

I would like to look with you for a few minutes this morning at the parable of our Lord found in Luke, the 14th chapter, vv.16-23 (reading text)

Parables are a rather unusual type of literature. They are not necessarily an account of something that has really happened. Often they have elements in them that seem rather strange. They don't quite fit with what would happen in ordinary life. Sometimes a parable has just one simple thought that it plans to get across. Other times there will be several points in it that are true. We all have a tendency to make the parables walk on all fours and draw from them more than is there. That's too bad but the worst tendency is to fail to get what God has there for us.

I believe that in this parable Jesus presents some truths that are very important. I'd like to meditate with you a few minutes about them. First in this we note a contrast between free-will and sovereignty. Both truths are illustrated in the passage. We find today that many people get all excited about one or other of these. They are both very important; it's easy to neglect one. Or ~~to~~ neglect the other.

On the one hand we cannot think of people having automatic devices that move (them) this way or that, and they have no responsibility. We know we have responsibility. We know that we have to move and declare ourselves to do what we should. We do have responsibility.

On the other hand, the idea that we can do anything we want we all know to be nonsense. We know that God controls all things and God planned all things from the beginning. We don't know how we can fit these two together, but we will know that eventually. We find from Scripture and from experience that they are both true. We must recognize them both.

In this parable the people who did not come to the banquet did not come because they chose not to come; they did not come because they made excuses. They had very definite responsibility. The people who did come were compelled to come. He said to go into the highways and byways and compell them to come in. Both are true in the Christian life. God controls all that we do very definitely. But we have very definite responsibilities and the decisions we make are extremely important.

This is brought out very definitely in the course of the parable. These men had excuses. They had reasons they gave why they would not come to the banquet. As you serve the Lord you will constantly come in contact with people who have excuses. Excuses of many different kinds.

I was much impressed not long ago by reading a statement by a man who told of an experience he had in going to visit people in order to interest them in coming to church. He said he came