

to one house where the woman was a believer. She had asked that they visit her husband. Her husband did not believe in God at all. He said to (them), What will you have to say when you die /~~and~~/ as to why God should receive you into His heaven? Well, the man said, I've lived a good life, why won't you receive me into your heaven? Well, the man said. Suppose someone wanted to come into your house and he said, What reason can you give for not letting me into your house? Well, the man said, I'd tell him where to go pretty fast!

That shows the absurdity of the position. We all tend to make excuses, and we can answer the excuses but = it is necessary to answer them, but answering them purely on a rationalistic basis usually is not enough. We have to learn how to answer the excuses that people give. I think even more important is that we answer the excuses that we ourselves are prone to give.

Of course we know it is sin that keeps people from the kingdom of God. We know that all men are sinners. We know that the devil is leading us to turn away from God in every possible way and reject His desires for us. We know that we deserve nothing good. That it is only through the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and its being applied to us by the Holy Spirit that any of us have any hope of salvation.

We know that and that is tremendously important but that is not the point of this parable. No one of these men presented something that was sinful, something that was wicked as his reason for not coming to the banquet. They all had reasons that were altogether justifiable under many circumstances.

The first one said, I have bought a field and I must go and see it. This is perhaps the least valid of the three, yet it certainly is valid. This was an important part of this man's economic life. This field he had bought he must see it. He must plan how to make the best use of it. He could not just put the thing off--I must go and see the field.

The next was more valid. I have bought 5 yoke of oxen. I am on my way to try them out. He had to get these oxen accustomed to the work he wanted them to do. He had to put them to work right away. It was important for his life, for his continuance in carrying the support of his family.

The third excuse might be the most valid of all. I've just gotten married so I can't come. The OT said that a man when he got married was excused from military service for a full year after he was married. These refer to the ordinary progress of life. They are perfectly valid things. Yet they are presented here as excuses and the people who allow them to keep them from coming to the banquet these people receive very strong condemnation.

I think it's important we put these things in their proper place. We must recognize that God's work is first. We must recognize that our progress in grace is first. We must realize