



# Birds Aren't Real. Jesus Is A Party Starter.

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[Luke 14:15-24 NLT](#)

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## **MAIN POINT**

If we've truly experienced God's grace we will reflect that grace by living lives of compassion, humility, and surrender.

## **INTRODUCTION**

What character trait are you most known for and why?

What trait do you wish you were known for?

What character traits, attitudes and behaviors do you think are important for a follower of Christ to exhibit? Why these specific traits?

Today's passage from Luke highlights three important characteristics of the life changed by Christ—compassion, humility, and surrender. Through negative examples—how not to think and live—Jesus helps us understand the effect the gospel should have on our hearts, and how that should impact our relationship with Him and with others.

## **UNDERSTANDING**

**READ JOHN [LUKE 14:1-6](#).**

The events of 14:1-24 occurred on the Sabbath, which began at sundown on Friday and ended at sundown on Saturday. The Pharisees had a strict interpretation of Sabbath laws and were growing more and more hostile toward Jesus because of His healing on the Sabbath. Nevertheless, a leading Pharisee invited Jesus to his home for a meal. Luke made a special point of noting that other guests present, probably other Pharisees, were watching Him closely.

How do you feel when you know others are keeping an eye on you?

How do you think Jesus felt in this setting?

What lessons did Jesus choose to teach the onlookers in this scene?

Jesus justified His healing by giving examples of less lofty Sabbath deeds that even His opponents would deem legitimate, such as rescuing a son or an ox from a well. **Read [Deuteronomy 22:4](#) and [Exodus 23:4-5](#) for Old Testament laws related to this principle.** This man belonged to Jesus, and Jesus saved Him. The day didn't matter.

What does the silence of the religious leaders mean?

How did the religious leaders' attitude differ from Jesus'?

Why do we as Christians often err on the side of acting like the Pharisees?

The silence was not due to uncertainty about whether this man's life was in danger, but reveals that they had no answer to Jesus' argument. This brief exchange shows us an incredible picture of the gospel. The religious leaders were so focused on themselves and their rules that they failed to see the hurting man in front of them. But Jesus didn't turn the man away. Instead, He set the man free. By pointing out the religious leaders' selfishness and misplaced focus, Jesus reminds us of His compassion for us and the compassion we should have for others.

**READ [LUKE 14:7-11](#).**

**According to these verses, why should followers of Christ be humble?**

**What was Jesus' motivation for teaching His disciples about humility?**

**When have you encountered situations similar to the wedding party in Jesus' parable?**

**In those situations, how did you (or the other people involved) respond?**

We live in a culture that encourages people to do whatever it takes to get ahead. However, in God's kingdom, the person who humbles himself will be exalted by God. Of course, Jesus did not advise adopting a veneer of humility to gain honor from God. To do so would be self-seeking ambition. Humble people draw their sense of self-worth from their relationship with God. They don't seek or need honors bestowed by humans. They know who they are—God's children—and are secure in that confidence. Such solid self-identity carries with it strength to serve others in Christ's spirit.

**READ [LUKE 14:12-24](#).**

**Look at [verses 12-14](#).**

**Why do you think people tend to give preference to one of the groups Jesus listed in these verses over the other?**

**What actions might we take to implement Jesus' teaching in [verse 13](#)?**

**How does Jesus' view of honor vary from that held by others at the meal?**

**How does it differ from our culture's view?**

Jesus taught that people demonstrate true humility by acting on the basis of what others need rather than on what others can do for them in return. He explained that God Himself would repay such humility. By reaching out to those who could not repay the act of kindness, the host would not expect to receive anything in return. But by this action he would be inviting a much greater reward, God's special blessing. In dying on the cross for our sins, Jesus demonstrated such humility to us; love requires that we demonstrate the gospel by following His example.

**What does this passage teach you about the differences between kingdom values and social values?**

**How do things like status and customs get in the way of loving others in your family? Church? Work place? Community?**

**Which of the character in this parable can you most identify with? Why?**

## How would you feel as one of the people mentioned in verse 21?

Jesus took this opportunity to stress another characteristic of the gospel's humbling affect on the heart. When you see that the Creator God is offering you the banquet feast of grace, you want in. You don't care where you are sitting, and you don't make excuses. When you see how lavish God's grace is, you drop everything and run to Him.

### **APPLICATION**

**Of the three characteristics of a transformed heart we discussed today—compassion, humility, and surrender—which are you most struggling to exhibit?**

**What steps can you take this week to allow God's grace to penetrate that area of your heart?**

**What religious habits, rules, traditions might you be prioritizing above showing love to people in need? How can you confront these tendencies?**

**What excuses do you use not to do kingdom work? How might Jesus respond to them?**

### **PRAYER**

Being humble in a "me first" society is very difficult. Pray that each day God will strengthen everyone in your group to pursue a lifestyle of humility. This will take daily prayers and reminders to even begin walking humbly. Encourage each other and continue to pray for and with one another.

### **COMMENTARY**

#### **LUKE 14:1-24**

**14:1-2.** Luke is interested in the Sabbath question and Jesus' way of dealing with the religiosity of the Pharisees. A mis-formed, gravely sick man appeared in front of Jesus. How he got there we do not know. How Jesus and the Pharisees responded to him we do know. We also know that Jews often viewed this condition of dropsy as the judgment of God on sin and refusal to obey the rabbinic laws.

**14:3-6.** Jesus knew what the Pharisees were thinking: Will He heal on the Sabbath and thus break the Sabbath laws? Before acting, Jesus involved His opponents in the decision. Would they make a ruling? Is it legal to heal on the Sabbath? They refused to answer, so Jesus acted on God's authority. He healed the man and dismissed him. The Pharisees remained in a dilemma. To allow healing on the Sabbath violated the tradition they so zealously taught and practiced. To forbid such healing made them appear without compassion and care for a person in need. Obviously, these people did not believe Jesus' teachings on the kingdom. They remained fast in their ritualistic, legalistic ways but were afraid to show their hand in front of the crowd of witnesses.

**14:7-13.** Jesus selected the contents of the parable on the basis of what was happening in the banquet. The best places at a dinner were next to the host. Jesus' parable made the point that the danger of arrogantly taking the best place at a banquet was that the person who invited you—here representing God—could ask you to move to the lowest place at the banquet table, causing humiliation rather than honor. It was wiser to sit in the seat of the humble and then be asked to move up to a seat of higher honor. The point was clear: If you try to gain honor for yourself, you will be humbled and humiliated. But if you show humility,

then you will receive great honor.

**14:14-15.** In contrast to [Luke 6:20-22](#), which speaks of a present blessed state, this blessing occurs in the future at the resurrection. God will bless/repay. Jesus' belief in the resurrection coincided with that of the Pharisees as opposed to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection ([Acts 23:8](#)). Jesus' teaching drew a comment from the crowd. A dinner guest pronounced a blessing on those who joined the heavenly banquet ([Isaiah 25:6](#); [Psalms 22:26](#); [23:5](#)). Luke again does not concentrate on the man or his motive. Jesus remains center stage. The metaphor of the feast speaks of the messianic banquet and refers to participating in the resurrection of the righteous ([14:14](#)). This is another way of describing salvation and the inheritance of eternal life ([18:18](#), [25-26](#)). While sounding devout, the statement assumes that God's kingdom is a distant abstraction rather than, as Jesus had been teaching, a present reality brought about by his coming.

**14:16-24.** Another parable ensued, also with a banquet theme. The host issued invitations. Then according to custom, at banquet time with the meal ready, he sent servants to remind the invited guests. Obviously, the gossip line had found something amiss with the banquet. Everyone quickly found an excuse not to come. The host was thoroughly snubbed. No one came. The excuses were ridiculous. You do not make financial deals of such magnitude without having assessed the value of the property purchased. You do not accept an invitation to a banquet in conflict with a wedding. Jesus was showing how easy and absurdly finances and family matters get in the way of more important things. They can cause you to miss God's final heavenly banquet.

The host's response was predictable: rage. Still, he said, we will have a glorious banquet. Go out in the streets and get anybody you can get to come. Those people in rags invited as second thoughts are the very ones Jesus had earlier instructed the host to invite ([5:13](#)). Inviting them robbed the host of any social standing in the community or with his family. He placed himself on the same social plane as the new invitees.

He could not immediately find enough of this class to fill his banquet hall. So he sent a second invitation. The upper class required two invitations to the banquet. The simple people on Jesus' list came immediately. The second invitation was issued only in order to find more people. This may hint at Luke's constant emphasis that Gentiles as well as Jews get an invitation to God's banquet. The banquet host must represent God. The banquet is the inauguration of His kingdom. The original hosts are the upper-class Jews who were so tied to their social status, financial business, and family matters that they snubbed God. God rejected them and turned to the very ones the Jewish leaders looked on with contempt to find adequate guests for the heavenly banquet. Those who think they have a place reserved and assured in the heavenly feast find themselves on the outside looking in.