LIFEGROUPS StudyGuide

Things to Talk About and Reflect Upon

"Excuses, Excuses…"

Points from Sunday's Message

Point 1 - God has made everything ready; He asks only that you come.
Point 2 - We can have a valid excuse, but it doesn't mean that it will be excused.
Point 3 - The grace of God bids the unlovely uninvited to come.
Point 4 - Every excuse ends one of two ways: you lay it down, or it keeps you out.

Key Verse:

"But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.'"

—Luke 14:18

Discussion Questions:

1. "A presumptuous beatitude"

Read Luke 14:14–15 and Luke 6:20–21. When Jesus said "blessed," one guest made up a beatitude of his own: "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Pastor Miles called it "a presumptuous beatitude," a statement "expecting the attaboy response from Jesus." Who does Jesus call blessed in Luke 6, and who did the guest assume would be at the table? Where are you tempted to assume your seat with God rather than receive it as a gift?

Further Reading: Matthew 5:3–6; Luke 18:9–14; Isaiah 25:6–9; Revelation 19:9

2. Enchiladas for 30

Miles loves two words in verse 16: "great and many." His wife made "enough enchiladas for 30" for a family of six, and Elliot ate the leftovers all week. Read Luke 14:16–17. What did the host do, and what did he ask the guests to do? Miles said, "The guests, they don't need to bring anything. All they need to do is come." Spurgeon added, "Grace is first, and man at his best follows its footsteps." Why do we find it so hard to come

empty-handed? What does the word “now” in verse 17 say to someone who is waiting for “someday”?

> **Further Reading:** Isaiah 55:1–3; John 6:37; Ephesians 2:8–9; Revelation 22:17

3. “I ask you to have me excused”
Read Luke 14:18–20. A field, five yoke of oxen and a wife: land, work and family, and none of them is a sin. Yet Miles said, “Underneath every excuse was a choice,” and “There’s a value judgment in every single one of these excuses.” The word for “make excuses” shows up in Hebrews 12:25 as “refuse,” so “an excuse is a refusal.” Miles admitted he tells people he’s too busy to speak when the truth is he doesn’t want to. Which good thing in your life is most likely to become your excuse with God?

> **Further Reading:** Hebrews 12:25–29; Deuteronomy 24:5; Luke 9:57–62; Matthew 6:33

4. An excused absence
Miles remembered grade school excuse notes, and his kids’ Tuesday mornings when they’re “kind of sick of school.” His conclusion: “Not every excuse is excusable.” Read Exodus 4:10–13. Moses had reasons, God answered every one, and the real excuse finally came out: “I don’t want to do it. Find somebody else.” Miles said, “Underneath the excuse is an issue of the will.” Name the excuse you have been giving God, whether it’s busyness, church hurt, questions, or “later.” Write it down, and tell one person this week what you will do with it.

> **Further Reading:** Exodus 3:10–12; Jonah 1:1–3; James 4:13–17; Luke 14:25–33

5. Still there is room
Read Luke 14:21–23 and 2 Samuel 9:7, 13. The master sends his servant out quickly for the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind. “That’s you and me,” Miles said, and it’s strange “that we get a place at the table because those who should have been there would not come.” Like Mephibosheth, we eat at the King’s table for someone else’s sake. Miles said “compel” means that we “beg and plead” as ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20), not that we force anyone. Spurgeon wrote, “Words and tears are the arms with which gospel ministers compel men to come in.” Who pleaded with you before you came to Christ? Who is one person you will invite again this week?

> **Further Reading:** Matthew 22:1–10; Romans 10:13–15; 1 Corinthians 1:26–29; Jude 22–23

6. No rain check
Read Luke 14:24 and 2 Corinthians 6:1–2. Miles said, “God’s invitation doesn’t come with a rain check,” and “The only thing that kept them out was their excuse, their refusal.” God’s grace pleads, but it doesn’t force: “It can be refused.” D. L. Moody’s last message, 127 years ago this week, was on this parable, and his last word was, “Don’t

make an excuse." If you have never come to Christ, "your excuse is the only thing between you and the seat that He already paid for." If you have, what excuse is keeping you from following Him in some area, or from going out to the highways and hedges for someone else? Lay it down together in prayer, using Matthew 11:28.

Further Reading: Luke 13:24–30; Deuteronomy 30:19–20; Hebrews 3:7–15; Matthew 11:28–30

Use these blended questions for deeper personal reflection, prayer, or small group discussion.