

LUKE

Chapter 14

Healing of a Man on the Sabbath

One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. 2 And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” 4 But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. 5 And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?” 6 And they could not reply to these things.

Lk 14:1 introduces the setting for the narrative in 14:2–24. It is a Sabbath meal at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees. As is his custom (4:16), Jesus will teach at the synagogue on the Sabbath (6:6; [7:36]; 13:10; 14:1). Jesus foreshadows his teaching on the road to Emmaus on Sunday, the eschatological day of rest. Here after sundown on Friday, he is invited by a local dignitary to “eat bread” at the festive Sabbath evening Seder. (CC p. 570)

While there Jesus performs a miracle and directs teaching to the host and invited guests. The literary unit is tied together by “eat bread” (14:1) and “taste my banquet” (14:24) and by the references to the poor and infirm (14:2, 13, 21). Jerusalem’s unwilling children (13:31–35), who were eating and drinking in Jesus’ presence, will be excluded at the end, when the Great Reversal comes (13:26–30). To “eat bread” is one thing; to “eat bread in the kingdom of God” (14:15) is something more. It is to “taste my banquet” (14:24) at which the poor and infirm are welcome guests. (CC p. 570)

D. Moessner, *Lord of the Banquet*, 157, notes “that far more is at stake than friendly words of correction about rewards.” He concludes, “The Pharisees’ own meal practice and especially their own *eating and drinking* with Jesus are not allowing them to recognize the Lord of the Banquet in their midst (cf. vv. 21–23). They are [so] puffed up with self-esteem in interpreting and guarding the Law that they are numb to the invitation by the Lord of the household (v. 21) at their own table” (p. 158). To taste Jesus’ banquet means to eat bread humbly with the last, the poor. (CC pp. 570–571)

Both the meal (5:27–39; 7:36–50; 11:37–54) and the Sabbath (6:1–11; 13:10–17) have been the occasion for controversy with the Pharisees or religious authorities (in 13:10–17 it is a ruler of the synagogue). The controversy with the Pharisees and their careful observation of Jesus at the table during the Sabbath remind the hearer of their previous concern for his behavior at the first Sabbath miracle (6:7, 11) and the second meal with the Pharisees (11:53–54). The Pharisees’ unwillingness to be gathered into Jesus’ brood is exactly the kind of rejection Jesus just described in 13:34–35. (CC p. 571)

14:1 *One Sabbath*. Of seven recorded miracles on the Sabbath, Luke includes five (4:31, 38; 6:6; 13:14; 14:1); the other two are Jn 5:10; 9:14. (CSB)

Jewish traditions specified numerous categories of work to avoid on the Sabbath, making the Sabbath a detailed and onerous observance. (TLSB)

In Judaism the Sabbath was a sign of election and granted a foretaste of glory. It was believed that even the wicked in Gehenna enjoyed respite on it. Many held that if Israel could keep two consecutive Sabbaths the Messiah would come. The Sabbath stood at the heart of the Law; hence the Maccabean struggle to keep it, even to the point of refusing to attack enemies on the Sabbath. Rules about journeys, driving or rescuing cattle, drawing water, moving vessels, and the like are developed in different circles, although the Pharisees and scribes tried to adjust the laws to practical situations. More important, however, is the NT proclamation of Jesus as the Lord of the Sabbath, who decides concerning the applying or transcending of the Sabbath. While on the Sabbath is a day to put down the sword and the plow, the Pharisees do not put down the sword but keep careful watch in order to discredit Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

to dine – There are five words or expressions for meals in this passage: “to eat bread” (14:1; φαγεῖν ἄρτον); “wedding feast” (14:8; γάμους); “breakfast” (14:12; ἄριστον); “dinner”/“banquet” (14:12, 16–17, 24; δεῖπνον); and “dinner party” (14:13; δοχὴν). (CC p. 568)

at the house of a ruler of the Pharisee – ὢν ἀρχόντων [τῶν] Φαρισαίων—See the excursus “The Opponents of Jesus in Luke.” As a leader among the Pharisees, this man may have represented them on the Sanhedrin and could have been instrumental in calling for Jesus’ death after Jesus arrived in Jerusalem. (Cf. also Lk 23:13, 35; 24:20; Acts 3:17; 4:5, 8, 26; 13:27; 14:5) (CC p. 568)

A leading rabbi among them, renowned for meticulous devotion to the Law. (TLSB)

watching carefully – ἦσαν παρατηρούμενοι—This durative imperfect with a present participle refers to the continual watching of those at the feast. This has been the pattern of the Pharisees since their first confrontation with Jesus in Luke 5. The word παρατηρέω is used of the Pharisees’ close observation of Jesus during his Galilean ministry at the first Sabbath controversy (6:7), here during his journey to Jerusalem, and during his Jerusalem ministry (20:20), where the observers are not described as Pharisees but hypocrites sent by the chief priests and scribes (who are also unnamed Pharisees). (CC p. 568)

The Pharisees’ growing conflict with Jesus (ch 13) made them hope that He would break their Sabbath rules as in 6:7. (TLSB)

14:2 drosy. An accumulation of fluid that would indicate illness affecting other parts of the body. The Greek for this word is a medical term found only here in the NT. (CSB)

Swelling caused by water pockets collecting in body tissue. Some believed the cause was immorality. (TLSB)

ὕδρωπικός—This condition of swelling, called edema today, is caused by water retention in the body. It was considered grotesque because of the disfigurement it caused. One who had drosy was considered unclean according to Lev 13:2. (CC p. 568)

Luke’s schema shows the movement in the miracle from sickness to healing (14:2—A; 14:4b—A’), from Jesus’ question about what is permitted on the Sabbath to his question that offers an interpretation of what is permitted on the Sabbath (14:3—B; 14:5—B’), from silence (ἠσύχουσαν) to an inability (note the play on words with ἰσχύσαν) to answer Jesus (14:4a—C; 14:6—C’). The previous controversies concerning Jesus’ Sabbath teaching are pertinent to this Sabbath healing.

At the three Sabbath miracles, there has been a progression from anger (6:11) to humiliation (13:17) and now to silence (14:4; οἱ δὲ ἤσυχασαν). The lawyers and Pharisees' complete inability to answer Jesus' questions (14:6) indicates that Jesus' overturning of their Sabbath requirements is irrefutable. (CC p. 571)

The heartless and impenitent attitude of the Pharisees is brought out in verses 2-6. They are willing to use the suffering of the man with dropsy and Jesus' mercy toward him as tools for their own purposes. (Concordia Pulpit Resources)

14:3 lawyers. By questioning them before the miracle, Jesus made it difficult for them to protest afterward. (Note from 5:17 – “Scribes,” who studied, interpreted and taught the law (both written and oral). The majority of these teachers belonged to the party of the Pharisees.) (CSB)

τοὺς νομικοὺς καὶ Φαρισαίους—Lawyers are part of the Pharisaic group. See the excursus “The Opponents of Jesus in Luke.” (CC p. 568)

is it lawful – Also used in 6:2, 4, where the issue was eating grain from the field on the Sabbath. Here there is more at stake, namely, healing a man who was suffering. (CC p. 568)

14:4 sent him away – Dismissal with blessing (e.g., 7:50; 8:48). (TLSB)

14:5 he said to them – πρὸς αὐτούς—The emphatic position of the prepositional phrase accents the fact that Jesus is speaking directly to those who were watching him closely. (CC p. 568)

having a son. The reading “donkey” matches well with the “ox that falls into a well.” But in Dt 5:14 the law is specified for both humans and animals; one category opens with “son” and another with “ox.” Jesus' action was “unlawful” only according to rabbinic interpretations, not according to the Mosaic law itself. (CSB)

υἱὸς ἢ βοῶς—Some manuscripts replace υἱὸς with ὄνος or πρόβατον, since “son” and “ox” do not seem to go together as well as “donkey” or “sheep” and “ox.” Nestle Aland has the more difficult reading. For a detailed analysis, see I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 579–80, who suggests the meaning “a child or even just an ox.” (CC p. 568)

Some rabbinic traditions allowed only the person to be rescued; others allowed the animal also to be rescued. (TLSB)

14:6 could not reply – The lawyers and Pharisees' complete inability to answer Jesus' questions (14:6) indicates that Jesus' overturning of their Sabbath requirements is irrefutable. (CC p. 571)

Their hypocrisy became obvious. (TLSB)

14:1–6 Jesus exposes His enemies' inconsistencies and cruelty. Today, we are also tempted to build our religion on human tradition (rather than on God's Word) and then to condemn others on the basis of our traditions. Jesus holds the well-being of God's children above all. Still, He reaches out to us in mercy, despite the indifference or rejection of others. • Jesus, look upon us in our need, heal us, and dismiss us with Your blessing. Amen. (TLSB)

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8 “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

14:7-11 The parable offers advice about manners in social situations and also applies to our pride before God. (TLSB)

14:7 *now he told a parable* – The message is not about party manners. Rather, Jesus’ teaching expands on his unique role as host of the Messianic banquet, who calls people into fellowship at the table of his Messianic Feast. – The point of comparison of this parable is clearly stated in verse 11. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 8, Part 3)

those invited – τούς κεκλημένους—Those who have been invited to the banquet are the focus of this section of Jesus’ teaching. They will be referred to frequently throughout Jesus’ teaching on table etiquette. The same verb (καλέω) is used both for those who were invited (14:7–11) and for the host (14:12–14), linking Jesus’ teaching of both groups. (CC p. 569)

Guests were expected to give priority to those of higher rank, who would take the most prestigious places near the head of the group. (TLSB)

places of honor. Maneuvering for better seats may also have caused trouble at the Last Supper (22:24). (CSB)

ἐξελέγοντο—This a durative and conative imperfect; there is a sense of engagement and deliberation over their choosing of the seats. (CC p. 569)

14:8 *do not sit down in a place honor* – At such a feast, there is great significance in the position of the guests. The marriage banquet is also a frequent image in Scripture for the kingdom of God. (TLSB)

They were being arrogant even in their own company. Again, this speaks to being aware of who invited you and that the invitation is a gift and not a right. – With his simple illustration Jesus speaks not only to the specific situation but also to the attitude behind it. The Pharisees behaved in an arrogant manner even among themselves. Luke returns to this point in chapter 18 where the Pharisee thanked God that he was “not like other people,” including other Pharisees. At a wedding a wider spectrum of guest would be expected, and those who thought highly of themselves usually made it known. How often we hear today that “rank has its privileges.”

τὴν πρωτοκλισίαν—“First couch at the meal” accents that this is a place of honor at the table and that this is a festive meal since they reclined at the table. Cf. 20:46. (CC p. 569)

14:9 *give* – δός—This is the first of three imperatives (four if one includes the participle πορευθείς that acts like an imperative—see above at 13:32) in 14:7–11; the other two are in 14:10: ἀνάπεσε (“recline at table”) and προσανάβηθι (“come up higher”). (CC p. 569)

with shame to take the lowest – μετὰ αἰσχύνης—One’s position at the table is very significant in the first-century Jewish culture (B. Malina and J. Neyrey, “Honor and Shame in Luke-Acts: Pivotal Values of the Mediterranean World”). (CC p. 569)

Publicly acknowledging that one has exalted oneself. (TLSB)

This implies a continued action; the guest suffers humiliation for the whole time of the banquet. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

14:10 *sit in lowest* – The result agrees with verse 11: those who humble themselves are exalted by God not because their humility merits exaltation, but because of God’s grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

you will be honored – ἔσται σοι δόξα—God is the unnamed giver: “there will be for you honor” *from God*. (CC p. 569)

Being promoted to a more dignified position. (TLSB)

14:11 *everyone* – This leaves no room for exceptions; final judgment will be universal. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

humbles himself will be exalted. A basic principle repeated often in the Bible (see 11:43; 18:14; 20:46; 2Ch 7:14–15; Pr 3:34; 25:6–7; Mt 18:4; 23:12; Jas 4:10; 1Pe 5:6). (CSB)

The person who boasts before God will be humbled in His judgment, while the one who humbly confesses sin may trust in Christ for forgiveness and so be raised up at the Last Day. Cf 1:51–52. Hus: “[The apostles], like Christ, began to do good by excelling in good works and not by receiving kisses, given as unto God. For they despised mundane honors” (*The Church*, p 145). (TLSB)

Noting these parallels in Jesus’ teaching for both the guests and the host helps clarify the intent of Jesus’ teaching. In each instance, he begins with the improper *eschatological* table etiquette situation, introduced by “when” (14:8, 12; ὅταν) and then counters with the proper table etiquette at the *end-time* banquet, introduced by “but when” (14:10, 13; ἀλλ’ ὅταν). His instructions to the guests are about humility. One should never recline at the first couch at the table lest the host shame the aggressive guest by placing him in the last place. Such humiliation! Rather, recline at the last place so that the host may elevate you. When this occurs, *there will be honor* for you in the presence of the guests. This is a clear warning not to exalt oneself but to choose humility, and thus the logion “every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted” (14:11). (CC p. 573)

These words clearly apply to the guests, but how might a catechumen hear them, especially in view of Jesus’ earlier teaching about the slave and his Lord at the table where the Lord performs the humble act of serving his slaves (see comments on 12:35–40)? This saying is part of Luke’s reversal motif, a restatement of “some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last” (13:30; another reason to see a parallel between 13:22–30 and 14:1–24). This is a motif that began with the Magnificat and continues throughout the gospel. But is it to be applied only to catechumens, or is it also *first and foremost* a statement of Christology and a description of the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus? For did Jesus not also say during his farewell discourse at the Last Supper, when a dispute arose among the disciples concerning “who of them

seems to be greatest,” that the greatest is not the one who sits at the table, but the one who serves, and that he, Jesus, is with them “as the one who serves” (22:24–27)? The biggest reversal of all is that Jesus himself is the Messiah who suffers and dies. Jesus girded his loins (12:35) for his final Passover with his disciples and then went to his bloody death and vindicating resurrection. Jesus is exalted in the very act of humiliation, which is one of the themes of his last parable, “The stone that the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner.” (CC p. 573)

Lk 20:17, a citation from Ps 118:22, the same psalm that was cited by Jesus in Lk 13:35, another reason for a parallel between 13:22–30 and 14:1–24. With this exposition by Jesus, also the common sense court wisdom of Prov 25:6–7 is being shown to have a Christological and spiritual aspect. Even as the King’s Son humbled himself and was exalted, so those who are “wise” in him are drawn into his exaltation when they remain as nothing in the King’s presence. (CC p. 573)

will be exalted – This is another example of the great reversals that are a part of the Bible in general and the teaching of Jesus in the gospels. In our world of pride and self-promotion, God values humiliation. The passive verbs imply God as the agent; He exalts, He humbles. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

ταπεινωθήσεται ... ὑψωθήσεται—These are two more theological passives: one will be humbled or exalted *by God*. (CC p. 569)

Philippians 2:1-11, If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:⁶ Who, being in very nature^a God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Pride is really fear that our supposed greatness will not be acknowledged. Jesus’ mature love throws out fear. True humility knows no fear. The humble accept what they are: people totally dependent on their Savior. Trust in that great Lord results in every need being provided through His mercy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

14:7–11 Jesus illustrates how pride leads to humiliation. Let others praise you or promote you rather than praise and promote yourself. No matter what others say or do, your greatest promotion is when the heavenly Father calls you His beloved child, through Christ. • Grant me a humble and steadfast heart, O Lord, to see myself as You see me. Amen. (TLSB)

The Parable of the Great Banquet

12 He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For

you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” 15 When one of those who reclined at table with him heard these things, he said to him, “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!” 16 But he said to him, “A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. 17 And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ 19 And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ 20 And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ 21 So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, ‘Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ 22 And the servant said, ‘Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ 23 And the master said to the servant, ‘Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.’”

14:12 *to man who had invited him* – We understand him to be the man in verse 1 who laid the trap for Jesus. Perhaps the host was feeling smug as Jesus addressed the other guests. Now it is his turn, and Jesus uses exactly parallel grammar to address him. A favor done in expectation of reward or repayment does not express love. Nor is self-serving charity confined to the unregenerate. The key is one’s selfless attitude toward others at the table, regardless of whether they are relatives, friends, or strangers. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

do not invite...invite– Jesus’ instruction to the host is very similar, but now the focus is on whom to invite. Jesus instructs his host that his hospitality *now* will affect his status at the end-time banquet. Do not invite (imperative!) those who can repay your hospitality (friends, relatives, rich neighbors), but instead, invite (imperative!) those who cannot repay you (the poor, disabled, lame, blind). Jesus has already dealt with the theme of reciprocation in the Sermon on the Plain (6:32–35). To the host of this Sabbath evening Seder, Jesus is suggesting that he invite the outcasts of society whom the Pharisees and lawyers would consider unclean and therefore not party to their table fellowship. This would be considered a serious break of table etiquette, but Jesus is reversing what would be considered normal Pharisaic table etiquette. Jesus not only reverses this etiquette *now* in his own table fellowship with sinners (see 15:1–2), but he indicates that table fellowship with outcasts brings a state of blessedness *now* because they cannot repay and that one’s reward will be at the end-time banquet (the *not yet*). This provides a perfect transition to the “banquet beatitude” (14:15) and the “banquet parable” (14:16–24). The reward at the resurrection of the righteous results from one’s humility as host at table, just like the invited guests whose humility led to their exaltation. (CC pp. 573-574)

R. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity I*, 183, notes a correspondence between this saying and the Lazarus story: “The promise in 14:14, ‘It will be repaid to you in the resurrection of the just,’ is the positive counterpart to the warning in the story of the rich man and Lazarus, which indicates the punishment awaiting a rich man who fails to feed the poor. Thus teaching to the rich about their responsibilities to the poor is a repeated theme in Jesus’ discussions with scribes and Pharisees.” (CC p. 574)

Emphasis should be on generosity. Jesus is neither criticizing His host nor forbidding people to host their family and friends. (TLSB)

14:13 *invite poor, crippled, lame and the blind* – Lists people likely reduced to begging for food. (TLSB)

Jesus desires an attitude that includes the destitute, but He is not requiring that hosts exclude anyone. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

πτωχούς, ἀναπίρους, χωλούς, τυφλούς—These categories are repeated in 14:21 with the article, and three of them appear in 7:22, where Jesus responds to the question of whether he is “the Coming One” by pointing to his miracles of healing. Men with these characteristics are disqualified from the priesthood according to Lev 21:17–21. The man with dropsy is such a person. (CC p. 569)

14:14 *blessed* – μακάριος ἔσῃ ... ἀνταποδοθήσεται—God is the unnamed agent: you will be blessed by God, and it will be repaid to you by God in the resurrection of the righteous. (CC p. 569)

“Blessed” refers to the condition of fruitful believers. Good works are the result of salvation, not the cause. Good works truly become “second nature” for the believer in that he usually does not even think about doing them. How different is he from the scheming Pharisee! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

you will be repaid – Christians are to do things without expecting any reward. This is true servanthood which Jesus modeled on more than one occasion. Their payment will come at a time and place determined by God. Only God can repay, and repay He will. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

Unlike the circumstances in v 12, God will repay the giver. Cf Ac 20:35. (TLSB)

resurrection of the righteous. † All will be resurrected (Da 12:2; Jn 5:28–29; Ac 24:15). (CSB)

Those justified by God’s grace, who through faith rise to eternal life. The repayment already promised for Christ’s sake outweighs anything we could hope to receive in this life. (TLSB)

ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει τῶν δικαίων— The Pharisees believed in the resurrection of the righteous. (Cf. Acts 24:15: “a resurrection of both the just and the unjust.”) The Sadducees, who also are members of the Sanhedrin, do not believe in the resurrection (see Lk 20:27–40; Acts 23:6–9). (CC p. 569)

the just. Those who have been pronounced so by God on the basis of Christ’s atonement and who have evidenced their faith by their actions (cf. Mt 25:34–40). (CSB)

Humility is a mark of the messianic age in the teaching of Jesus, who becomes a paradigm of this humility both in his instructions on table fellowship with the outcasts of society in 14:12–14 and in his humble suffering and death upon a cross just prophesied in 13:31–35. This humility illustrates once again that *the table fellowship of Jesus is where he teaches about the kingdom and is itself an expression of the new era of salvation.* The kingdom does not belong to the Pharisees, but to these outcasts and sinners, for wherever Jesus is sitting at table with these humble, repentant, believing sinners, there is the kingdom of God. Those who *now* sit at table with Jesus will be rewarded at the resurrection of the righteous to sit at table at the messianic feast, the very thrust of the next parable in 14:15–24. *In essence, they are both the same table, expressing the eschatological tension of the present and future realities of the kingdom of God. This is the*

ongoing feast. Those who dine at the Lord's Supper today are participating in this same feast. (CC p. 574)

14:15 *at table with him* – The pivotal verse for 14:1–24 is the beatitude in 14:15: “Blessed whoever will eat bread in the kingdom of God.” This beatitude is a response by someone in the crowd to Jesus’ Sabbath healing and his teaching on meal etiquette. It leads into the third passage, the banquet story, the climax of 14:1–24. The banquet beatitude also illustrates the significance of the banquet story. It is one in a series of beatitudes in Luke’s gospel that illustrate the pervasive nature of Luke’s table fellowship matrix (see the excursus “The Lukan Beatitudes”). The story itself is Jesus’ response to this voice from the crowd. (CC p.575)

The Jews anticipated that the Messiah’s new age would begin with a banquet, as after a military conquest. (TLSB)

blessed is everyone – Blessedness comes from eating bread in the kingdom of God, which Christ is now ushering in through his table fellowship with outcasts and sinners. (Luther)

who will eat – φάγεται ἄρτον—This repeats the expression used at Lk 14:1 and provides a frame with “taste my banquet” (γεύσεταί μου τοῦ δείπνου) in 14:24. “To eat bread” is to eat a meal. (CC p. 569)

bread in the kingdom. The great Messianic banquet to come. Association of the future kingdom with a feast was common (13:29; Isa 25:6; Mt 8:11; 25:1–10; 26:29; Rev 19:9). (CSB)

14:16–24 Though the parable is similar to Mt 22:1–14, this is not necessarily the same event in Jesus’ life. (TLSB)

14:16 *Jesus replied.* Jesus used the man’s remark as the occasion for a parable warning that not everyone would enter the kingdom. (CSB)

While this story is not labeled a “parable,” it appears to be another illustrative story that functions as a parable, and so, like the Good Samaritan story (10:30–37), it is commonly called a parable. (CC p. 575)

A high point in Luke’s “banquet theology,” this parable presents Jesus’ table fellowship as the fulfillment of the OT banquet prophecies.

J. Navone, “Lukan Joy,” 54–55, discusses the OT banquet motif in Is 25:6; 55:1–3; 65:3–7; and Prov 9:1–6 and comments on this parable:

The significance of this chapter [14] derives from the prophetic and wisdom literature of the OT, which had developed the banquet theme as an expression of the perfect happiness which God has in store for his faithful at the end time. ...

The eschatological banquet symbolized the accomplishment of God’s plan of salvation. It is doubtful that any of Jesus’ Jewish hearers would have been unaware of the banquet theme and its significance. Jesus himself employed the wedding banquet as a symbol of ultimate happiness (Mt 22:1–14 = Lk 14:16–24; Mt 25:1–13 = Lk 12:35–38).

Jesus’ banquets were a realization of the messianic and eschatological prophecies; and at the same time they are only the beginning of the ultimate realization of these prophecies.

They promise more; they are signs of the beginning of the eschatological banquet. (CC p. 575)

Blessedness comes from eating bread in the kingdom of God, which Christ is now ushering in through his table fellowship with outcasts and sinners. The parable describes the nature of the kingdom. Jesus begins the parable by introducing the major character in the parable, a certain man, who will later be called “the master of the house” and “Lord” (14:21), and the circumstance for the parable, a great banquet to which many are invited. After the framework is introduced, the seven stanzas record the conversations between the Lord, his slave, and some of the guests who were invited to the banquet. (CC pp. 575-576)

a man – Jesus begins the parable by introducing the major character in the parable, a certain man, who will later be called “the master of the house” and “Lord” (14:21), and the circumstance for the parable, a great banquet to which many are invited. After the framework is introduced, the seven stanza record the conversations between the Lord, his slave, and some of the guests who were invited to the banquet. (Luther)

banquet – ἐποίει—This is a durative imperfect, that describes both the continuous preparations for the feast, which the parable describes, and the feast that is ongoing. (CC p. 569)

14:17 *at the time of the banquet* – τῆ ὥρᾳ τοῦ δεῖπνου—On the use of “hour” as a critical time reference, see comments at 13:31; 22:14; 22:53; 24:33. (Cf. also Lk 1:10; 2:38; 7:21; 10:21; 12:12, 39, 40, 46; 20:19; 22:59; 23:44) (CC p. 569)

sent his servant – The first stanza (14:17–18a) describes the Lord’s sending his slave to announce the invitation to his guests and the beginning of the excuses that they make. In the Mediterranean world this would be known as the “second invitation.” Jesus’ hearers are told that the feast is *now*. And Luke’s catechumens would also clearly grasp that the feast is already ongoing in the eucharistic life of the church. Jesus’ instructions about table etiquette (14:7–14) are about eschatological *and* eucharistic table fellowship. (CC p. 576)

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Usually an invitation was issued, and then a summons was sent when the feast was prepared. It would be insulting to accept the invitation but miss the banquet. (TLSB)

14:18–20 Two of the excuses match legitimate OT reasons to refrain from military service (Dt 20:6–7). (TLSB)

14:18 *they...began to make excuses* – After this glorious announcement, “the parable takes a totally unexpected turn.” The next three stanzas (14:18b–20) deal with three different persons who offer excuses as to why they cannot attend the feast. These would be considered insults in that culture. (CC p. 675)

bought a field. The initial invitation must have been accepted, but when the final invitation came (by Jewish custom the announcement that came when the feast was ready), other interests

took priority. None of the “reasons” given was genuine. For example, one did not buy a field without first seeing it, nor oxen without first trying them out (v. 19). (CSB)

go out see it – Either it was bought unseen or the guest needed to complete the sale. (TLSB)

14:19 *five yoke of oxen* – Ten oxen, implying considerable wealth; and ordinary farm required only one pair. (TLSB)

go and examine them. The sale was contracted but required closer examination. (TLSB)

14:20 *I have married a wife* – Demonstrates a wrong priority in this case: the good preferred above the best. Cf. v. 26) (TLSB)

14:21 *became angry* – ὀργισθείς—This is an ingressive aorist, translated “becoming angry,” to signify that the report of the rejection of the invitation led the master of the house to become angry. (CC p. 569)

streets and lanes – τὰς πλατείας καὶ ῥύμας τῆς πόλεως ... τοὺς πτωχοὺς καὶ ἀναπίρους καὶ τυφλοὺς καὶ χωλοὺς—These two phrases capture the comprehensive search undertaken by the slave. The definite article τὰς governs both the wide roads and the lanes, both of which are found *within* the city; the definite article τοὺς governs the poor, disabled, blind, and lame as if they were one entity. This group will be found in the wide roads and lanes of the city. (CC p. 570)

When the slave reports this rejection by the invited guests, the Lord of the house is angry and commands his slave to go out into the highways and byways *of the city* to bring in the poor and disabled and blind and lame (stanza 5, 14:21). These outcasts *within the city* (i.e., within Israel) would include those people whom the Pharisees would consider unclean and therefore unable to share table fellowship with them. It is no coincidence that these are the same categories of people that Jesus encouraged his host to invite to his dinner party (14:13). (CC p. 576)

Only those who are beggars before God accept the invitation of His grace. Luther’s last written words, found in his pocket, were “We are beggars.” (TLSB)

14:22 The servant’s comment follows the completion of the instruction. (TLSB)

14:23 *out to the highways* – τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμούς— Again, the definite article τὰς governs both places, highways and fenced-in paths (hedgerows), and both of these roads lay *outside* the city. (CC p. 570)

When the slave reports to his Lord that there is room even after inviting these outcasts (stanza 6, 14:22), his Lord sends him *outside the city* (i.e., outside Israel to Gentiles; stanza 7, 14:23). In the Mideast, an unexpected invitation must be refused, especially when one is a foreigner or outcast, which is why the slave “compels” (ἀνάγκασον; 14:23) them to come in. (CC p. 576)

K. Bailey, *Through Peasant Eyes*, 101; he also notes that the command to go out into the highways and byways “remains an *unfulfilled future task* as the parable closes” (emphasis Bailey). In other words, the Gentile mission is not part of Jesus’ ministry but remains a future event. (CC p. 576)

The summons outside the city suggests God is reaching to the Gentiles. (TLSB)

house may be filled. God's grace will fulfill His plan to seek and to save the lost. (TLSB)

The Lord's banquet must be full! (CC p. 576)

14:24 *I tell you* – On λέγω ὑμῖν, see comments at 4:24. This expression occurs in this final verse to highlight the eschatological significance of these words. “You” is in the plural to indicate that Jesus is now addressing the Pharisees and lawyers who were gathered at this meal on the Sabbath. “I say to you” is also used at 13:35, tying these chapters together by this significant expression. (CC p. 570)

those men who were invited. Without explicitly mentioning them, Jesus warned the Jews that refusal to accept God's invitation would result in their rejection and the inclusion of Gentiles instead (see 20:9–19). (CSB)

The parable began with a banquet beatitude and ends with a banquet warning (14:24). This Lukan shaping of the parable emphasizes how those who reject the invitation of the host are replaced by those who are invited in their stead. The table fellowship of Jesus is a two-edged sword of blessing and judgment. In this respect, this parable is directed against the Pharisees who are seated at the table. Luke's table fellowship matrix accents the tension between those who are excluded, the Pharisees and religious establishment of Israel, and those who are included, the tax collectors and sinners, the poor and maimed and blind and lame. (CC pp. 576-577)

Luke's concern for the disenfranchised has already been traced throughout the gospel. (Lk 4:16–30; 5:27–39; 7:22, 34, 36–50; 9:10–17; 14:7–14) Included among the outcasts of society are *the Gentiles*, for in the eyes of the Pharisees, Gentiles were the personification of the outcast and sinner. Luke anticipates here and throughout the development of his table fellowship matrix the mission to the Gentiles in Acts. This parable, told in the presence of the Pharisees, deals the final blow to any expectations they had about the table fellowship of Jesus embracing their particular religious perspective. It confirms for them that Jesus is guilty of blasphemy and deserving of death, a view expressed by them in 15:1–2. This parable reiterates that Jesus' table fellowship is *with sinners, i.e., it is an inclusive event.* (CC p. 577)

But the parable itself goes beyond simply expressing this tension between those excluded and those included at the banquet. There is also the tension between the present and future reality of the messianic feast. This eschatological feast is both a future event and one already realized in the ministry of Jesus. The table fellowship of Jesus is *where Jesus teaches about the kingdom and is itself an expression of the new era of salvation.* Jesus' table fellowship with sinners in the course of his ministry as described in Luke's gospel prepares for the full expression of this fellowship at the Last Supper with his disciples, where *in the meal itself* he will give his flesh and blood, and at Emmaus, where *in the meal* the crucified and risen Christ will be made known to them. (CC p. 577)

my banquet – This possessive genitive indicates that this is the Lord's banquet. Jesus is the host he has been speaking about in the parable. (CC p. 570)

14:12–24 God's invitations overcome people's rejections. Too often God's gifts are more important to us than He, the giver, is. But God is persistent. He reaches out again and again wherever His servants carry the Good News, so that all may receive His gracious invitation. • O Lord, by grace move us to treasure most the invitation to fill Your house and love those despised by the world. Amen. (TLSB)

The Cost of Discipleship

25 Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, 26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. 33 So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

14:25 *great crowds* – ὄχλοι πολλοί—Luke provides an echo of 12:1, where the size of the crowds was accented. (CC p. 578)

The crowds stuck close to Jesus everywhere He traveled. (TLSB)

Although Jesus may not be popular with the Pharisees and lawyers, he still draws large crowds. This crowd is journeying with him to Jerusalem. Luke’s travel narrative takes another turn with Jesus teaching in parables that are unique to Luke’s gospel. There seems to be a large block of teaching from 14:25 to 17:10, which means that the parables of Luke 15–16 that center in God’s mercy and compassion may be part of one extended discourse, which begins with 14:25–35. (CC p. 579)

accompanied him – συνεπορεύοντο δὲ αὐτῷ—Luke uses his journey vocabulary (συνεπορεύοντο) to remind the hearer that Jesus is still journeying to Jerusalem. This is the only indication until 17:11 of Jesus’ ongoing journey. On συνεπορεύομαι, see 7:11; 24:15. (CC p. 578)

turned and said to them – Are the crowds who go along to inherit the same destiny as Jesus? In this passage, Jesus says *yes!* To be invited to the final, eschatological banquet has its consequences; to repent and receive the gift of the kingdom means to be baptized into Jesus’ death. Lest the crowds look down on the Pharisees and lawyers as unwilling to count the cost, Jesus warns these crowds that to follow him entails great sacrifice. In fact there are three entailments of discipleship announced in this pericope: hating family (14:26), carrying the cross (14:27), and leaving possessions behind (14:33). The point is illustrated with three parables (14:28–30, 31–32, 34–35), the last of which raises the distinction between the hypocritical and the genuine. (CC pp. 579-580)

Since the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, he has engaged in continual catechesis of the Twelve, the seventy (-two), and the crowds. As was clear in the Sermon on the Plain, not all disciples are called to be apostles, but all disciples are learners, students, catechumens. The same meaning for “disciple” obtains here. Much of what Jesus tells the crowds here is catechetical material they have heard before. He has already spoken of hating family (8:19–21; 9:59–62; 12:52–53), carrying a cross (9:23–27), and giving up possessions (5:11, 28; 12:33). But perhaps the loudest echo comes from the discourse in Luke 8 on the parable of the sower (8:4–8), the meaning of

parables (8:9–10), the interpretation of the parable of the sower (8:11–15), the parables of seeing and hearing (8:16–18), and the new kinship (8:19–21). (CC p. 580)

14:26 *hate his own father*. A vivid hyperbole, meaning that one must love Jesus even more than his immediate family (see Mal 1:2–3 for another use of the figure). See Mt 10:37. (CSB)

Hebrew idiom for hate. To love one thing and to hate another gives preference to the former. Cf Gn 29:30–31. God does not expect us to be cruel to the family He has given, but rather to love Him first. (TLSB)

Discipleship is an either/or situation. Either we love and hate everything that might possibly come between us and him, or else we cannot be his disciples. This phrase does not apply to Christian homes.

Both Luke 8 and Luke 14 describe barriers to true repentance and impediments to genuine discipleship. The parable of the sower told the disciples to expect a mixed reception with various responses to the Gospel they will preach. Here too are described the different reactions of hearers and catechumens, and the pitfalls they will encounter. The first type of catechumen (14:26) is one who comes to Jesus (ἔρχεται πρὸς με, “comes to me”) in the initial stage of inquiry when he first hears the Word and comes to hear more. The catechumen must be told what costs are involved in following Jesus, for there will be some who are unwilling to leave their human family for the sake of the kingdom. This corresponds to seed that fell on the road and was trampled and eaten by birds, as when the devil takes away the Word from the heart, in order that those who believe at first might not continue in faith and be saved (8:5, 12). These words jar our modern ears, where the human kinship of the nuclear family has such a lofty place, even within the church (see also the Fourth Commandment; Eph 6:1–4). Does Jesus really mean that we are to *hate* our father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, even our own soul? Matthew records the softer formulation that makes “hate” correspond to “not love more than” (Mt 10:37), i.e., we are not to love family “more than” Jesus and his kingdom. This is, in fact, the meaning of “hate” here, but Luke preserves the semitic expression in all its hardness. (CC pp. 580-581)

T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 229–30, has a helpful comment: “The term ‘hate’ (*misein*) is the opposite of ‘love’ (*agapao*; cf. 1:71; 6:[22], 27). The terms denote attitudes and modes of action, not emotions. The point is not how one feels toward parents and family but one’s effective attitude when it comes to a choice for the kingdom.” (CC p. 581)

This language of “hate” comes from the Torah,

Gen 29:30–31: “So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and he loved Rachel more than Leah and served Laban for another seven years. When Yahweh saw that Leah *was hated* [LXX —μισεῖται], he opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.” Deut 21:15–17:

If a man has two wives, the one loved and the other hated, and they have borne him children, both the loved and the hated [μισουμένη], and if the firstborn son is of her who is hated [μισουμένη], then on the day when he assigns his possessions as an inheritance to his sons, he may not treat the son of the loved [wife] as the firstborn in preference to the son of the hated [wife; τὸν υἱὸν τῆς μισουμένης], who is the firstborn, but he shall acknowledge the firstborn, the son of the hated [wife; τὸν υἱὸν τῆς μισουμένης], by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he is the first issue of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his.

See also Ex 32:27–29, where Moses instructs the people “and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. . . . Today you have ordained yourselves for the service of Yahweh, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother that he [Yahweh] may bestow a blessing upon you this day.” (CC p. 581)

and it can only be understood in the context of Jesus’ overturning the Jewish laws of kinship and showing one’s true family is first and foremost the family of God, where membership is by grace through faith by means of catechesis and Baptism. If one sees this family as of first importance, then one can fear and love God and rightly love and honor fellow Christians and human family, in keeping with the Lord’s word: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it” (Lk 8:21). (CC p. 581)

False priorities crippled such a person’s discipleship. (TLSB)

14:27 *bear his own cross*. οὐ βαστάζει τὸν σταυρὸν ἑαυτοῦ—The other reference to “taking up the cross” includes “daily” (9:23). Here to “carry” or “bear” the cross implies an ongoing situation. (CC p. 578)

The second entailment of discipleship (Lk 14:27) clearly echoes an earlier call for the disciple to “deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (9:23). Now the crowd of catechumens are told to “carry [the] cross and come after me” (ἔρχεται ὀπίσω μου; 14:27). These are catechumens who have heard the Word, have left family, and understand the costs of discipleship. But as they travel with Jesus to Jerusalem, they begin to encounter rejection and persecution. This entailment of discipleship corresponds to the seed that fell on the rock and withered because of lack of moisture, like those who receive the Word with joy but have no roots and fall away in times of temptation (8:6, 13), which can include *persecution* (cf. 22:40–46). (CC p. 581)

Refers to Christ’s own death and His disciples’ willingness to follow in His sacrifice. (TLSB)

cannot be my disciple – οὐ δύναται εἶναι μου μαθητής—Luke repeats this phrase (14:26, 33) and so emphasizes discipleship. At this point Matthew records “is not worthy of me” (10:38). (CC p. 578)

14:28-32 Jesus now interrupts the flow of his narrative with two parables, one that uses a building metaphor, and the other a metaphor about war. The theme of both is the same, namely that one is to *count the cost* before embarking on anything as serious as a huge building project or a full-scale war. This theme is signaled by the parallel language, i.e., that the builder/king must first sit down (14:28, 31; οὐχὶ πρῶτον καθίσας) and decide whether this is feasible. Eph 2:14–22 contains the same two motifs of the foundation and peace. Jesus is the one who makes peace between Jew and Gentile. All who are built on him and the foundation of his prophets and apostles are united as God’s holy temple. (CC pp. 581-582)

The two metaphors in Jesus’ parables clearly illustrate the first two entailments of discipleship. The catechumen builds his life on the firm foundation of the catechetical teaching of Jesus and the church. Through Baptism he enters into a new family, the family of God (6:48), which is greater than one’s human family. Such a catechumen is one who “hears my words and does them” (6:47). Baptized, he is crucified to the world and the world to him (Gal 6:14). The follower of Jesus loses the world and gains only a cross while in the world. One would never begin this new life without the resources to complete it, and these resources are supplied by Baptism and the Word. (CC p. 582)

Likewise the catechumen doesn't rush off into Christ's war thinking that he can win it himself. The enemy is fierce and the catechumen is outnumbered, and so the only way to win is to carry the cross Jesus carried and follow him, for he is the one who knows the terms for peace (τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην; 14:32). The same expression will be used by Jesus as he weeps over Jerusalem and asks, "If only you—even you—had known in this day the things that have to do with peace [τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην]! But now they are hidden from your eyes" (19:42). Will these same terms of peace be hidden from the catechumen's eyes, crowded out by temptations and persecutions that he, like his Lord, might be called to endure? In both parables, crowds who would journey with Jesus are warned to first sit down, count the cost, and know what they lose and what they attain when going with Him. Catechumens are warned of the consequences of joining Christ on the ongoing journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. Both parables are in fact a call to repentance and faith in the one whose first destiny is the earthly Jerusalem and the cross. (CC 582)

14:28 *count the cost.* Jesus did not want a blind, naive commitment that expected only blessings. As a builder estimates costs or a king evaluates military strength (v. 31), so a person must consider what Jesus expects of his followers. (CSB)

Substantial building, such as a fortress. (TLSB)

Either a man completes his building, or he becomes the object of ridicule for starting something he cannot finish. Jesus does not suggest he should consider erecting a less costly building or an alternate structure, because discipleship is not a half-way activity to be changed as we see fit. Its demands cannot be lessened; the level of our commitment is what must change.

14:29 *will begin to mock him* – As an unfinished builder may be ridiculed, so those who falter in their discipleship dishonor themselves and the Gospel. (TLSB)

14:30 *finish* – Complete the course and keep the faith. (TLSB)

2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

14:31-32 Same point is reinforced with a second comparison. (TLSB)

14:31 *king going out to encounter another king* – Often, Christians feel outnumbered by the forces of the world. (TLSB)

14:32 *terms of peace* – τὰ πρὸς εἰρήνην—"The things for peace," in which πρὸς means "belonging to" or "necessary for" peace, i.e., "the terms of peace." Cf. Lk 19:42; also 2 Pet 1:3; BAGD πρὸς, III, 5, b. (CC p. 578)

Jesus advises not mere compromise, but a sober look at reality and evaluation of the cost. (TLSB)

14:33 *does not renounce all.* The cost, Jesus warned, is complete surrender to him. (CSB)

ἀποτάσσεται—In 9:61, a would-be disciple asks to "take leave of" (BAGD,1) his family; here Jesus uses the same verb as he instructs disciples to be prepared to "renounce, give up" (BAGD, 2) their possessions, echoing 12:33 and anticipating 18:22. (CC pp. 578-579)

τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὑπάρχουσιν—This is a common Lukan expression for possessions, one’s worldly goods. (Cf. Lk 8:3; 11:21; 12:15, 33, 44; 16:1; 19:8) (CC p. 579)

Possessions, along with hypocrisy, are stumbling blocks for the Pharisees. This is one of the major themes of Jesus’ long discourse of 12:1–13:21. (CC p. 582)

There are echoes also here from the Sermon on the Plain (6:20–49), and this theme concerning possessions will be picked up again in chapter 16. Throughout Jesus’ catechesis of his disciples, the proper use of possessions has been a major theme, since possessions are one of the greatest threats to discipleship. Could this entailment of discipleship correspond to the third kind of seed that falls among the thorns and as it grows up is choked with thorns? These are people who hear the Word but are choked by the anxieties and riches and pleasures of life (8:7, 14). (CC p. 582)

Being a disciple entails the readiness to give up anything if duty to God calls for it. (TLSB)

14:25–33 Jesus illustrates the unconditional nature of discipleship. Consider well the radical demands of following Jesus, and be ready to meet them. Yet, count also the demands our salvation placed on the Son of God, who gave up all things for us. He is your tower and refuge of strength. • “Take myself, and I will be Ever, only, all for Thee.” Amen. (LSB 783:6). (TLSB)

Salt Without Taste Is Worthless

34 “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? 35 It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

14:34 *Salt is good.* Ancient salt was made of several chemicals dried from seawater. Sodium chloride, true salt, could leach out, leaving other worthless minerals. So the Christian whose faith has eroded is no longer a Christian. (TLSB)

Jesus summarizes his teaching about discipleship with an enigmatic saying about salt. (There is a similar saying in Mt 5:13 in the Sermon on the Mount and in Mk 9:49–50.) Luke’s version of this saying accents the value of genuine salt. Salt is critical in a world that lacks other means for preserving food. Food that tastes bad might be redeemed by seasoning with salt. If salt were to lose its ability to preserve and season food, it would be useless, for there is no way to restore these qualities to salt (Lk 14:34). It would lose its purpose and would not even be suitable for other uses such as enhancing the soil or aiding decomposition in a rubbish pile (14:35). It should be thrown out, like those who came to the final banquet of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob without faith in Jesus as the Lord of the banquet (13:28). In the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:13), Jesus called the disciples “the salt of the earth” because through their presence in the world, Jesus is present. But if family ties, the burden of Jesus’ cross, and possessions hinder hearers from becoming believing disciples, then they will be like tasteless salt, worthless and deserving of being thrown out. They are like the first three groups of seed that fell on the road, on the rocks, and among the thorns. They begin by hearing the Word, but eventually the entanglements of life cause them to fall away. (CC p. 583)

but – οὐδὲ—The RSV leaves this untranslated, but the conjunction shows that these final verses are connected to the previous teaching about discipleship. (CC p. 579)

14:35 *thrown away* – The partly desalinated compound could still harm the soil; therefore, it must be thrown away like a worthless servant into the outer darkness (Mt 25:30). (TLSB)

let him hear – The follower of Jesus needs to listen to everything He (Jesus) has to say, not only what one wants to hear. (PBC)

ὁ ἔχων ὄτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω—Jesus issued this declaration earlier at 8:8; see textual note and comments there. On ἀκούω as a term for hearers/catechumens, see comments at 5:1; the Sermon on the Plain (6:27, 47, 49); the parable of the sower (8:8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18); and Jesus’ discussion of the new kinship (8:21). (CC p. 579)

The seriousness of these entailments of discipleship is summed up by Jesus’ final words: “The one having ears to hear, let him hear” (Lk 14:35). The catechumen has heard these words before, at the conclusion of the parable of the sower (8:8). Not all are given ears to hear and eyes to see. The doctrine of election is involved here; see comments on 8:8, 9–10, 15. Once again, Jesus is calling the crowds to become hearers of the Word, that is, catechumens who follow him to Jerusalem, to the cross, and beyond that to the empty tomb and the heavenly “exodus” (9:31). But to be hearers of the Word they must take seriously the nature of Jesus’ call into a new family, carry their cross, and renounce their possessions. The road to heaven leads through Calvary. (CC p. 583)

14:34–35 Christ’s people are “the salt of the earth” (Mt 5:13), purifying and seasoning it, because Christ is within them. He makes us Christians through God’s Word. • Spare us, O Christ, from a weak and insipid faith, that the world may taste and see that You are good. Amen. (TLSB)