

Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

SSBC Luke Bible Study #53

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.

Passage: Luke 14:12-14

Sermon Date: Sep 24, 2006

Down to Your Last Bowl of Soup?

Last week a neighbor who lives on a tiny fixed income heard us mention that we were having soup for dinner. Five minutes later she was at our door with a bag of groceries – some bread, a couple of frozen TV dinners, a few boxes of noodles. She told us she thought we needed some food, and that she had some extra. I guess to her eyes, our only having soup for dinner meant that we must have no other food left to eat in the house. So without hesitation she got a bag, found some things in her small cupboard, and walked (across a busy street I might add) to our house to bring us some of her food. I'm not sure when I've ever been loved in a more Christ-like fashion. Some things that happen sure grab your heart, don't they?

This week's passage in Luke will also stir your heart (and mess with your invitation lists). You're not just going to study these verses, you're going to apply them (don't get defensive now – that's God's idea, not mine). So before you turn the page, ask God to open the eyes of your heart a little wider. By the way, do you know anyone who's just having soup for dinner?

These studies are produced by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. Studies are distributed one week prior to the sermon as inserts in the church bulletin and posting at www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/. Sermons are also recorded and can be listened to later by visiting that same website. Have feedback or questions? Contact studieditor@southshorebaptist.com

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Bible Study:

1. Read this week’s Bible passage and use the chart below to note your observations and any questions you have.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p style="text-align: center;">New International Version NIV</p> <p>¹² Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid.</p> <p>¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,</p> <p>¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”</p>	

In between these, the New International Version (NIV) is a “dynamic equivalent” which tries to balance between the more literal and the freer approaches. This version is the one primarily used in these Luke Bible studies.

2. You used the NIV in question 1. Now read the NASB and NLT versions below, and highlight some of the differences that you notice (look closely). How do these clarify your understanding of the passage?

New American Standard Bible NASB	New Living Translation NLT
<p>¹² And He also went on to say 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 neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment.</p> <p>¹³ But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,</p> <p>¹⁴ and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”</p>	<p>¹² Then he turned to his host. When you put on a luncheon or a dinner,” he said, “don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will repay you by inviting you back.</p> <p>¹³ Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.</p> <p>¹⁴ Then at the resurrection of the godly, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”</p>

A good practice when studying the Bible is to begin by re-reading the passage a number of times, ideally using a few different trusted translations. This often better illuminates the meaning of the passage. Three good translations for this purpose are as follows.

The New American Standard Bible (NASB) is a more literal translation from the original Hebrew and Greek languages.

The New Living Translation (NLT) aims to more freely translate the ideas from one language to another.

Dig Deeper:

3. What excuses might the host in Luke 14 have given to Jesus in reply? After all, there was that one guy with dropsy (Luke 14:2) at the party. How might the host have finished the following sentence:

I didn't invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind because ...

4. Think about some related situations in your own life. Perhaps there are actual parties & banquets that you invite people to. Or barbeques, picnics, dinner guests, outings, etc. Think of things that you initiate or at least could invite people to.

a. What are some examples where you've reached out to the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind? Or perhaps the widows, the lonely, the emotionally wounded, the mentally ill?

b. According to Luke 14:14, what do you understand will be God's response to these compassionate outreaches?

c. What kinds of benefits ('repayments') do we reap when we invite "comfortable" people (those who aren't poor, lame, blind, etc.) into our lives, our homes? What are some of our motives as we select people to spend time with?

d. What are some instances where you have either avoided or not even considered extending invites to poor & broken people?

e. Take an honest look at your own heart in this. To whatever extent you tend to fall short of Jesus' instruction in Luke 14:13, why do you think that happens?

Jesus, I didn't invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind because ...

f. From what you know of Jesus, how do you suppose He would respond to you about your shortcomings in loving and reaching out to the poor and broken ones that He loves so much?

5. What do you see as the main point of Luke 14:12-14?

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth. (1 John 3:16-18)

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)

Take the “Today or Tomorrow Challenge”:

6. How can you apply the truth of Luke 14:12-14 today or tomorrow? (If you wait beyond the next day or so, it probably won't happen, right?)

A. **START BY PRAYING** for a genuine opportunity to extend some sort of invitation or hand of friendship to someone who is poor, crippled, lame, blind, widowed, lonely, emotionally wounded, or mentally ill.

B. **LOOK** for such an opportunity, perhaps by considering the following questions:

- What parties do you have coming up, and who might you invite?

- Who could you call and extend yourself to in loving friendship?

- Who could you get up and go visit?

- Who could you call to invite over?

- Who could you find a way to humbly serve?

C. **CAUTION:** What kinds of attitudes might you have to guard against in the above? (Such as looking down on people, fearing them, avoiding real relationships with them, ...)

D. **DO SOMETHING.** Pursue an opportunity; reach out to someone.

7. Once you have taken the 'today or tomorrow challenge' and reached out to someone, spend some time reflecting on the experience.

a. What did you do, and how did it feel?

b. How did the experience affect your understanding of Luke 14:12-14?

c. How will you continue to apply what you've learned and experienced in this? (Perhaps with the same person you reached out to – do they need you to be a friend?)

Ask God to guide you and enable you to persevere in this.

Take A Peek at the End of the Story:

Want a peek at the repayment in store for the righteous who take Luke 14:12-14 to heart?

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people from one another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.”

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison, and go to visit you?’”

“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’ ”

Matthew 25:31-40

Those who truly have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior and been given a new heart in Christ can't help but reach out in love toward the poor, the broken, the lonely. The gospel is particularly beautiful when it is lived out in such small yet huge ways. May we each take the 'today or tomorrow challenge' every day.

... when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.