

How To Get On Heaven's Guest List

The Rented Vineyard:

The owner gives trust, patience, and judgment.

The farmers get privilege, freedom, and responsibility.

The Wedding Feast:

The king prepares everything for joy and celebration.

The guests are indifferent, opposed, or unchanged,
and all suffer the same fate.

The Invitation:

Great responsibility comes with receiving great grace.

To accept the invitation, is to accept change.

Food for Thought for the week of August 21, 2016

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. Chris talked about the wedding banquet that God has prepared for all of his children. How do the following passages encourage you in terms of what God has in store for his children for eternity?

Revelation 21:1-4 *New International Version (NIV)*

A New Heaven and a New Earth

¹ Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ² I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴ ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”

John 14:1-4 *New International Version (NIV)*

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

¹ “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.”

2. As a follower of Jesus we’ve been given the privilege and responsibility to be involved in inviting people to the wedding banquet. We call this evangelism – telling people the good news of what Jesus has done for us. How do the following passages help you better understand what is involved in this invitation process?

2 Timothy 2:24-26 *New International Version (NIV)*

²⁴ And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. ²⁵ Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, ²⁶ and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

1 Corinthians 9:19-23 *New International Version (NIV)*

Paul’s Use of His Freedom

¹⁹ Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. ²⁰ To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. ²¹ To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law), so as to win those not having the law. ²² To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. ²³ I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Colossians 4:3-6 *New International Version (NIV)*

³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

3. In this weekend's parable, we saw people ignoring the invitation to attend the wedding banquet so they could do other things. In life that translates into people choosing to follow other things besides Jesus. As you read the passages below, identify the reasons people don't follow Jesus and what is involved in fully choosing to follow him.

Mark 10:17-31 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

¹⁷ As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

¹⁸ "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'"

²⁰ "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

²¹ Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

²² At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.

²³ Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"

²⁴ The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

²⁶ The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"

²⁷ Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."

²⁸ Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"

²⁹ "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. ³¹ But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Luke 9:57-62 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Cost of Following Jesus

⁵⁷ As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."

⁵⁸ Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

⁵⁹ He said to another man, "Follow me."

But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

⁶⁰ Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."

⁶¹ Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."

⁶² Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

Luke 14:25-34 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Cost of Being a Disciple

²⁵ Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

²⁸ "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? ²⁹ For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, ³⁰ saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

³¹ "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?³² If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. ³³ In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

³⁴ "Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again?