

Hope of the Nations

Annie

Scripture:

Luke 14:12-24

Romans 15:1-13

Matthew 12:17-21

Isaiah 42:1-4



And in His Name shall the nations hope

We are fast approaching the season when, if you believe all the advertising gurus, all the world seems to want to “party”. Preparations for lavish dinners, office parties, exorbitantly overpriced delicacies surround us wherever we go. I do wonder if, in the midst of this, many people remember the exhortation in Luke 14 to consider very carefully who we invite to these feasts.

In verse 12 Jesus gave a specific instruction to the one who had invited Him to the gathering, “when you prepare a feast”, not “if”. This is a clear direction of how to live in the Kingdom of God while we are still this side of Heaven. Invite those who can give you nothing back, the marginalised, the poor, solo mums, those who you don’t normally associate with. Those whose way of life doesn’t match up to our standards of decency or morality but whose sins, in God’s eyes, are no worse than ours. Jesus is telling this man and us not to get sucked into the mentality that was then, and still is, so prevalent, not to be a part of a culture where we always have to be number 1, always the centre of attention. This is not Kingdom of God living, this is not the Hope that Jesus paid for with His precious Life.

Luke then records that only one of the guests who had heard what Jesus had said responded. When Jesus sees a response in us, He looks directly at us and expands on what He has already said, to anyone who would listen, anyone who places all their Hope upon Him alone. By responding, we are given more, God is always looking for some response from us, however tentative or seemingly insignificant. He loves to share more of Himself with us but we need to be hungry, to let Him know that we want more. He delights to fulfill our expectation, the hope of seeing His goodness in the land of the living.

Jesus came to bring the fulfilment of the promises of an eternal Life with Him to the nation of Israel, but they had become so distracted by their earthly traditions and ambitions that they were blind to His message. They had been hoping for the Messiah to set them free for so long, yet they rejected Him, because accepting His message would mean that they had to let go of all the trappings of their lives. The pull of this world was more important to them than the Hope of eternal Life with God. God’s banquet table is groaning under the weight of all of the spiritual food that we could ever imagine or desire, we have to decide, as did the nation Jesus came to, whether our “stuff” is more important than accepting the invitation to the feast.

In the parable, the master of the feast then sent his servant back out to the streets, to the lanes in the city and told the servant to collect up all the homeless, the poor, the lame, the blind so that his lavish feast would not be wasted, but there was still room at the feast. So, he told the servant to go out

of the city, to the highways, the hedgerows where the dispossessed outcasts and the religiously unclean were forced to live, and to "compel" them to come to the feast so that his house would be filled.

When we look at this parable, it's clear that God is our Master of the feast and His invitation had clearly been sent out by a man declaring the coming of the Lamb of God. A man preparing the way, John the Baptist, the herald sent by God to proclaim the coming of the Messiah to the nation of Israel. He came to His own and they rejected Him, despised Him and trampled Him, as the Living Bread, underfoot. God always knew that this would happen, ancient prophecies were being fulfilled as Jesus, the Messiah, was revealed as, not only the Hope for the nation of Israel, but the Hope for everyone. For all who hunger and thirst after righteousness and are prepared to turn aside from their sinful lives, no matter who they are, Jesus is the Hope of Life forevermore. Our only, precious, magnificent Hope in life and death.

Prayer: Abba Father, open our eyes to see how You long so lovingly for us to feast from You, to be nourished by You and be forever rejoicing with You and the Angels in Your Kingdom. Help us to recognise and accept the Hope of Nations. Through His Name we pray, Amen