**The Poor, Crippled, Blind, and Lame**

As I wrote on our Pursuing Holiness blog this week, I felt really stupid on Thursday. Who knows how many times I’ve read Luke’s account of the gospel, but I had never noticed the connection between **Luke 14:13** and **Luke 14:21**. In the first verse, Jesus instructed a man giving banquets to invite the poor, crippled, blind, and lame because they cannot repay him. Then in His parable which includes the second statement, He explains God invites the poor, crippled, blind, and lame to His great banquet. All of this is on the heels of His teaching in **Luke 13:22-30**, that many will wait until God has already shut the door and they will not be able to enter the banquet. Further, it immediately follows Jesus’s direction in **Luke 14:7-11** to take the “last” seats in a banquet rather than the “first.”

What do these connections demonstrate? While God has invited everyone to enjoy His great kingdom banquet, only certain ones will actually attend. What is the difference between the ones who attend and the ones who don’t? The ones who don’t are distracted by their own accomplishments and acquirements. The first had bought a field, the second had purchased five yoke of oxen, and the third had married a wife. Each of these acquirements come by personal financial accomplishment. Even the marriage does when we recognize the ancient practice of dowries given to the father when taking his daughter from him (see **Genesis 34:12; Exodus 22:16-17; 1 Samuel 18:25**). Each of these three are too busy enjoying their own accomplishments to appreciate the banquet to which they have been invited. But the poor, crippled, blind, and lame have nothing to appreciate in themselves. They recognize what a great gift it is and jump at the opportunity to participate in what they know they could never, ever even attempt to pay for.

Here is my problem. I often put myself in the wrong place in this parable. I don’t like to see myself as the poor, crippled, blind, and lame who can’t at all repay the Great Banquet Giver. I like to see myself as the one who has just bought a field, just bought five yoke of oxen, and just married a wife, but I would be smart enough to go to the banquet when invited. What this parable demonstrates is it just won’t work that way. The point is not that if I have a certain amount of money in my bank account or if I make a certain amount of money I can’t go to heaven. The point is those enamored by our own accomplishments and acquirements won’t accept the invitation.

Therefore, the first will be last and the last will be first. That is, those who think they deserve the invitation and who believe they are owed the first seats in the banquet hall will simply not enjoy the Great Banquet. Whether they believe that of themselves because of socio-economic status, mental prowess, family heritage, or especially personal righteousness, they will be last of all. In fact, they won’t enter the banquet at all. Those who see themselves as last of all, unworthy to attend at all, will enter the banquet before the others.

So, the question for us is are we enamored by what we accomplished in our field, with our oxen, or in our spouse or are we poor, crippled, blind, and lame enough to accept Jesus’s invitation to feast with Him?