

The Inviter

Series: The Invitation

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“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30)

Last week we talked about the three-fold invitation:

- Come After Me-Follow Me
- Take My Yoke
- Learn From Me

The seriousness and the precise nature of the invitation cannot be minimized. And we must take the invitation in its entirety. We must stay for the whole affair. We should be grateful that we even got an invitation.

But, just as important as the actual invitation is the one who is inviting us. We use to talk about what if we got an invitation from the president-but that is not universally valued in today's political climate. So I will personalize it-if Alison Kraus gave me an invitation to a jam session I would clear my schedule and show up-no matter where it was being held. I hope that everyone would be eager to accept an invitation from Jesus-but it is not true. In fact most snub His invitation-they pitch it in the trash-or they simply never get around to RSVPing. The Hebrew writer gives us perspective on this:

“Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Heb. 10:28-29)

Jesus addressed this in Luke 14 by first observing how some guests picked their seats at the banquet taking the places of honor, and sometimes being humiliated when the host made them move to the back of the room. Jesus advised us not to invite those who could simply repay us by inviting us to their place next week-but to invite “the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind.” (vs. 13) Then He told the parable of the great banquet in 14:15-24 (Read)

So who is this master, this host who is inviting us? Wouldn't it help to know who wants us to come over?

Jesus describes Himself as “gentle and humble in heart.” (11:29)

GENTLE:

The word is *praus* in Greek, meaning mildness of disposition, gentleness of Spirit, meek.

- Matt.5:5, “Blessed are the gentle/meek, for they shall inherit the earth.”
- Matt.21:5, “Behold your King is coming to you gentle and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.” (Do you see the connection? Jesus choice a beast of burden-and the humblest beast, the foal-a colt, on which to enter Jerusalem to become the King of kings and Lord of lords. Even here He identifies with the burden-bearers.)
- 1 Peter 3:4 uses it regarding a Christian woman: “the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.”
- The opposite of gentle is harsh, angry, controlling, demanding, and manipulative.
- This trait is imperishable or incorruptible-more like gold, silver and precious stones, and unlike iron that rusts and wood that rots. Therefore, gentleness is valuable.
- The harsh and angry are often foolish, impetuous, and quick to act without thinking. The gentle person is usually calm, wise, and thoughtful.

HUMBLE IN HEART:

The word is *tapeinos* in the Greek. It can mean lowly as opposed to exalted.

- Our host is not pompous or arrogant, or loud and boastful, dominating the party and making everything about Him-though He would have every right to do so.
- Jesus was content to let God exalt Him. Luke 1:52 says, “God exalts those who are humble.” (See Phil.2:5ff)
- Rom.12:16 teaches us to associate with the lowly ad humble. Perhaps it will keep us grounded.
- 2 Cor.7:6 says God comforts the depressed or lowly.
- 2 Cor.10:1 Paul made his appeal to these Christians “by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.”
- 1 Peter 5:5 younger men are to clothe themselves with humility toward others because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Neither of these two words are to be taken for weakness or complacency. Jesus is not simply wanting to chill out with us. Remember the invitation is to come after, take the

yoke and learn. Our time spent with Jesus will involve some serious walking, and pulling, and studying. But, know that the pacesetter, the yoke-fellow, and the teacher will be gentle with you, he will approach you with humility of heart, displaying patience and tolerance.