this parable. We grieve. We grieve for those who are too hard-hearted and too distracted by the world to come.

But Father, we pray that we would believe that you will be honored in your feast and that you will call men to yourself and you will cover them from all their sins.

And Father, help us to go out and preach believing. Believing that the gospel is what the world needs and Christ is what the world needs and that all those around us need to hear and need to be saved.

Help us to preach with our dying breath that there is a Savior if you will have him. We pray in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 46 : 58 ] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.