

I think that the following story has something to say to us about how we might live out the words of today's Scriptures. Michael Green, Anglican priest, and author tells this story in a collection called *Stories for a Faithful Heart*, compiled by Alice May.

*"I read about a missionary candidate in language school. The very first day of class the teacher entered the room and, without saying a word, walked down every row of students. Finally, still without saying a word, she walked out of the room again. Then she came back and addressed the class. "Did you notice anything special about me?" she asked.*

*"Nobody could think of anything in particular. One student finally raised her hand. "I noticed that you had on a very lovely perfume," she said. The class chuckled.*

*"But the teacher said, "That was exactly the point. [It] will be a long time before any of you will be able to speak Chinese well enough to share the gospel with anyone in China. But even before you are able to do that, you can minister the sweet fragrance of Christ to these people by the quality of your lives."*

I suggest that in our texts for today Jesus is calling us to be "living invitations." Lives that are attractive and invite others because they give off the sweet fragrance of kindness, generosity, and compassion.

**PRAY:** That the fragrance of Christ will be ministered through his people so that more people will hear the gracious invitation to the Table.

## FRIDAY MARCH 4

Read: Luke 14: 16-24

I mentioned this in Sunday's sermon, but in my opinion it's important enough to mention here as well. Notice how the parable ends. The host sends his servant with a command and we read the result. Many excuses! Then he sends his servant out a second time with a command. Again, we read the result, people come but there is still more room. So, a third time the host sends out his servant, again with a command, "Go out...so that my house will be full." But this third time no result is given. The parable concludes but we're still left to anticipate the ending. Perhaps that is because the church is still completing the third instruction of the Host. Jesus has called us to "Go out to the highways and byways...until his house is full."

**PRAY:** Pray for a full house!!

## SATURDAY MARCH 5

Read: Luke 14:25-34 in preparation for tomorrow's sermon.

Consider coming to morning prayer today in the sanctuary at 6:00AM.

# WEEKLY DEVOTIONS GUIDE

FEB. 27- MAR. 5, 2011

BY: PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

NEW WEST CRC

**SERIES: A 'TANGIBLE DISPLAY' PEOPLE: JOURNEYING WITH JESUS IN LUKE**

SERMON: "TRUE RESPONSE OF A DISCIPLE: HUMILITY AND CONCERN FOR LITTLE PERSON"

LUKE 14:1-24

PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 27

"In God We Trust (But We'd Rather Pay Cash)" a sermon title from Bryan Wilkinson.

Three movements in today's text, each extending the C\_\_\_\_\_ of the Kingdom and revealing the C\_\_\_\_\_ of the Kingdom.

1. The P\_\_\_\_\_ of the Kingdom. (v.1-6)
2. P\_\_\_\_\_ within the Kingdom (v.7-14)
3. A P\_\_\_\_\_ of the Kingdom (v. 15-24)

Jesus calls us to be \_\_\_\_\_ invitations to a feast that must be \_\_\_\_\_.

**KEY THEME OR TAKE-AWAY:**

## MONDAY FEBRUARY 28

Read: Psalm 46

The psalmist writes, “Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall...” Depending on how old you are you’ve seen the truth of these words played out through many history-shaping events over the last several decades. As I watched the Berlin wall come down in the late ‘80’s and the Twin Towers being destroyed a decade ago, I remember having a deep sense that history books were being rewritten. And it’s happening again in our day. The landscape of a significant portion of the Arab world is being transformed before our very eyes. Dictatorships are crumbling and from the dust new political realities are emerging. Many lives are being lost, especially in the country of Libya. And amidst all the speculation and posturing no one really knows what will emerge.

We wonder how the Lord’s hand is at work in all this, don’t we? In a recent *Globe and Mail* article Patrick Martin quotes Alastair Crooke of the Beirut-based director of Conflicts Forum, “It would be wrong to count out the Islamist movements, as many people are. This is not a post-Islamic era we are embarking on, but a new chapter of Islamism.” Is he correct? No one can be sure. But we can be sure of this: The new chapter will bring significant changes with considerable consequences; and yet, in the midst of this revolution and change, God is on the Throne. “Therefore we will not fear. The Lord Almighty is with us...and our world, the God of Jacob is our fortress.”

**PRAY:** Read vv. 7-10 again, slowly, prayerfully, and insert a time of silence between the first and second phrases of v.10. (If you know the short refrain “Be Still and Know” sing it.) Now, allow God to minister to you in the silence. Then pray for our world, especially the Middle East.

## TUESDAY MARCH 1

Read: Luke 4:16-21; 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:1-6

In Luke the earthly ministry of Jesus begins with a prophetic Sabbath-day announcement. That’s significant. In the life of the Kingdom, Sabbath is more than simply one day of rest, it’s also a way of life. As the Heidelberg Catechism says, when we uphold the practice of Sabbath in our lives we, “rest from our evil ways and let the Lord work in us through his Spirit so that already in this life we may begin the eternal Sabbath.”

There is a strong sense in Luke that Jesus intentionally taught and healed on the Sabbath. As we read these texts we see how the words of ch. 4 are fulfilled in subsequent Sabbath-day ministry. Perhaps the Sabbath compelled Jesus to teach and heal. Through his teaching and healing Jesus

made manifest the power of the Kingdom that the practice of Sabbath was intended to point towards. Jesus’ words and miracles declared that a New Day had come and was coming; the Eternal Sabbath was beginning.

The Light of this New Day however, was exposing an old darkness. The darkness of what had become a dead legalism was being exposed in the Pharisees response. The old order was being threatened as the New Day was breaking in through Jesus Christ. But for many others this New Day, this true Sabbath brought amazement, rejoicing, healing, and deliverance.

As we walk each day with Jesus we are called to rest from our evil ways and allow the Lord’s Spirit to work in us, so that everyday is brightened with the Light of Sabbath.

**PRAY:** Pray that in your life, in your family, in our church community the “eternal Sabbath” will be tangibly displayed to others...every day.

## WEDNESDAY MARCH 2

Read: Isaiah 25: 6-9; Luke 14:15

When Christ returns to judge the living and the dead, when he comes to gather His people to himself, when in power he cleanses the world of all wickedness and evil, when he comes again to make all things new, the Bible invites us to picture a feast. Theologians call it the “eschatological (end-times) banquet.” The story of the Bible begins with a Garden filled with trees bearing delicious and abundant fruit, and it ends (Rev. 19) with the wedding feast of the Lamb. It’s no coincidence that on the eve of his crucifixion, a moment in history when sin would be defeated and life in the Spirit opened up, it’s no coincidence that Jesus hosted a meal. A meal in which his own body and blood was the food and drink. That meal was and remains a preview, a foretaste, a participation in, the end-times banquet that Isaiah writes about, and that Jesus spoke into in Luke 14.

And anyone who receives the food and drink that Christ gives, the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, any sinner that reaches out to Christ for the food of forgiveness and peace, has a place at the feast.

Perhaps you are reading this around the dinner table with others. Have you received the bread and the cup of Christ? Then raise a glass together around your table and give thanks to Jesus for giving you a place.

**PRAY:** If you are sitting around a table with others, bring an empty chair to the table.(If you’re not around a table, picture it in your mind’s eye). Pray for friends and loved ones by name who are not walking with the Lord, that they would find their chair at the Table.

## THURSDAY MARCH 3

Read: Luke 14:12-14; 2 Corinthians 2:12-17