

Luke 14:12–14//Who's at Your Party?//8 – *Kingdom Come*

Praise God for a great Easter....

We're actually going to give you another chance to be baptized at the end of this service, if you want. I Because some of you last week had this internal struggle at the end of the message about whether or not to be baptized... you had this little battle going on inside of you (we could see the smoke coming out of your ears). You were white-knuckling it... couldn't make yourself do it... 15 min into your car ride home you thought, "I really should have done that..." Well, you're welcome.

Plus, we had a lot of students and others who were gone on Spring Break... my daughter will be baptized.

- Again, baptism is the public symbol; it's the wedding ring... I would encourage you not to say that it's not important, or to write it off, because, frankly, Jesus commanded it, and the way you start off your Christian life is not by ignoring one of his commands.
- You say, "I'm not sure I'm ready." If you've accepted Christ you're ready. Imagine in the middle of your wedding ceremony you were like, "Whoa, I'm not ready for that."

Luke 14 (that's where we were last week; where we'll pick up again this week): Jesus is at a party and He uses that opportunity to teach that the Kingdom of God is like a party, which I told you is significant because that's not how most people think of the Kingdom of God.

- Most people see the Kingdom of God as a constraining set of rules. Even heaven itself, truth be told, doesn't seem that appealing. It's like an eternal choir practice.
- But Jesus said, "My Kingdom is everything your heart has been created for; everything you've yearned for. It's like a party."
- God loves parties. One reason that we love parties is we're created in the image of God, and He loves parties.
- And so His first miracle is fixing the broken tap at a party; Revelation gives us a picture of heaven like us, as a bride, at a big wedding feast.

Well, while Jesus is at this party, He looks around at the party and notices a couple of things.

1st, he notices how everyone was angling to choose the places of honor; the best seats; the seats up near the important people (v. 7)

- And Jesus said, "When you come to a party, don't take the high place. Because then, if the host sends you back to the low place, that's pretty embarrassing. I compared it to being at a wedding of the daughter of the president of your company... and you see a spot open at the head table, and you think, "You know what, I'm pretty awesome. I'm sure that the president would love for me to sit there..."
- Jesus said, "Instead, rather, choose the low place."
- And while that is good social advice, in and of itself, Jesus was also showing us the path of salvation.
 - Because the truth is that none of us deserve the high place at God's table. We don't even deserve to be there.

- But the Gospel is that Jesus, who did deserve the high place, took the low place for us. He took our place on the cross, suffering the penalty for our sin. He took our place on the cross, and offers us His place at God's table.
- But to get it, see, you have to acknowledge you deserve the low place and receive God's offer as a gift.
- Most people stumble at that, because we feel like we have to earn our place there. We believe our acceptance is conditional.
 - We think that others will love us only if we show we're worthy of that love. We think that God will love us only if we show we're worthy of that love. So we spend our lives trying to show we're worthy. That we're better than other people. We're smarter; we work harder; we are morally superior; we're more talented.
- God's acceptance is a gift, and has to be received that way. We are so guilty in our sin that we could never earn our place before God. God has to give it as a gift.
- Jesus says if you choose the posture of trying to earn your place before God, you'll be rejected. But if you acknowledge that you deserve to be rejected, but that Jesus was Himself rejected for you, then you'll be received up to the high place.
- You see, in Christianity, the way up is the way down. If you exalt yourself before God, you'll be rejected; if you humble yourself before God, you'll be received.

2nd thing Jesus notices at the party: The Pharisee throwing this party has invited all of his rich friends to be at the party. (Jesus wasn't Himself rich but He was pretty well-known, and He could do some really cool party tricks and He was pretty popular... He had a lot of twitter followers)

So, Jesus turns to the man who invited him and says: **Luke 14:12-14 (ESV)** 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."

- ~~(Factoid: There is no evidence in the NT that Jesus ever got invited back to anyone's house for a party twice, because the Man was not afraid to speak His mind.)~~
- When you have a party, don't invite people who can pay you back. Invite people who can't pay you back. Then you'll be blessed and have reward in heaven.
- A few observations:
 - What Jesus was telling them here was economic suicide. In Jewish society, meals were the primary business forum. So, inviting rich, influential people to a meal was a strategic economic decision, because the people that you invited to a meal would turn around and invite you in return. So, of course you invited the rich, because your generosity to them would ultimately benefit you.
 - To invite the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind meant that you were inviting people who could never pay you back; people who could not reciprocate.
 - This is how we live. Most of us, generally speaking, invest in people who can benefit us. We're not trying to take from others. But, generally speaking, we make decisions, and form relationships, and pursue life in a way that benefits us.
- Jesus says that we shouldn't live that way. For a few reasons...
 - 1. You don't want to live by the law of reciprocity.**
 - When it comes to God's party, what did you deserve? To be rejected. Why were you accepted at God's table? Because Jesus left everything to come to earth to rescue you. He turned His back on His interests and gave them up for you.
 - What Jesus is doing is attacking this whole idea of reciprocity which so undergirds how we think.

- That's how most of us live: you get what you deserve. And you give others what they deserve.
 - Veronica and I live that way... someone takes us out for dinner, what do you start thinking? We need to take them out. Someone gets you a gift... I have to get them one in return.
- But you can't do that with God. The most fundamental tenet of the Gospel is that you and I owed a debt we could never pay. God had to give us His grace *entirely* as a gift. A gift that cost Him everything, and that we just receive. And He did that gladly.
- If you understand that, that should shatter the whole idea that we would invest our lives primarily in those who can pay us back. God poured out Himself for us when we could not pay Him back... how is it possible that we get that and still use our stuff and leverage our lives and throw our parties in a way that primarily just benefits ourselves?
- How could someone who recognizes that they are present at God's party because of His mercy, given as a gift, live a life of selfishness? It is inconceivable.
- Jesus told 1 parable to prove that... it's one of my favorite, and most convicting to me. PARABLE OF MAN FORGIVEN 10K TALENTS... Your attitude toward your possessions is the best sign as to whether or not you get the Gospel. If you look at what you have as acquisition for personal benefit, there is no way you could have experienced the Gospel.

2. Second reason Jesus says that we should invite people to our parties who can't pay us back (the poor, lame and blind), is that He gives you reward in heaven.

- See vs 14? Live this way ¹⁴ ...and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.
- Jesus' life on earth was not one of luxury. He never owned a house, or a 2nd one. He lived poor, as a servant, and poured His life out for us, to the point of giving away His very lifeblood so we can be saved.
- He did that not because He enjoyed poverty and pain; He did that because He set His focus on eternity. He was willing to be impoverished here so he could be enriched there—and part of His riches there would be the fact that we would be able to enjoy those with Him. He expanded the circle of His joy, and was willing to be impoverished here so that He could have riches in heaven.
- He tells us to live that way. What we sacrifice down here will be abundantly repaid at the resurrection of the just.
- Personally, I think that one of the things that keep most people from being really generous is failing to take into account, or take seriously, Jesus' promises about eternity.
 - You will be actually repaid.
 - The Bible presents heaven as lavish beyond your wildest imagination. Many of us have this image of sitting on a cloud in a robe sipping a tasteless margarita and strumming a harp. It is a perfected creation. It's always described in terms of resurrection. When Jesus was resurrected, it was his same body, just perfected. His body was not less alive, it was more alive. When this world is resurrected, it's like that. The new creation has similarities to the old creation, just so much more.
 - Let me tell you a way that I've learned to look at my life... I like at my giving like an investment. There is a dilemma with my retirement: you save and save but by the time you finally get there, you are not able to enjoy it as much as you could have when you were saving for it. How many of you in your retirement dreams you are old, hobbling down the beach on your walker, sand all in your depends. That's the

dilemma: a lot of you are saving for retirement you're not going to enjoy that much, at least for that long.

- Nothing wrong with saving for retirement. But what I really want to invest in is my eternal retirement... because then I'll have a super-charged super-hero body and I'll really be able to enjoy it. I mean, Jesus' resurrected body could walk through walls. That's the way to retire.
- You will be REPAID at the resurrection of the just. Do you really believe that? If so, your money would follow.
 - Randy Alcorn has said that the bald truth about your money is that when you die, ***You can't take any of it with you, but you can send it on to heaven ahead of you!*** But you do that here by investing it in God's Kingdom.
- So, I ask you again. Do you REALLY believe that? If so, your life would be characterized as a party you throw for people who can't really pay you back.

So, here's what I'm going to do. 2 things.

- I want you think about your life in terms of this issue in a very general way. **Who is the party of your life thrown for?**
 - You see, Jesus told this story not to make rules about the guest list at your next birthday party, but to make you think about the bigger picture of your life, so that's what we'll do first.
- And then, I want to apply this to you in a really practical way in one very overlooked aspect of the Christian life.

1. If your life were depicted as a party, who would be the "invited guests"?

- Let's imagine we chose to depict your life in the metaphor of a movie. If we did that, who would be the guests invited to that party?
- The party of *your* life—who is it thrown for? Is it primarily for people who can benefit you, or people who can't necessarily pay you back, people for whom you pour out your life, like Jesus poured His out for you?
- **Some of you college students and young professionals need to ask this question, because you're making big decisions about your career...** Jesus said that following Him means that you looked at your life, in many ways, like He looked at His.
 - We live in a world where there are still over 6500 unreached people groups.
 - If you lined up all the people in those groups in a single file line they would circle the earth 25x. *Can you imagine a line of people as long as the earth, 25 people wide, trampling hopelessly to destruction?*
 - What does that mean for your life? I've told you that we ask God to reveal His will to us... like we need to wait for God to tell us what to do in a situation like that.
 - If I had credible evidence that there was going to be a bomb that would go off in a public place and kill lots of people... I don't have to wonder what God's will is in that situation... I don't have to go home and pray about. "God, I found out that a bomb is going off today in a place where thousands of people are going to die. Is it your will that I do something about that, or should I go on about my life?"
 - I think it's reasonable that every follower of Jesus ask, "God, not do you want to use my life but how do you want to use my life? Use my life for maximum benefit for the lost."

- We live in a world where many people live without the basic necessities of life. 100,000 kids a week die of starvation and hunger related diseases.
 - I don't say that to guilt you... just to give you perspective. The average American makes 4x what a person outside of America makes, yet the average American spends about 98% of their money on themselves. You say, "Americans are the most generous people on earth." But I still want you to think about the fact that God gave you what He gave you for the purpose of the poor, lame, blind and crippled.
- And some of you need to think about the career you're going to and where and how you're using it in light of global lostness.
- This is not optional, for a select group of you. This is what every follower of Jesus must consider. How can your life best be leveraged for the Great Commission?
- For you students: **Really practical step:** I'd challenge you to spend 2 years with us, after you graduate, somewhere overseas. Let us tell you how.
- **Some of you say, "Well, I have a secular job.** Are you saying that I missed it? Is everyone supposed to go into full-time ministry?" Not at all. God doesn't make that many of us to go into full-time vocational ministry. For most of you, He gave you what we would call a secular gift. Your interests lie in business or in law or medicine. But you still must look at that as a gift to serve others, as given to you for the purpose of serving others not just benefiting yourself and filling up your party with people who can pay you back. **Here are 3 questions for you:**
 - **3 questions for those in a 'secular' job:**
 - 1. **Do you look at your job as a way of serving others?** Everyone should be able to do that in their profession... If you are a lawyer, what you do is serving others. If you work at Starbucks that is a way of serving others. You say, "Getting people coffee doesn't seem that significant." Yeah, but neither does washing people's feet, but Jesus did that.
 - If you see your job as serving others, it changes your whole attitude in that job. You should try it. In my job, I am here to serve others.
 - That will also serve as a guide to what you will and won't do.
 - If you're a business owner, and you look at your job as an avenue to serve others, and you know that a certain venture will exploit and harm the poor, you won't pursue it even if it's good for your bottom line
 - For example, if you're a lawyer, you avoid suits that are built on exploitation and unfairness.
 - I know adjudicating these things are always complex questions, but it means in general in your job you have an attitude of service.
 - 2. **Are you looking your ways to leverage your job for the Great Commission?**
 - You are the only witness to Christ many people in your workplace will ever receive. You're like a missionary to them. When is the last time you shared Jesus with your co-workers? Several of the people who were baptized last week were there because someone they worked with who goes to our church invested in them and brought them.
 - Some of you are in positions where you could use your company in a way to serve the community. Even if that's not optimal for your bottom line. Listen: there's nothing wrong with profit and working toward it. I'm a free market guy through and through. Good profit is good for everybody. But you might be able to think about ways you can benefit the poor, lame, blind and crippled.
 - Some of you might be able to expand your company to places in the world with no Gospel witness. Business is able to get into places that church planters can't get into. Where I served, the word for missionary and terrorist were the same world.
 - My conviction: the Gospel today will go forward on the wings of business. Why do I say that? Because if you study church history, you'll see that is

always how it has happened. In the ancient world—soldiers and business people.

- Paul wanting to go to Rome.

- Some of you will do that again. You might not arrive at that conclusion just because it's good for your bottom line, but because you're thinking about your job from the perspective of the Great Commission and leveraging your life for eternity.

3. **3 - Do you share the money you make from your job?**

- Those of you who are well off—this parable teaches you that God did not give you money to throw parties for yourself... he gave it to you for the purpose of the poor, the blind and the lame. You don't make the money you make so you could drive the nicest cars, live in the nicest houses, and have a life filled with the nicest amenities. He gave it to you so you could leverage it for the poor and needy.

- **Now, J.D., are you saying we have to be poor to be true followers of Jesus?** Can't make and enjoy money.

- Not at all. God gave you your money and one of the reasons He gave it to you, He tells you in multiple places in the Bible like 1 Timothy 6 and several verses in Proverbs, is to enjoy it.
- But there's a difference, you see, in enjoying things along the way while you are in the midst of pouring your life out for others—there's a difference in that and in living mostly for yourself and throwing out an occasional bone to ministry.
- Jesus said here that the depiction of your life ought to be pouring itself out for those who can't pay you back...

- Once I was hiking up a mountain for exercise... Every so often I would see these breathtaking views that just gave me the inspiration to keep running. In some ways, I see that as a picture of my life, as like this difficult hike in pursuit of the Great Commission and then along the way, God just throws in these blessings that sometimes just bless me – a vacation, a time with a friend, the place where I live, even things as trite as the clothes that I wear – but they're always done in pursuit of the larger purpose of the difficult hike known as the Great Commission.

- For most of us it is the opposite... we're trying to basically live for ourselves with an occasional tip to God; as opposed to pouring ourselves out and letting God bless us along the way.

- Jesus said the party of your life should be lived for guests who can't benefit you or pay you back.

- Let me be clear: I'm talking about a radical reorientation for a lot of you to your possessions. Radical. A lot of you are feeling pretty good about yourself because you've been giving God 10% for several years, but that doesn't matter if the other 90% of your life is leveraged entirely for you.... Just because you tithe doesn't make you a follower of Jesus. **Unless you see your life as something primarily to be leveraged for God's Kingdom and the poor, lame, and the blind, you're not a disciple.**

- That's why right after this, Jesus says: **[33] So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that He has cannot be My disciple.**

- Unless you are ready to take a fundamentally different approach to your possessions and see them all as expendable and leverage-able for the purpose of God's Kingdom, to the point that you are willing to be radically generous with them or even to walk away from them for the purposes of God's Kingdom, you are not Jesus' disciple.

That's the general question for your life.

Second, I want to give you a real, practical, obvious application on this in an area that is increasingly overlooked among Christians. **2. Do you practice biblical 'hospitality'?**

The actual practice that Jesus is talking about here... of inviting outsiders (the poor, the lame, and the blind) into our homes is called, in the Bible, "hospitality."

- Sometimes when it comes to this issue of hospitality, people misunderstand it: hanging out with Christians. A perfect Southern living home.
- The word "hospitality" in the Bible literally means "to welcome the stranger." Fellowship is when you hang out with all your Christian friends. And that's great and it's good and you should do. Hospitality is when, in addition to those friends, you invite strangers to hang out with your friends so that they too start to become friends.
 - In Leviticus the people of Israel were repeatedly commanded to take in the outsider, the foreigner, into their homes... they weren't just supposed to have the preacher over and call that hospitality.
 - Jesus lived this way. He hung out with sinners and prostitutes. With Zacchaeus. The point was not that He had more in common with them than with religious people. A lot of uber cool Christians try to talk like that; the point is He had less in common with sinners and tax collectors and prostitutes but He hung out with them anyway, because that's what God is like and God wants to bring His healing and salvation to those on the outside.
 - Hospitality is something that is required of pastors in places like 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It's something that is also required of all Christians in places like Romans 16 where Paul commands the whole church there to practice hospitality.
 - Here, it is commanded of all followers of Jesus...
- You want to get people's attention in our culture, practice hospitality! In our day, any kind of community is counter-cultural...
- In the book 'Bowling Alone', a Harvard professor chronicles sociologically and statistically the decline in hospitality in the last few decades... the whole premise of the book is that bowling leagues are all but extinct. When people go bowl, they usually do it alone now.
 - *The number of people playing cards together is down 25%.*
 - *The number of bars, nightclubs, and taverns where people used to congregate is down 40%.*
 - *Full-service restaurants where people walk in, sit down, and have a meal are down 25%, but the number of fast-food restaurants are up 100% because so many people eat so many of their meals alone in their car.*
 - *Having a social evening with a neighbor is down 33%.*
 - *Having friends over to your home is down 45%.*

So just inviting guests into your life today is counter-cultural. When you mix in that the guests you bring into your life are outsiders who can't pay you back, that's revolutionary.

- Some of you think that being countercultural is primarily putting fish on your car and wearing Jesus' bracelets and not drinking beer.
- You want to be a real revolutionary... throw parties for people who can't pay you back! That would get the world's attention!

Look, might I suggest to you that RDU will not be transformed by my preaching? RDU will be transformed by your hospitality. Opening your home and your life and your table and your refrigerator to serve, to host parties, to invite strangers over to become friends.

- I've heard the most incredible stories of people baptized last week.
 - A girl who one of our members got to know working at a gym... our member said she felt like the whole reason God had sent her to work there was this girl... this girl got in a bad way... marriage

troubles; lost her car... our member's small group came beside her and helped provide financially. I met her on Sunday as she was coming to be baptized.

- One of our pastors opened up his home to let a guy live with him...
- Another one mobilized people in our church to provide meals for someone who had a death in their family
- Might I suggest to you that RDU will not be transformed by my preaching, but by your hospitality?

How many of you who became Christians as adults, was hospitality used of God in a very significant way to bring you to an understanding of the person and work of Jesus? People had you over for dinner, bought you coffee, took you out? The gospel tends to move most effectively along relational lines in hospitality.

- Let me get something off my chest: Some of you are too cheap. The more I walk with God, the more I hate cheapness. Some of you don't spend enough money for big events and parties. Some of you will have the attitude of, let's say, Judas Iscariot, who, when a woman gave a lavish gift to Jesus, Judas says, "Oh, we could have given that money to the poor."
- Sometimes it's good to spend money and to spend it lavishly on others. That's exactly what Jesus says to do. Throw a massive party. Don't give all your money away. Throw a lavish party and invite outsiders into it.
- When is the last time you had a neighbor, an unbelieving co-worker, over for dinner.
- Ryan's HOA

For us as a church:

- We want to treat guests well here. I hate cheapness. "Christ has been generous to us"
- HOPUD: we want to succeed in those areas. Conventional church wisdom says that money you spend on your kids' area you get back. We will do that. But we also need to pour our money and lives out for ministries that don't benefit us, because that's what Jesus said we'll be judged by.
 - I think a lot of churches are going to have to answer to God because they only spent their money on people who could pay them back. The only people they reached out to were people who could, in return, benefit their own bottom line. That's not discipleship, that's just worldly business profiteering.

Do you remember our motivation?

Our motivation: 1. This is what Jesus did for us

- We were the poor, blind, naked...
- I ask you this often... but where would you be without Jesus? Same place others are without you.
- If you get that, you'll invite others. If you don't, you won't.
- If you're not living that way, you haven't. Some of you need to consider, seriously, whether you have experienced the Gospel. Does how you spend your money show that you are greatly indebted to grace?
- It's not like we're trying to pay Jesus back. We never could. Martin Luther said, "Jesus doesn't need our good works, but our neighbors do." We do for them what Jesus did for us, because without us, they'll never be able to hear about what Jesus did for them.

Our motivation 2: We'll be repaid at the resurrection of the just

- I think some of you should start thinking about eternity and leverage your life from that perspective.
- Psalm 90:12

Bullpen:

- 'm going to show you how this applies to your life in a general way, asking you a very serious question about the big picture of your life—You see, Jesus told this story not to give you rules about the guest list at your next birthday party, but to make you think about the bigger picture of your life, so that's what we'll do first).
- Well, those of us who follow Him should live the same way. We don't leverage our lives for riches down here; we leverage them for riches up there. That leads to an eternal reward beyond our wildest comprehension, and one in which the souls of others who were just as helpless as we were when Jesus found us get to enjoy them with us.
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- *2 wrong approaches toward possessions among Christians*
 - You are free to spend all your money on yourself as long as you tip God 10%. This parable says “no.” Your whole life ought to be spent with a focus on God's kingdom and others. A lot of you are feeling pretty good about yourself because you've been giving God 10% for several years, but the other 90% of your life is leveraged entirely for you.... And you can't call yourself a disciple of Jesus, even if you do tithe.
 - The other wrong approach is to say that it's wrong to enjoy any of our money... That's wrong b/c God gave it to us and one of the express reasons he gave it to us is so what we might enjoy it.
- Jesus gives you the balance here. Life is a party. You're enjoying a party. But at
- We will be blessed: more joyful to give than to receive
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- We give an account: the whole context of this is that we're going to answer...
 - Luke 14: unless you hate father and mother... do you hate your money?
 - You won't tithe; you won't be generous. Don't over spiritualize those. If you are really committed to Jesus, that commitment will show up in your attitude toward your possessions. Some of you, how you treat money, shows you love and depend on money more than Jesus and that's why you won't obey Him in the area of your money and be generous with it and share it lavishly with the poor and with God's work. Have you ever really become a follower of Jesus?
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- Seeing others as souls:
 - How do you see people? Do other people that you see have souls? Does the waitress that serves you at the restaurant have a soul? Is she human? Or does she only exist to take care of you? Your children's teachers, do they have souls? Your neighbors, your boss, your coworkers, the girl at the gym that slides your card, do these people have souls? The checkout lady at the grocery store, are these people human beings? Do you try to take the position of honor?
- You and I will answer for it: Luke 14
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 - End of Luke 14: the call to discipleship

Harder for a rich man to enter heaven than a camel to go through eye of a needle

Piper: Jesus is challenging the law of reciprocity. You do not want to live by the law of reciprocity

Chandler: **How do you see people?** Do other people that you see have souls? Does the waitress that serves you at the restaurant have a soul? Is she human? Or does she only exist to take care of you? Your children's teachers, do they have souls? Your neighbors, your boss, your coworkers, the girl at the gym

that slides your card, do these people have souls? The checkout lady at the grocery store, are these people human beings? Do you try to take the position of honor?

- We're worse than the Pharisees. The Pharisees would take social status by where you sat at dinner. **We take something that's just a necessity for life and we stylize it and turn it into levels of coolness.** So we take something basic, like shoes, and we go, "No, no, no. Let's make \$400-500 shoes, and let's feel better about ourselves over others because we can afford (or not afford but get into debt on) \$500 shoes." So it's not the dinner table to us, it's pants, which is far stupider. Tell me that's not dumb. Tell me we don't set ourselves above others with things like cars, homes and dress.
- "Everybody exists to make much of me, to serve me, to provide for me, to honor me, to exalt me. And where it doesn't happen, I feel disrespected and angry. Nobody else has a soul but me. Nobody else has emotion but me. Nobody else can be wounded but me. No one else can have a bad day but me. No one else can struggle but me. **No one else has a soul but me.**"

Driscoll:

- In the book 'Bowling Alone', a Harvard professor chronicles sociologically and statistically the decline in hospitality in the last few decades...
 - The number of people playing cards together is down 25%.
 - The number of bars, nightclubs, and taverns where people used to congregate is down 40%.
 - Full-service restaurants where people walk in, sit down, and have a meal are down 25%, but the number of fast-food restaurants are up 100% because so many people eat so many of their meals alone in their car.
 - Having a social evening with a neighbor is down 33%.
 - Family dinners are down 33%.
 - Having friends over to your home is down 45%.
 - From 1985 to 1999, the readiness of Americans to make friends is down 33%.

The doctrine of Christian hospitality is something that is required of pastors in places like 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It's something that is also required of all Christians in places like Romans 16 where Paul commands the whole church there to practice hospitality.

Sometimes when it comes to this issue of hospitality, people misunderstand hospitality. Hospitality is not just hanging out with Christians. **The word "hospitality" in the Bible literally means to welcome the stranger.** Fellowship is when you hang out with all your Christian friends. And that's great and it's good and you should. Hospitality is when, in addition to your friends, you invite strangers to hang out with your friends so that they too start to become friends.

Might I suggest to you that RDU will not be transformed by my preaching. **RDU will be transformed by your hospitality.** That is you open your home and your life and your table and your fridge to serve, to host parties, to invite strangers over to become friends. You will be doing something that is exceedingly countercultural.

How many of you who are Christians, was hospitality used of God in a very significant way to bring you to an understanding of the person and work of Jesus? People have you over for dinner, bought you coffee, took you out? **It is a big deal that the gospel tends to move most effectively along relational lines in hospitality.**

- **Some of you are too cheap.** Some of you don't spend enough money for big events and parties. Some of you will have the attitude of, let's say, Judas Iscariot, who, when a woman gave a lavish gift to Jesus, Judas, who was the betrayer and the thief, said, "Oh, we could have given that money to the poor." Well, **sometimes it's good to spend money and to spend it lavishly and to invite the poor.** That's exactly what Jesus says, that we don't have a

greed motivating us. We have a generosity motivating us. It's good to spend some money, to get dressed up, to throw a great party.

MacArthur:

- Pharisees separated themselves from the riffraff. This would be the death of their elevation. This would defeat the whole system. The divide that defined Pharisees was the divide between holy and the unholy, the rich, the poor, the honored and the despised. And if they invited these people, the separation, the middle would collapse and the system would come crashing down.