

13. Luke 13:18 - 16:31



## 5. The time of God's judgment is now (continued)

### f. The wonderful largesse of God's grace

Luke 13:18-21 (Matthew 13:31-33)

He said therefore, 'What is the kingdom of God like? And to what should I compare it? It is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in the garden; it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.' (see Mark 4:30-32).

And again he said, 'To what should I compare the kingdom of God? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour (40 litres) until all of it was leavened.'

g: We must follow Jesus, now, along the road he has chosen 13:22-30

Luke 13:22-24 (Matthew 7:13-14)

*Jesus went through one town and village after another, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem (see Luke 9:51).*

*Someone asked him, 'Lord, will only a few be saved?'*

Jesus said to them, 'Keep on striving (ἀγωνίζεσθε) to enter through the narrow door;

for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able.'

'I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death' (Jeremiah 21:8).

'Fight the good fight of the faith; take hold of the eternal life, to which you were called' (1 Timothy 6:12).

Luke 13:25-27 (compare Matthew 25:10-12)

When once the owner of the house has got up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us,' then in reply he will say to you, 'I do not know where you come from.'

Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.' But he will say, 'I do not know where you come from. Go away from me, all you evildoers!' (see Psalm 6:8).

Jesus is lamenting the terrible truth that many people lead lives of self-destruction, and fail to experience the blessedness offered them by God through him. They never know the experience of the beatitudes because they take the way of self-indulgence. But there is another way, and it is the way lived by Jesus.

Luke 13:28-30 (Matthew 8:11-12)

There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out.

Then people will come from east and west, from north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God.

Indeed, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last.” (see Mark 10:31)

In relation to the question as to who and how many will be saved, Jesus warns us against forming our own judgment. We should leave the judgment to God, for God's thoughts are not our thoughts and God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8). Our judgments, in this as in every other matter, are turned upside down by the good news revealed by Jesus: ‘some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last’.

h: The one we are following will not be turned from his goal

Luke 13:31-33

At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod (see 9:7-9; Mark 3:6) wants to kill you.”

He said to them, “You go, and tell that fox for me, ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and **on the third day** I finish my work.

Yet today, tomorrow, and **the next day** I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’

The ‘third day’ is the day when God reveals God’s Self (see Exodus 19:11). It is the day when God vindicates the poor.

i: Lament over the Jerusalem which rejects Jesus

Luke 13:34-35 (Matthew 23:37-39)

‘Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! See, your house is left to you.

Jesus concludes this section of judgment on a note of intense compassion and hope mixed with sadness. Jesus was reaching out to them like a mother bird but they did not accept his offer. The psalms speak of God protecting us by drawing us to his throne under the wings of the cherubim: ‘How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shade of your wings’ (Psalm 36:7).

God was also likened to an eagle: ‘You have seen ... how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself’ (Exodus 19:4; see Exodus 23:10-12)

Luke 13:35 (Matthew 23:39)

And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, “Praised be the one who comes in the name of the Lord.”

This verse is full of hope. In its original context it is a blessing given to those who are entering the temple in procession with their king (Psalm 118:26; see Luke 19:38). Just before these words we find the following: ‘The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Save us, we beseech you, O Lord’ (Psalm 118:22-25; quoted Luke 20:17).

Many of Jesus' contemporaries did reject him. He did not fit their picture of the Messiah. Luke, however, clings to the hope that filled the heart of Jesus, that one day they will come to recognise Jesus as the herald of God's love to them. Then they will repent, rejoice in him, and enter the 'temple' of the community of Jesus' disciples.

We find the same anguish in the heart of Paul (Romans 9:1-5), and the same hope: 'My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved' (Romans 10:1; see Romans 11:11,23,26).

If this hope is to be realised, however, we must know that it is not anything that we can do of ourselves. The religious leaders and the people are too blind to see, and the disciples' faith is too weak. Our only hope is to wait expectantly for God to grace us with a love that will liberate us from our self-reliance – a grace that our hearts will welcome.

6. Jesus calls us to attend the banquet which celebrates the reign of God.

Luke 14-15

a. The initiative comes from Jesus Luke 14:1-6

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had dropsy. And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, “Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?” But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him, and sent him away.

Then he said to them, “If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?” And they could not reply to this.

(Sabbath healing: Luke 6:6-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6)

## b: The poor are invited to God's banquet 14:7-14

### Luke 14:7-11

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honour, he told them a parable. “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honour, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honoured in the presence of all who sit at the table with you.

For all who exalt themselves will be humbled,  
and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

## Luke 14:12-14

Jesus said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

The theme of this present section is that of the Messianic Banquet (see the commentary on 5:27-32). Luke has in mind the Eucharistic celebration of the Christian community. The invitation to enjoy a meal with Jesus must go out to all if we are to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). This is only the second occurrence of the word ‘resurrection’ in Luke (ἀναστάσις, see 2:34). Those who, like Jesus, make the poor their concern will be rewarded by God in the eternal communion of love experienced by the blessed.

c. God's invitation goes out to the whole world Luke 14:15-24

Luke 14:15-21 (compare Matthew 22:1-10)

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, "Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for everything is ready now.' But they all alike began to make excuses.

The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' Another said, 'I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.'

So the slave returned and reported this to his master.

## Luke 14:21-24

Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'

And the slave said, 'Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.'

Then the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled.'

For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

d. The necessity of accepting the invitation Luke 14:25-35

Luke 14:25-27 (Matthew 10:37-38)

Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, “Whoever comes to me and does not hate (μισεω) father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

‘Jesus is not denying the importance of close family, and the propriety of living in supportive harmony with them. But when there is an urgent task to be done, as there now is, then everything else, including one’s own life, must be put at risk for the sake of the kingdom’ (N.T.Wright).

‘Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me’ (Matthew 10:37-38).

## The necessity of accepting the invitation Luke 14:28-33

For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace.

So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions.

Luke 14:34-35 (Mark 9:49-50)

“Salt is good; (for preserving and seasoning)  
but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored?  
It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile;  
they throw it away.

Let anyone with ears to hear listen!”

e: Jesus welcomes sinners and eats with them

Luke 15:1-2

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.

And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, 'This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.'

## f: Finding the lost sheep

Luke 15:3-7

So he told them this parable: “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

## g: Finding the lost coin

Luke 15:8-10

Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

h: Finding the lost boy. Will we celebrate with him? Luke 15:11-32

### Luke 15:11-19

Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; **treat me like one of your hired hands.**”

## The younger son (Luke 15:20-21)

So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

## The speech he planned (Luke 15:18-19)

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; **treat me like one of your hired hands.**”

## Luke 15:22-24

But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one – and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

## The two sons Luke 15:11-32

‘All the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him.

And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So he told them this parable.

### The younger son

1. leaves his father and home
2. loses everything
3. sin takes him to the bottom

change of mind

### 3. Father comes out to his son

2. receives everything

1. ‘They began to celebrate’

### The elder son

1. Comes in from the fields
2. hears of celebration and is angry

### 3. Father comes out to his son

stubborn refusal

3. Father tells him of his love

2. father explains the celebration

1. ??????

## The elder son (Luke 15:25-32)

Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

## 7. How disciples are to use material riches

a: Disciples are to use material possessions for the benefit of others 16:1-9

### Luke 16:1-4

Then Jesus said to the disciples, “There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property. So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’

Then the manager said to himself, What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.

I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’

## Luke 16:5-8a

So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

He answered, 'A hundred jugs of olive oil.'

He said to him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.'

Then he asked another, 'And how much do you owe?'

He replied, 'A hundred containers of wheat.'

He said to him, 'Take your bill and make it eighty.'

And his master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly.

## Luke 16:8b

For the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light.

‘Be wise as serpents’ (Matthew 10:16)

## Luke 16:9

And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of the mammon of dishonesty so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal tents.

- ‘friends’ : those who benefit from the sharing of goods
- ‘mammon of dishonesty’ : money acquired in a dishonest way
- ‘eternal tents’ : ‘There are many rooms in my Father’s house’ (John 14:2)

## b: Do not be slaves of wealth

Luke 16:10-15

“Whoever is faithful in the least matter is faithful also in the greatest; and whoever is dishonest in the least matter is dishonest also in the greatest. If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own?”

No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Matthew 6:24)

The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all this, and they ridiculed him. So he said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of others; but God knows your hearts; for what is prized by human beings is an abomination in the sight of God.”

8. To follow Jesus is to be willing to go beyond the Law

a: Willingness to follow the Law to its goal

Luke 16:16 (see Matthew 11:12)

‘The law and the prophets were in effect until John came; since then the good news of the kingdom of God is proclaimed, and everyone strives to enter it. (Luke’s exhortation?)

‘Strive to enter through the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able’ (Luke 13:24).

Luke 16:17 (Matthew 5:18)

It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one stroke of a letter in the law to be dropped.’ (irony!)

‘You have taken away the key of knowledge; you did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering’ (Luke 11:52).

b: Marriage fidelity:how the good news of the kingdom surpasses the Law

Luke 16:18

(Mark 10:11-12)

‘Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery,  
and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband  
commits adultery.’

c: The Law and the Prophets require of us that we care for each other

Luke 16:19-24

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’

## Luke 16:25-26

But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. Between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.'

In this parable we find illustrated the reversal of values promised in the Magnificat: 'He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty' (Luke 1:53). Lazarus (means 'God helps') is indeed blessed. We see him with Abraham 'eating in the kingdom of God' (Luke 14:16).

## Luke 16:27-31

He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house – for I have five brothers – that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’

Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’

He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

Abraham said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”