

You Are Missing Something

Luke 14: 15-24

5th Ave State - 11/14/48

Hudson Falls - 1/4/49

Brookline WTRX 1/20/52

Greeter St. 11/14/54

Trinity Albany 11/30/58

921

see 551

YOU ARE MISSING SOMETHING  
Luke 14:15-24

I. Introduction

A. What are you going to do tomorrow?

1. Your washing
2. Start that term paper
3. Sell that hard prospect
4. Clean the cellar, the attic
5. Write that letter
6. Answer that letter

B. What will determine what you do?

1. Your boss
2. Circumstance
3. Necessity
4. Your own desire

C. The chances are that whatever you do you are missing something. Emerson wrote:

"DAUGHTERS OF FINE, THE HYPOCRITIC DAYS,  
MUFFLED AND DUMB LIKE BAREFOOT DERVISHES  
AND MARCHING SINGLE IN AN ENDLESS FILE,  
BRING DIADEMS AND FAGOTS IN THEIR HANDS.  
TO EACH THEY OFFER GIFTS AFTER HIS WILL,  
BREAD, KINGDOMS, STARS, AND SKY THAT HOLDS THEM ALL  
I, IN MY FLEACHED GARDEN, WATCHED THE POMP,  
FORGOT MY MORNING WISHES, HASTILY  
TOOK A FEW HERBS AND APPLES, AND THE DAY  
TURNED AND DEPARTED SILENT. I TOO LATE,  
UNDER HER SOLEMN FILLET SAW THE SOURN."

II. The Parable of the Wedding Feast

A. The setting

1. Jesus often attended feasts
2. At this one everything went wrong
  - a. Heals the man although it is the Sabbath
  - b. The rush for the best places
  - c. The tables are turned and Jesus is not the one who is embarrassed
    - (1) "Now when he marked how they chose places of honor"
    - (2) "When you give a dinner do not invite your friends..."
3. Some pious soul, in order to relieve the tension says: "Blessed is he who feasts in the realm of God."

B. Then Jesus tells the story of the Wedding Feast

III. The teaching

A. Our failure to see what is really important

1. Eagle Bridge saves 80¢
2. William Law in "A Serious Call to A Devout and Holy Life"

"PERSONS THAT ARE WELL AFFECTED TO RELIGION, THAT RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS OF PIETY WITH PLEASURE AND SATISFACTION, OFTEN WONDER HOW IT COMES TO PASS THAT THEY MAKE NO GREATER PROGRESS IN THAT RELIGION WHICH THEY SO MUCH ADMIRE... NOW THE REASON OF IT IS THIS: IT IS BECAUSE RELIGION LIVES ONLY IN THEIR HEAD, BUT SOMETHING ELSE HAS POSSESSION OF THEIR HEART... IF IT BE ASKED WHY RELIGION DOES NOT GET POSSESSION OF THEIR HEARTS, THE REASON IS THIS: IT IS NOT BECAUSE THEY LIVE IN GROSS SINS, OR DEBAUCHERIES, FOR THEIR REGARD TO RELIGION PRESERVES THEM FROM SUCH DISORDERS: BUT IT IS BECAUSE THEIR HEARTS ARE CONSTANTLY EMPLOYED, PERVERTED, AND KEPT IN A WRONG STATE BY THE INDISCREET USE OF SUCH THINGS AS ARE LAWFUL TO BE USED... FOR OUR SOULS MAY RECEIVE AN INFINITE HURT, AND BE RENDERED INCAPABLE OF ALL VIRTUE, MERELY BY THE USE OF INNOCENT AND LAWFUL THINGS... GROSS SINS ARE PLAINLY SEEN AND EASILY AVOIDED BY PERSONS THAT PROFESS RELIGION. BUT THE INDISCREET AND DANGEROUS USE OF INNOCENT AND LAWFUL THINGS AS DOES NOT SHOCK AND OFFEND OUR CONSCIENCES TO IT IS DIFFICULT TO MAKE PEOPLE AT ALL SENSIBLE OF THE DANGER OF IT."

3. I was in the library the other day.

- a. I thought of all the treasures that were there—it seems that it should be crowded
- b. People complain about being bored, and lonesome, and what have you and here at our doorstep is a treasure.

4. I have the feeling that so many young people are missing the things that are truly important

- a. A Minister has the opportunity to talk to people who tell him about all the things they have missed
- b. They missed them because they thought other things were important.





Too many times we fail to see what is really important. Someone, much wiser than I has said: "We are beginning to realize that there is something fundamentally dangerous rather than merely naive about a man who, while an expert in economics, let us say, muddles along with no religion or with scant regard for it, or with a ten-year old conception of it." What is your reason for neglecting religion? I'll bet it is a good one. You work all week and you have to take care of your home on Sunday. You have no time to yourself except week-ends and you owe it to yourself to have a "day off". You have a beautiful garden and the only time you can work in it is on Sunday. You are all tied up in community activities, lodge activities, with good causes which need your support. Every person who refused to come to the feast in the parable was doing something worthwhile. You see it is not a choice simply between something good and something evil. It is a matter of values, a matter of deciding what good thing is most important. Back in the eighteenth century William Law wrote "A Serious Call To A Devout and Holy Life." In it he said: "Persons that are well affected to religion, that receive instructions of piety with pleasure and satisfaction, often wonder how it comes to pass that they make no greater progress in that religion which they so much admire... Now the reason of it is this; it is because religion lives only in their head, but something else has possession of their heart... If it be asked why religion does not get possession of their hearts, the reason is this: it is not because they live in gross sins... for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders; but it is because their hearts are constantly employed... and kept in a wrong state by the indiscreet use of such things as are lawful to be used... For our souls may receive an infinite hurt, and be rendered incapable of all virtue, merely by the use of innocent and lawful things... Gross sins are plainly seen and easily avoided by persons that profess religion. But the indiscreet and dangerous use of innocent and lawful things... as it does not shock and offend our consciences make it difficult for people to be sensible of the danger." Are you making the right decisions? Will you wake up someday to find that you have missed what is most important.

The second thing I should like to have you notice is that the punishment is not

that we are forced to come to the feast - the punishment is that we are not allowed to come. Rufus Jones puts it well when he says: "Before you know it you are caught in a moving treadmill which carries you on, and little by little the inner walls thicken, and you no longer hear the knocking of the Spirit on the closed door." Nels Ferre characterizes the present day with the phrase: "Small talk, small acts, small lives." And it has all come gradually, imperceptibly, because day after day we have made wrong choices and no one ever stopped us - certainly not life, certainly not God - but now we suddenly discover that the door is closed and we are outside when we should be inside. That is certainly true of friendship. How many times people grow to be old and do not realize that their preoccupation with good things has cost them the friends who could have enriched their later years. That happens in the family - how many times a man is so concerned to provide material things for his family that he misses the great feast of companionship with his family? Are you missing something?

In the third place we must not miss the fact that the values of life are not destroyed because we neglect them. Others go to the feast, others enjoy what we could enjoy. We must remember the teaching here about the persistence of God. John Erskine once said: "The intention of the story is simply to set forth a love which refuses to be discouraged or defeated." Because some of us refuse God's gifts does not mean that God will withdraw these gifts from others. There are certain groups of people who particularly need to hear this word today. Is there a teacher listening to this broadcast - a teacher who is tired and discouraged and a little cynical? You have tried again and again to teach what you believe is true and valuable and necessary. Pupil after pupil has missed the point, has neglected the wisdom, has turned away to something else. You have come to the place where you are saying - well, it's a sort of a living, but I can't do very much, what's the use? Don't say that! Remember the eternal persistence of God, who although men turn from him, never ceases to continue to seek them. Is there a minister listening to this broadcast? You've got the gripe and couldn't take your service today and you are really down. You have tried and tried. You have prepared feast after feast and those who should have come were not there. You of all people should remember that God is never defeated - that God continues to seek. Is there

a leader in some community venture listening to this service? You have expended energy, time, money to do something for your community and so few have responded. Is it worth while? Sure it's worth while. Never forget the persistence of God.

Finally, Jesus pictures fellowship with God as a banquet. Too many times we think of religion only in terms of its demands, its obligations, its responsibilities. Once in a while we should remember that religion has its rewards. The reward of religion is in the real of mind and spirit and bring to us, no matter what our external circumstances, an attitude which will bring us victory. There is an old, old hymn that is not sung much any more that says it so well:

"How tedious and tasteless the hours when Jesus no longer I see!

Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers, have all lost their sweetness to me

The midsummer sun shines but dim, the fields strive in vain to look gay;

But when I am happy in His, December's as pleasant as May.

If you are leaving religion out of your life you are missing something! If you are failing to find joy in your religious faith you are missing something. Religion is a banquet - religion is a feast. If religion is only a casual thing in your life - you are missing something! You found some joy a few weeks ago in Christmas. You do not need to wait for Easter to find more joy. There is a feast waiting for you. Don't miss it!