



SESSION 4

# not my party

*“Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’”*

Luke 14:23



In the Bible, we read that Jesus was invited to two kinds of parties: the “sinner” parties and the Pharisee parties. Interesting enough, Jesus always had a great time at the sinners’ parties, but he disrupted the Pharisees’ parties. The Pharisees were always surprised and really upset that Jesus would be interested in connecting with irreligious people. They would have expected Him to only want to be with “righteous” people but not “sinners.” But Jesus made it clear that these religious leaders had missed the heart of God.

It’s easy for the same thing to happen in church today—we can lose sight of those we are called to invite and instead craft environments for those of us who are already Christ-followers. When we gather together, it’s a party, but it’s not our party. This is the Father’s party; we are His servants, privileged to prepare the party for those who have yet to come and who are far from God.

## share your story

Begin your time together by using the following questions and activities to get people talking.

What do you think makes a great party?

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Is it hard for you to invite people to church, or does it come naturally? Explain why.

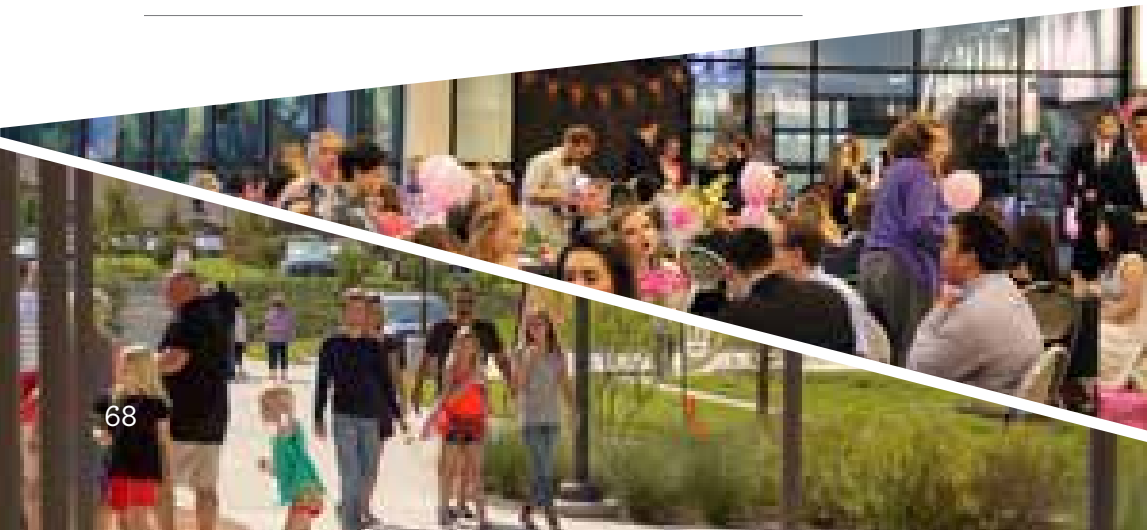
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## watch the video



NOTES FROM THE SESSION

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# hear God's story

## READ LUKE 14:15-24

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.' Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.' Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.' The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.' "Sir," the servant said, "what you ordered has been done, but there is still room." Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"



Pastor Jeff Jones explains that as believers we represent the servant in this story. Who do you think are the original guests? And who are the poor, crippled, blind, and lame? And who are the ones on the roads and country lanes?

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All the first, invited guests had an excuse as to why they couldn't come. What do those excuses say about them?

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How did the host react when the first guests declined his invitation?

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Why do you think the host wanted a full house (v. 23)? What does the full house represent?

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## study notes

Jesus was telling the parable of the great banquet when he was a dinner guest at a Pharisee's home. The interesting fact is this was the last time the book of Luke mentions that Jesus was invited to a Pharisee's party. The reason Jesus chose that location to share this parable can be understood as Jesus giving them one more warning: The time is coming; are you going to accept the invitation to my party or not?

Unfortunately, the Pharisees didn't accept the invitation and instead did everything in their power to crucify Jesus. But since nothing is impossible for Jesus, He chose to do a miracle in the life of one of the Pharisees who seemed to hate Jesus and His followers the most. Read more about the transformation from Saul to Paul in Acts 9:1-31.



## *create a new story*

*In this section, talk about how you will apply the wisdom you've learned from the teaching and Bible study. Then, think about practical steps you can take in the coming week to live out what you've learned.*

Do the people we invite into our home or church feel comfortable? How can we build an inviting environment?

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What are some ways you are tempted to make church your party instead of the King's party? Are there any preferences you need to give up for the sake of those who are far from God?

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What did you learn about the Kingdom of God from today's teaching?

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Reading the parable of the banquet communicates an urgency to invite people. How do you respond to this urgency?

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This week, how will you interact with the Bible? Can you commit to spending time in the Daily Devotions? Tell the group how you plan to follow Jesus this week, and then, at your next meeting, talk about your progress and challenges.

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Give each person an opportunity to share prayer requests. If you'd like, you can write these on the Prayer and Praise Report on page 92.

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Close your meeting with prayer.

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## for additional study

Take some time between now and our next meeting to dig into God's Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own. Jot down your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. You may even want to use a Bible website or app to look up commentary on these passages. If you like, share what you learn with the group the next time you meet.



### READ MATTHEW 22:1-14

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' "But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. "Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

This passage is similar to our passage in Luke. What is the same, and what is different?

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Identify the characters of the parable. Who are the King, the son, and the servants?

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In Luke, the original guests were uninvited after their refusal; the original guests in this passage were killed. Why were they treated so differently?

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What do the wedding clothes signify?

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**READ ACTS 13:47- 49**

*For this is what the Lord has commanded us: "I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth." When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed. The word of the Lord spread through the whole region.*

Who are the Gentiles in your life?

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What does it mean to bring salvation "to the ends of the earth"?

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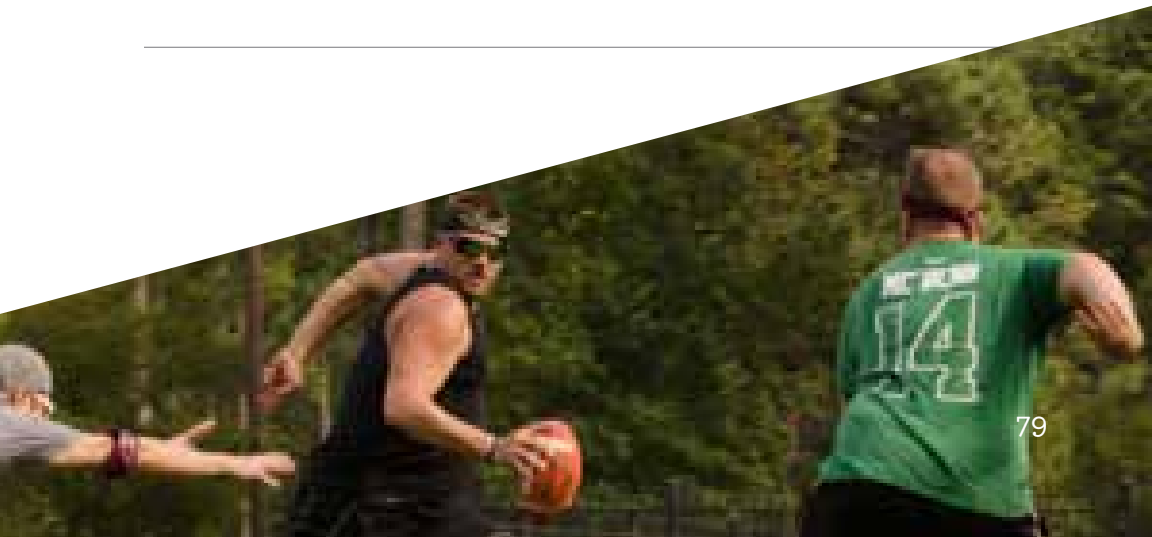
How have you witnessed the Word of the Lord being spread?

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# daily devotions



## Day 1

READ PSALM 96:1-3

*"Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples."*

### REFLECT

Give thanks to the Lord because He has given you eternal life. Also, give thanks to God because He has chosen you to declare His glory among your neighbors.



## Day 2

READ MATTHEW 28:19-20

*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

### REFLECT

This is not a suggestion; Jesus commands us to "go and make disciples." It is not a way of living but rather our ultimate goal as Christians. Pray right now for opportunities to invite your friends and family to church.



## Day 3

READ PROVERBS 10:12

*"Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs."*

### REFLECT

Whatever your past with your neighbors, co-workers, or friends, don't keep a grudge against them. Instead, encounter them with love. Forgive them and ask God to change your heart and to fill it with love.





**Day 4**

**READ ROMANS 13:10**

*“Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”*

**REFLECT**

Pray that God would give you a genuine heart for lost people, especially for the lost people you encounter on a daily basis. Think right now of a person and pray for her/him by name.



**Day 5**

**READ ROMANS 1:16**

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”*

**READ JOSHUA 1:9**

*“Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*

**REFLECT**

What is hindering you from sharing the gospel? Don't be afraid of sharing the good news of Jesus—be brave and know that you are not alone. God is with you! Pray that God will replace your fear with confidence and courage.



**Day 6**

Use the following space to reflect on what you learned this week and what God is saying to you.

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