

Compel them to Come In

Luke 14:15-24

Online Sermon:

http://www.mckeefamily.com/?page_id=3567

During our lives we will make many decisions that will not only affect our present but our future realities as well. While some decisions are routine and often trivial such as what to eat, what clothes to wear, or what route to take to work; other decisions have much larger consequences such as who to marry,



what house to purchase, what career path to take, and what friendships to establish. But when we take off our temporal glasses and put on

our spiritual ones, the decisions we make become infinitely more important because they affect not only the present but also our eternal destinies! When a person experiences the great shadow of the crucifixion tug at their souls, they must decide to either accept Christ's gracious invitation of salvation or reject Him. This decision will determine if one goes to the fiery lake of hell to be forever tormented in darkness or if one goes to the Great Banquet in heaven where there will be no more tears, sorrow,

pain, death, or sin! While those who accepted the Host's invitation are to rejoice that their souls will one day return to the One who gave them life, do they not also have an obligation to He who purchased their seats at the Banquet to compel the lost to accept the great invitation they so richly enjoy? Why is it that so many Christians feel so little desire to tell the world of the Pearl and Treasure they found in the field?

Are they afraid that they won't have sufficient answers to the worldly excuses that others might give to delay or outright reject the Host's invitation? Is not the main reason why the fields are so ripe and yet few conversions due to there being only a few workers that truly desire to preach the Good News to both the prominent and chiefs of all sinners of this world?

The following sermon is going to review Jesus' Parable of the Great Banquet in hope to spur your heart on to compel the lost to come in before it is too late!

Feasting in the Kingdom of God

“When one of those at the table with Him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God” (15)

Chapter fourteen is all about hypocrisy.¹ It was the Sabbath and after attending the synagogue Jesus was invited to eat at the house of one of the chief Pharisees (1). A man with dropsy (2)² was also invited to see if Jesus would heal on the Sabbath. Jesus healed the man and asked: if one has a child or



ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath wouldn't most people pull them out and consider this an act of mercy, not work (3-5)? Jesus then

instructed them that “instead of trying to promote self by seeking the seats of honor in a feast”³ only to have a more prominent person attend and in disgrace have the host ask them to move,

¹ Alan Carr, [“Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go \(Luke 14:15–24\),”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1334.

² Alan Carr, [“Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go \(Luke 14:15–24\),”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1334.

³ Alan Carr, [“Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go \(Luke 14:15–24\),”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1334.

⁴ Grant R. Osborne, [Luke: Verse by Verse](#), ed. Jeffrey Reimer, Elliot Ritzema, and Danielle Thevenaz, Awa Sarah, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 364.

⁵ A.T. Robertson, [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Lk 14:15.

they ought to seek the least important seat and wait for the host to invite them to a better seat. After having shown them their hypocrisy, one of the “pious participants among the Pharisees’ dinner guests,”⁴ likely trying to appear to be super religious, turns to Jesus and says, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God” (15). This was a “common figure of speech amongst the Jewish rabbis”⁵ that pointed to every Jew’s hope of partaking in the Messianic banquet one day in heaven (Isaiah 25:6-9)!⁶ How they looked forward to the day of the outpouring of God’s grace in which every tear would be wiped away and the disgrace of God’s chosen people would be removed.⁷ “While Isaiah makes it clear that the Messianic banquet was for all people,”⁸ due to their mistaken belief that being invited into heaven was contingent on “human worthiness rather than divine grace”⁹ and their mistaken belief that their invitation was guaranteed based on their heritage as God’s chosen people; many in Judaism,¹⁰ especially the Pharisees, came to belief that they would be invited to this Messianic feast

⁶ Craig A. Evans, [The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke](#), ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 407.

⁷ James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 419.

⁸ Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke](#), vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 442.

⁹ James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 419.

¹⁰ Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke](#), vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 442.

while the “spiritual outsiders such as the poor, sinners, Samaritans, and Gentiles”¹¹ would be excluded!

In response Jesus proceeds to tell the people the Parable of the Great Banquet so that they might understand that while God’s invitation to the Messianic banquet is for all people it will only be received by a few and often those not of prominent, but low social status who must completely rely on God’s grace!

The Invitation to Feast

“Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready’ (16-17)

¹¹ Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke](#), vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 442.

¹² Grant R. Osborne, [Luke: Verse by Verse](#), ed. Jeffrey Reimer, Elliot Ritzema, and Danielle Thevenaz, Awa Sarah, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 364.

¹³ Alan Carr, [“Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go \(Luke 14:15–24\),”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1335.

Jesus begins the parable by stating those invited were to come to the great banquet for everything was now ready. When the chief Pharisee and his guests heard the banquet being described as “great” they would have automatically associated the host as being important and powerful¹² and the guests as



being prominent, influential, rich members of society.¹³ Inviting people to a banquet in Jesus’ day would involve two invitations. First, a servant would be sent out with invitations to find out how many would accept

so that the host would know how much food to prepare.¹⁴ And a second time the servant would be sent out to “summon the guests when the banquet was prepared.”¹⁵ To accept the first invitation only to later reject the summons to attend was considered “an unconscionable insult”¹⁶ and “among the Arab tribes a declaration of war.”¹⁷ The invitation in this passage is not to be seen as those “elected” but merely that the Lord was sent first to invite the lost sheep of Israel (15:21-28,) to accept

¹⁴ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 558.

¹⁵ Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke](#), vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 443.

¹⁶ R. Kent Hughes, [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 116–117.

¹⁷ A.T. Robertson, [Word Pictures in the New Testament](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Lk 14:17.

His gracious gift of salvation and then to the “many” (Mark 10:41-45; John 3:16).

Since the “great banquet” in this parable refers to the supper of the Lamb in the kingdom of heaven,¹⁸ Jesus was telling those present that their attendance in heaven was only possible if they chose to have faith in the atoning sacrifice of God’s Son.¹⁹

By our daily sin and constant iniquities humanity has provoked the anger and wrath of our holy God!²⁰ While His justice demands the guilty to be punished, out of mercy He sent His one and only Son Jesus pay the price for our iniquities. In faith all we need to do is “simply look at God’s



bleeding dying Son and trust our souls” in the hands of Him died for our sins.²¹ This decision is the most important one a person will ever make for it has eternal consequences! To be invited and yet reject God’s gracious gift of salvation means both body and soul will be sent to hell (Matthew 10:28). One does not want to experience the second death for in this “fiery lake of burning sulfur” (Revelation 21:8) they will forever be “darkness” (2

Peter 2:4), “weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:50), unspeakable torment and no hope of any escape! In contrast those who have faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Son will attend the great banquet in heaven and experience unspeakable joy for there will be no sin, no pain, no suffering, no sorrow, and no tears (Revelation 21:4)²² for the curse will be no longer exist (Revelation 21:4, 22:3)! Since one cannot avoid making this decision,²³ Jesus “compels” all listening to accept His gracious and merciful invitation before it is too late! This not only leaves the reader wondering in great anticipation what would the Pharisee and his guests decide but more importantly invites us to ask what we the readers will decide, heaven or hell?

Excuses Given to not Attend the Great Banquet

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me. Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come’ (18-20)

¹⁸ R. Kent Hughes, [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 116.

¹⁹ Alan Carr, [“Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go \(Luke 14:15–24\),”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1335.

²⁰ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Compel Them to Come In,”](#) in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 5 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1859), 17.

²¹ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Compel Them to Come In,”](#) in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 5 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1859), 17.

²² Alan Carr, [“Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go \(Luke 14:15–24\),”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1335.

²³ C. H. Spurgeon, [“Compel Them to Come In,”](#) in *The New Park Street Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 5 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1859), 18.

It is at this point in the parable that Jesus tells us that those who had accepted the first invitation now had the audacity to refuse the summons to attend this great banquet!²⁴ “It was not that they were uninterested in the feast (or in the awaited kingdom), it is simply that they were too busy with worldly



concerns to respond promptly and with commitment when the summons was given.”²⁵ Even though they knew it was “a grievous insult to the dignity of the host who had prepared the feast at much

expense,”²⁶ they rejected his gracious offer by giving three flimsy excuses! The first person said they cannot attend due to “having just bought a field and I must go see it” (18). Since no one in the Middle East in Jesus’ day would buy a field without

having first inspected it, this was either a boldface lie,²⁷ or a very flimsy excuse for even if the sale was contingent upon a final sale inspection²⁸ it could have been delayed a day later.²⁹ The second person said they had “just bought five yoke of oxen, and I am on my way to try them out” (19). This too was a flimsy, inadequate and insulting excuse for no one would purchase oxen without first testing their capabilities³⁰ in the field before they negotiated the sale.³¹ And the final person said, “I just got married so I can’t come” (20). While this appears to have some legitimacy it too was insulting for while in the first year of marriage a man was excused for going to war (Deuteronomy 20:7),³² it did not forbid him from attending banquets.³³ Furthermore since the date of such a great banquet would have been known well in advance³⁴ to set one’s wedding date at the same time was a cultural taboo and therefore highly insulting!

²⁴ Grant R. Osborne, [Luke: Verse by Verse](#), ed. Jeffrey Reimer, Elliot Ritzema, and Danielle Thevenaz, Awa Sarah, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 365.

²⁵ Craig A. Evans, [The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke](#), ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 408.

²⁶ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Lk 14:18.

²⁷ Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke](#), vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 443.

²⁸ Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Lk 14:18.

²⁹ Grant R. Osborne, [Luke: Verse by Verse](#), ed. Jeffrey Reimer, Elliot Ritzema, and Danielle Thevenaz, Awa Sarah, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 365.

³⁰ R. Kent Hughes, [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 117.

³¹ John G Mason, [Luke: An Unexpected God](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2019), 199.

³² Craig S. Keener, [The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Lk 14:20.

³³ R. Kent Hughes, [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 117.

³⁴ John G Mason, [Luke: An Unexpected God](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2019), 199–200.

Dismiss the Excuses and Compel them to Come In

In this parable “Jesus clearly portrays the Jewish reaction of His gospel invitation”³⁵ as being a refusal of God’s gracious invitation simply because their business, career, and relationships³⁶ were more important than attending a feast!³⁷



While the Pharisee and his prominent guests “acted as if they wanted the kingdom”³⁸ their refusal to attend clearly showed that they “had no appetite for higher things.”³⁹

While this parable was addressed to the Jewish religious elite of Jesus’ day it is also “talking about us and our preferences”⁴⁰ today! Like the host of the parable when we compel people to choose heaven over

hell, we can expect to receive many excuses. In response we are to compel those who chase after money and refuse to bow to God to remember that “no servant can serve two masters” (Luke 16:13), God and money.⁴¹ Tell them how the rich man ended up not at the Great Banquet but in Hades with no hope of escape and with eternal fire and torment as his only friend! Compel those “who are trying to get ahead in the world”⁴² to realize that “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:24) and remind them that “social status is a product of peer approval”⁴³ that does not survive death! Compel those who are afraid what their family and friends will think if they surrender their lives to Christ⁴⁴ that Jesus as our kinsmen redeemer, Lord, Savior, King, is beyond a doubt the best friend one could ever have for He alone “offers forgiveness, peace, eternal life”⁴⁵ and adoption as His heir (Galatians 4:1-7)! Remind them that the banquet Jesus offers is beyond “great” for it is a “feast of help, guidance, friendship, rest, victory over self, control of passions, supremacy

³⁵ Grant R. Osborne, *Luke: Verse by Verse*, ed. Jeffrey Reimer, Elliot Ritzema, and Danielle Thevenaz, Awa Sarah, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 366.

³⁶ John G Mason, *Luke: An Unexpected God*, ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2019), 200.

³⁷ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 118.

³⁸ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 118.

³⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 118.

⁴⁰ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 118.

⁴¹ Thabiti Anyabwile, *Exalting Jesus in Luke*, Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2018), Lk 14:15–24.

⁴² Alan Carr, “*Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go (Luke 14:15–24)*,” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1337.

⁴³ Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 559.

⁴⁴ Alan Carr, “*Compelled to Come; Commanded to Go (Luke 14:15–24)*,” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1337.

⁴⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 118.

over circumstances – a feast of joy, tranquility, deathlessness, Heaven opened, immeasurable hope – salvation!”⁴⁶

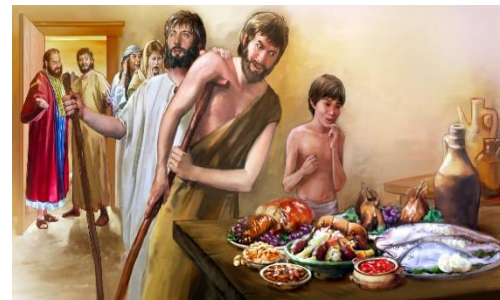
Compel them to come in for in a twinkling of an eye and at the last beat of their heart judgement will come and either they will be feasting in heaven as God's adopted child or burning in hell forever separated from the One whom they saw as irrelevant or worst yet despised!

Invitation Extended to the Least

“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’ ‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’ Then the Master told His servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and

compel them to come in, so that My house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of My banquet.’ (21-24)

When the servant returns and tells the Host of the excuses and rejection, the Host was angered but far from defeated!⁴⁷ In response the Host commanded the servant to “go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town” and invite “the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (21). This would have shocked the Pharisee and his distinguished guests



who did not associate with the poor and marginalized of society⁴⁸ due to them being disqualified for priestly service⁴⁹ and “full participation in Israel’s worship time”

(Leviticus 21:17-23)!⁵⁰ In their minds such people were religiously defiled sinners. This extended invitation however was an indictment against the “hypocrisy and pride” of the religious elite of Israel in whom Christ said, “tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the kingdom ahead of you” (Matthew

⁴⁶ R. Kent Hughes, [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#), Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 117.

⁴⁷ Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), The IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994), Lk 14:15–24.

⁴⁸ Thabiti Anyabwile, [Exalting Jesus in Luke](#), Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2018), Lk 14:15–24.

⁴⁹ Craig A. Evans, [The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke](#), ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 406.

⁵⁰ Clinton E. Arnold, [Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke](#), vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 444.

21:31)!⁵¹ It would be the “blind beggars who admit their brokenness and need”⁵² and those who sought a mere crumb from the Master’s table (Matthew 15:21-28) that would attend the Hosts great feast in heaven. The servant then returned after inviting the marginalized and said, “there is still room” to which the Host replies, “go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in” (22-23). To add insult to injury not only was the “extreme end of the elite Jewish social spectrum”⁵³ invited but now the servant was commanded to invite all those on the “highways and byways” which meant Gentiles⁵⁴ and the peoples of all nations!⁵⁵

Even though no one invited could ever repay the Host of His grace and mercy this parable points to the truth that no one is “too sullied or too wretched”⁵⁶ to not be invited and can go to heaven!

Jesus finished this parable but stating the shocking truth to the Pharisee and his elite guests that despite feeling like the “smug dinner guest” in the opening of this parable who felt assured of his going to heaven, the truth is that they weren’t going to

⁵¹ Thabiti Anyabwile, [Exalting Jesus in Luke](#), Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2018), Lk 14:15–24.

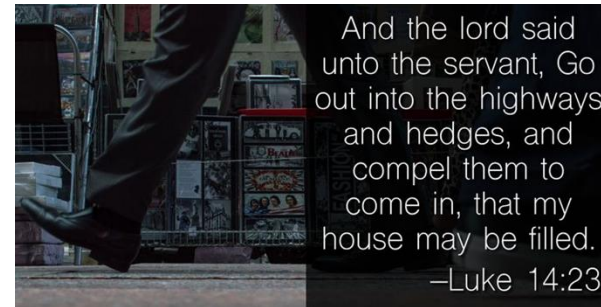
⁵² Thabiti Anyabwile, [Exalting Jesus in Luke](#), Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2018), Lk 14:15–24.

⁵³ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 561.

attend for no one can get to heaven without first humbly accepting the Host’s gracious invitation!

Conclusion

Compel them to come in! The invitations have been sent out and the Host Jesus has asked His hands and feet, His ambassadors, and royal priests to go out into the world and tell them the Great Banquet is ready for all those who believe in His atoning sacrifice. Compel those who like the Pharisees are



And the lord said
unto the servant, Go
out into the highways
and hedges, and
compel them to
come in, that my
house may be filled.
—Luke 14:23

pretending to be religious but have chosen to starve at the Master’s table to stop seeking the praise of the people but instead a

relationship with their Savior! Compel the self-indulged, temporal treasure seekers to drop their bags of covetousness and pick the Treasure and Pearl in the field that is of infinite, eternal value! Compel those seeking power and prestige to give up what

⁵⁴ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 561.

⁵⁵ John G Mason, [Luke: An Unexpected God](#), ed. Paul Barnett, Second Edition., Reading the Bible Today Series (Sydney, South NSW: Aquila Press, 2019), 200.

⁵⁶ Joel B. Green, [The Gospel of Luke](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 561.

they cannot keep, their reputations, to gain what they cannot lose, adoption into God's family and an eternal seat at His Son's banquet! Compel those who are afraid of what their friends and family might think of them to gladly give their allegiance to the Lord and gain a genuine relationship with their Father in heaven who offers them so much more: forgiveness of sins, peace, immeasurable hope, unspeakable joy, and eternal life. Compel not only the rich, prominent, influential but also the spiritual outsiders, the lame, and poor to humbly approach God's throne of grace with the assurance that as blind beggars who have faith in the Son they will always receive a crumb from the Master's table and live! Compel the lost to not delay or outright reject the Host's invitation lest in a twinkling of an eye and in their last heart beat they will experience the second death, ending up in the fiery lake of burning sulfur of hell where excruciating pain and darkness is their only, eternal friend! Compel everyone you meet to come in before it is too late and take their seat at the Great Banquet in heaven that the Host Jesus purchased for them at the cost of His very life!