

Sermon Series: "From Bethlehem to Calvary to Heaven"—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—1/18/2004

Title: "Jesus: The Savior who comes knocking"

Text: Luke 14: 15-24

Intro.: *Ills.: Holman Hunt picture*

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." Rev. 3:20

Theme: How you respond when Jesus comes knocking on the door of your heart will effect the eternal destiny of your existence but now and later.

A bird's-eye of Luke 1-19

- Luke's goal is to show that Jesus is the Savior of all people — Jew/Gentile; male/female; adults/children; rich/poor
- Luke is an educated man writing to the educated man (Theophilus) — logical presentation for the historical Jesus – to dispel misinformation, disconnection of Jesus to reality, and partial truths about Jesus
- Luke writes the *whole Gospel for the whole world* -- the most complete story of the whole life of Jesus

An invitation you just can't refuse

- A gracious and grace-filled invitation to everyone (**Print and read Luke 14: 15-17**)
 1. Invitation put out to the "many" — generic "masses"
 2. Celebration of the Master's making and wanted others to enjoy it, even though they did nothing to prepare or earn it
 3. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast." Eph 2: 8-9*
- So what's your excuse! (**Print and read Luke 14: 18-20**)
 1. Each of the invitees had a legitimate concern which paled in comparison to the benefactors generous invitation
 1. **Ills.: 10 excuses not to wash**
 2. Often we use the created gift of God to stiff arm the Creator
 1. Family, job/career obligations, health, play, upkeep of our home, vacation, education, etc.
 2. *"Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows." James 1: 17*
 3. Living out our life in discipleship and worship– being careful to give glory to God in the use of His gifts to us
 4. *"He said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say good-bye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." Luke 9:59-62*
- A time-limited offer (**Print and read Luke 14: 21-24**)
 3. *"But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first." Heb 3:13-14*
 4. God desires none to be lost but all to be saved
 1. *"God wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." 1 Tim. 2: 4*
 2. *"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live." Ezekiel 33: 11*
 5. God urges but will not force us into a saving relationship with his Son
 1. The word "compel" is too strong a translation—God does not fill his Church and heaven by conscription
 - *"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5: 20*
 - **Ills.: Invitation to a banquet**
 2. God "urges in the strongest words" that this is an offer we need, we won't get elsewhere, and we will never regret
 6. God is a God of perfect balance between the divine tension between holy justice and merciful grace
 1. If God were not consistently just in his dealing with us, we could never trust his Word, His nature, or our future
 2. *"I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed." Malachi 3: 6*
 3. Yet, God is a God of grace and mercy who will fill up his heavenly banquet with those who "seek first his Kingdom and His righteousness" in Jesus

Holman Hunt's "Light of the World" painting:

A Savior knocking on a door with no door knob on the outside

10 excuses not to wash

If you took the excuses people use for not going to church and applied them to other important areas of life, such as washing with soap, you'd realize how inconsistent we can be in our logic. For example:

1. I was forced to as a child.
2. People who make soap are only after your money.
3. I wash on special occasions like Christmas and Easter.
4. People who wash are hypocrites—they think they are cleaner than everyone else.
5. There are so many different kinds of soap, I can't decide which one is best.
6. I used to wash. It got boring, though, so I stopped.
7. None of my friends wash.
8. The bathroom is never warm enough in the winter or cool enough in the summer.
9. I'll start washing when I get older and dirtier.
10. I can't spare the time.

Invitation to a banquet

Evangelism is witness. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to get food. The Christian does not offer out of his bounty. He has no bounty. He is simply a guest at his Master's table and, as evangelist, he calls others too.

Luke 14:15-24

¹⁵One of those eating with him heard this. So he said to Jesus, "The person who will be at the banquet in the kingdom of God is blessed." ¹⁶Jesus said to him, "A man gave a large banquet and invited many people. ¹⁷When it was time for the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who were invited, 'Come! Everything is ready now.'

¹⁸"Everyone asked to be excused. The first said to him, 'I bought a field, and I need to see it. Please excuse me.' ¹⁹Another said, 'I bought five pairs of oxen, and I'm on my way to see how well they plow. Please excuse me.' ²⁰Still another said, 'I recently got married, and that's why I can't come.'

²¹"The servant went back to report this to his master. Then the master of the house became angry. He told his servant, 'Run to every street and alley in the city! Bring back the poor, the handicapped, the blind, and the lame.' ²²"The servant said, 'Sir, what you've ordered has been done. But there is still room for more people.' ²³"Then the master told his servant, 'Go to the roads and paths! Urge the people to come to my house. I want it to be full. ²⁴I can guarantee that none of those invited earlier will taste any food at my banquet.' "