

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

As we hit the mid-point of our Lost+Found miniseries in Luke 13-15, we're going to see that the intensity between Jesus and the religious leaders is heating up. So much, in fact, that the remainder of the passages in our series will be directed toward the attitudes of those leaders, and as much as we wish we didn't relate to them, what we're going to find out is that most of us do. In this week's passage, Jesus tells a parable that highlights the excuses people make in order to get out of the rescue mission that Jesus has called us to, and gives a strict warning that heaven will be full of people who aren't full of excuses.

- 1. The setting:** If we don't know WHY Jesus tells a parable and WHO Jesus is telling it to, it's easy to miss WHAT Jesus is trying to say. In this case, Jesus tells the parable because of one man's assumption that he would be one of the blessed people at the banquet Jesus had mentioned in the previous chapters. It's important to remember that Jesus is telling this parable to reveal the excuses that are so common in the hearts of men. We'd be wise to pay attention!
- 2. The parable:** Jesus describes who man invited a lot of guests to a banquet but when the banquet was ready, they all made excuses (I have something to see, something to do, someone to be with) even though they had originally made a commitment. Instead of convincing them to reconsider, they were left out and others were invited in, even people who seemed to be "less" than them and were not even invited originally. In the end, those who thought they were "in" were left out and those who felt left out were in.
- 3. The point:** Ultimately the point of this parable is that excuses exclude us from the kingdom. The Big idea says that heaven will be full of people who aren't full of excuses, and while that can seem harsh, the good news is that there is always room in the kingdom for the broken and the hurting. The choice is ours: we can make excuses and be left out or we can take responsibility and be brought in.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Describe a time when you either made an excuse to get out of something or someone gave you an excuse to get out of something. Why do you think it's so easy to make excuses?
- Do you think the man in verse 15 understood what Jesus had just taught in verses 7-13? Why or why not?
- In the parable, who were the invited guests? Which of their excuses do you identify with the most: I've got something to see, something to do, or someone to see (if it's easier, you can think of POSSESSIONS, PLEASURE, and PEOPLE)?
- Who eventually comes to the banquet? On what basis were they invited?
- Obviously we need to first stop making excuses about being a part of God's kingdom. But once we've done that, we need to be the servants who go anywhere we can to bring people into the kingdom. What excuses have you made or heard others make about going out to witness and invite people in?
- How can we help people overcome their excuses so that they can come into the kingdom?