

THE BIG IDEA: Heaven will be full of people who aren't full of excuses.

The Take-Off

Have you ever made an excuse to get out of something or to explain away something? I'd say we probably all have. We've all heard the typical homework excuse, right?
"My DOG ate it."

Well, students have gotten a lot more creative, and a group of 5th grade teachers were asked in a recent survey to share the best excuses they'd ever heard from their students about missing homework.

[IMAGES / Homework excuses]

We laugh and think "how cute" but what happens as we grow up?

We still find ourselves making excuses, and this morning we're going to meet 3 people who made excuses about something far more important than homework.

Grab your Bibles or Bible apps and turn to [Luke 14:15-24](#) and follow along with me as I read. It'll be on the screens for you, too, if you don't have an app or book.

Let me highlight 3 very important phrases before we dive into the message:

1. "They all began to make excuses." [IMAGE / verse 18]
2. "There is still room." [IMAGE / verse 19]
3. "Go...so that my house will be full." [IMAGE / verse 19]

Let me take those 3 phrases and put them together in a way that can help us remember them as our Big Idea.

Heaven will be full of people who aren't full of excuses.

Our first reaction to a statement like that could be horror because we've already established the fact that ALL of us have made excuses before.

But let's dig a little deeper into the passage and see what Jesus is getting at and how it fits into the Lost+Found theme we've been looking at over the last few weeks.

1. The setting

- a. Remember that context is king when it comes to understanding the Bible
- b. That means that if we don't know WHY Jesus says something and WHO He's saying it to, then it's easy to miss WHAT He's trying to say
- c. So let's make sure we understand the setting around this parable
- d. If you'll look back at [Luke 14:1](#), you'll see that everything we're reading today is still part of the Sabbath dinner talk that Jesus is having with the Pharisees and other religious leaders
- e. We saw last week that Jesus healed a man during the meal and the leaders got a bit upset about it because Jesus did it on a Sabbath
- f. That set off a couple of illustrations from Jesus centered around tables and meals - Adam covered 2 of them last week
- g. Each of them dealt with humility and pride, and it climaxed here with one man saying, "Blessed is the man who eats at that feast."
- h. Translation? Blessed is THIS MAN (himself) because I'm getting in.
- i. That prideful response is what prompted Jesus to tell a 3rd parable about a banquet.

2. The parable

- a. Let's just walk through the parable a verse at a time
- b. [v. 16](#) / the first of 2 invitations was given - will you be coming?
- c. [v. 17](#) / when the banquet was ready, the second invitation was sent to those who had said yes - it's ready!
- d. [vv. 18-20](#) / they all began to make excuses - Jesus shared 3
 - POSSESSIONS / "I have something to see" / Field
 - PLEASURE / "I have something to do" / Ox
 - PEOPLE / "I have someone to be with" / Wife
 - Basically, something better came along than what you first offered me
 - A popular dating site listed top excuses for backing out of a date (I'm sick, Someone else needs me)
 - Basically, it's the Brady Bunch all over again
 - [VIDEO / Something suddenly came up]

- e. **v. 21** / The host responds to the excuses
 - People making excuses isn't the shocking part
 - The shocking part of the parable is how the host responded
 - He didn't try to convince the invited guests to care
 - He just went after different guests
 - One's loss became another's gain
- f. **v. 22** / "but there is still room" - How do we see space? More comfort for us?
- g. **v. 23** / "Go ... so that my house will be full"
 - God will not settle for half-full or even almost-full. Why do we?
 - Empty chairs should remind us of empty souls that Jesus wants to reach
 - I love this quote from Loren Triplett, a veteran A?G missionary to NICA and AGWM director: "You don't measure yourself by your success, but you measure yourself against the unfinished task."
 - **We tend to be happy at having done SOME of the job when God would rather us be hungry to complete ALL of the job.**
- h. **v. 24** / "not one who was invited..." - the saddest part of the story
- i. Heaven WILL be full, but not with people who were full of excuses
- j. **Heaven will be full of people who aren't full of excuses**

3. The point

- a. And so we've come to the "so what?" part of the message, right?
- b. What's the point of the parable?
- c. Clearly, Jesus is the host and He is making it abundantly clear that we're not getting into the banquet if we continue to make excuses.
- d. There is a priority to the Kingdom that demands our intentional acceptance.
- e. So, before we land this thing, let me give you a few takeaways - a few observations - that can help us flesh out this parable.
- f. **ONE, stop making excuses about your tendency to make excuses.**
 - This is one thing humans do well, isn't it?
 - Adam and Eve did. Moses made excuses about his ability to speak and lead. Aaron blamed the fire for spitting out an idol. Peter made excuses by the fire about knowing Jesus.
 - We all do it. Even you.
- g. **TWO, If you want to stop making excuses, start taking responsibility.**
 - Own it. Our jacked up priorities are on us, not our bosses, spouses, friends or church. Us.
- h. **THREE, the kingdom of God is a "no-excuse" zone.**
 - Bill O'Reilly had the no spin zone. God has a no-excuse zone.
 - **Romans 1:20** / none of us has an excuse about the knowledge of God
- i. **FOUR, living without excuses means never living without hope.**
 - The people who got in made no excuse for being broken, hurt and lame
 - We can make excuses and be left out or take responsibility and be brought in

The Landing

There are 2 things that we need to consider as we close:

1. **Are we making excuses about following Jesus, and**
2. **Are we making excuses about finding others so that they can follow Jesus?**

If you're in that first group, you need to know that there will be a day when the invitation to spend eternity with Jesus will no longer be available to you. You cannot enter the kingdom with your excuses. There is no doubt that heaven will be full. The question is whether or not you will be there. Drop the excuses and receive salvation.

If you're in that second group, then let's be honest: you've allowed your passion for Jesus and His mission to drop dramatically on your list of priorities, and Jesus speaks these words to you: "Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first." (Rev. 2:4-5)

Heaven will be full of people who aren't full of excuses.

Let's pray and make sure that you'll be one of them.