

Other things can wait till the one thing needful is attended to, 2 Cor. 6 : 2. Draw from your class the reasons why any may be disposed to delay the acceptance of Christ and full salvation in Him, and you will have little difficulty in showing that none of these reasons are more urgent than definite, instant acceptance of Christ. Spend the greater part of your time examining excuses and disclosing the insult they offer to a gracious Host, by their essential pretentiousness, falsity and added aggravation of indifference. Then close with—

3. *The Amazing Outcome of Trifling with our Privileges*, vs. 21-24. They are taken from us and given to others, Matt. 20 : 16; 25 : 28; Luke 19 : 24; 20 : 16. When guests who count themselves respectable spurn the proffered hospitality of divine grace (v. 21), the ragged, the maimed, the halt, the blind, whom they despise, are called to their places, 1 Cor. 1 : 28. Those near at hand (v. 21), and those far away (v. 23), are sought out and urgently pressed to accept what others in their indifference have declined. In the end, what short-sightedness to despise the "roomy" hospitality of grace! (See Heb. 2 : 3, 4.)

For Teachers of the Boys and Girls

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This should be a "decision day" in each class, and for each scholar. There are few more pungent appeals in all scripture than those of this Lesson. They should be pressed home pointedly, tenderly, and, so far as may be, individually—that is, in the class; and then, after the class,—immediately after, on the same day, or the same week (lose no time),—the appeal should be followed up, each scholar being taken by himself or herself. It is this quiet, direct, loving, personal word, often, which settles the question. Few can resist it. It was Christ's own way (see John chs. 3 and 4).

The Lesson, be sure and have the class understand, is a continuation of the table talk of Jesus in the great Pharisee's house (v. 1); the guests were Pharisees: they thought God's kingdom was only for them, and that they were already in it, and every one else outside. The Lesson shows what Jesus

thinks, and where the Pharisees really stood, and who *do* come into the kingdom of God.

Of what joyous event had Jesus spoken in v. 14? The Pharisees believed that, *of course*, they all would be foremost in that new and heavenly kingdom; one of them says so, v. 15. Explain that a favorite description of heaven, by Jewish teachers, was as a great feast.

Jesus, in the parable of the Lesson, adopts their description of the kingdom of heaven; but we shall learn from the parable, that that kingdom is now, as well as hereafter, far different from what the proud, self-righteous Pharisees conceived it to be.

Vs. 16, 17 will give the scholars a chance to tell about Oriental feasts and the invitations to them. Let the talk flow freely. Then show that the gracious heavenly Father is the "certain man"; and that what He has provided for men, in Christ, is the "great supper"—how wondrously great! pardon, peace, joy, strength, fellowship with Himself, and with all the holy on earth and in heaven. The first invitation—"bade many" (v. 16) was, long ago, to God's chosen people, Abraham and his seed. The second (v. 17) was again to them through John the Baptist (see Matt. 3 : 2, 3). The same invitation comes to us through every sermon we hear, and every scripture lesson we study, and every friend who speaks to us of God's love in Christ the Saviour.

Will those invited accept? Now for the excuses, vs. 18-20. Have the scholars talk about them. Show that the pith of them all, is being taken up with oneself and one's own concerns, rather than with God's love and God's fellowship. There is little need to emphasize the folly of the excuses and of those who made them: it is sufficiently plain.

Can God be angry? Get the answer in such verses as these three—Neh. 9 : 17; Ps. 7 : 11; Mark 3 : 5.

What a surprising command! v. 21. Is it like God? Matt. 5 : 45; John 3 : 16, and the parables of Luke, ch. 15, are the answer to the question.

Who are meant in v. 21? The despised and outcast Jews, such as the publicans. Who are meant in v. 23? All sinners, of all nations and of all times.