

April 6, 2025

Fifth Sunday in Lent: Christ Collides with Our Need to Be Polite!

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

Office: (970) 658-2623 Cell: 970-412-7510



LENT: CHRIST COLLIDES

This Lent we will explore some of Jesus’ parables. It has been said that the origin of the word parable is two things that collide. In many parables, Jesus intentionally means to shock by using stark contrasts, reversals of fortune, humor, and surprise endings. Often we encounter his teachings colliding with our own assumptions and what is considered the “conventional wisdom” of our world.

1. GATHERING

Prelude

Call to Worship (Steve)

One: As we worship, Christ collides with our need to always be polite.

Many: Yet we want to know you and follow you fully, O Christ.

One: Are you truly willing to be hospitable with those who cannot pay you back?

Many: Yes, we will invite the poor to come in and eat with us.

One: Jesus, help us then to go out into the streets and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame to be our dinner guests.

Many: In similar fashion, Jesus, show us mercy and welcome us to your banquet!

All: Jesus, out of your healing love, show us your mercy.

Congregational Singing

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

“It is more comfortable for me, in the long run, to be rude than polite.” — Wyndham Lewis (author)

“Rude contact with facts chased my visions and dreams quickly away, and in their stead I beheld the horrors, the corruption, the evils and hypocrisy of society, and as I stood among them, a young wife, a great wail of agony went out from my soul.” — Victoria Woodhull (American activist)

Confession and Words of Assurance (Steve)

All: *Loving and merciful God, we confess that we have once again “missed the target” and failed to do what you have called us to do.*

One: We have not loved you with all our thoughts, words, and actions.

Many: We “missed the target” with what we have chosen to do and in what we have chosen to neglect.

One: We have not fully accepted your love for us. We have not loved our poorest neighbors as we love ourselves.

Many: We go around giving deference to the wealthy and powerful rather than to the poor and powerless whom you love deeply.

(How have you missed opportunities to invite the poor into your life this past week?)

All: We repent before each other and before you, our loving God. Please help us open our hearts to your love. Help us walk with the poor, open eyes and hearts so we may better share your peace in your world, rejoicing in your name. Amen.

Leader: Now hear these words of assurance: God tells us that we are created in God’s image. God created us for relationship with God and each other. In this, we know that God will never break our relationship. God’s steadfast love endures forever.

2. HEARING GOD’S WORD

Scriptures: Luke 14 (selected verses)

Luke 14:1 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. 2 Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, "Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?" 4 But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him...

7 When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; 9 and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, "Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place...

12 He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay

you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

16 Then Jesus said to him, "Someone gave a great dinner and invited many. 17 At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, "Come; for everything is ready now.' 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, "I have bought a piece of land, and I must go out and see it; please accept my regrets.' 19 Another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please accept my regrets.' 20 Another said, "I have just been married, and therefore I cannot come.'

21 So the slave returned and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and said to his slave, "Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 22 And the slave said, "Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.' 23 Then the master said to the slave, "Go out into the roads and lanes, and compel people to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those who were invited will taste my dinner.'"

Sermon: “How To Be a Very Rude Guest!”

Jesus Collides With Our Need to be Polite

Every society has its clear norms of behavior for both party hosts and guests. Jesus seems to often intentionally collide with many of those expectations. This morning’s parable seems to be encouraging both rude guests and unconventional hosts.

3. RESPONDING TO GOD’S WORD

Congregational Singing

Response

Joys and Concerns

Offering & Music

Sending (Steve)

When necessary go ahead and be rude to the rich. After all they can take care of themselves. But be kind, generous, and overly hospitable to the poor and weak. Because when you do that, you will remind yourself, and others, that the poor and weak too, are very dear to God.