

Luke 14:7-18 (New International Version)

⁷ When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable:

⁸ "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.

⁹ If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place.

¹⁰ But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests.

¹¹ For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

¹² Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid.

¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,

¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

¹⁵ When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

¹⁶ Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.

¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

¹⁸ "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

Luke 14:22-24

²² "Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

²³ "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.

²⁴ I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

Good Morning, First Baptist Members and Friends. David said, I was glad when they said unto me let us go into the house of the Lord. Being able to worship ought to make you glad. Being able to get up and get here ought to make you glad. Being able to have another opportunity to do something for God ought to make you glad. If you are glad this morning I invite you to make some noise for the God who continues to bless, provide and transform. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!!

On last Sunday I blended two sermons together and worked with the theme:

**I PLAN TO LIVE FOR JESUS IN 2014
HOW DO I DO IT?**

I ended that sermon by declaring that in order to truly live for Jesus we need to learn **and** show

**THREE TYPES OF LOVE
RADICAL LOVE
TOUGH LOVE
POWERFUL LOVE**

Radical Love – loving your enemies and unlovable people

Tough Love - praying for those who misuse you

Powerful Love – denying yourself in order to help others

I suggested that we could not love in the way Jesus would have us to love unless we did two things:

**Do unto to others, as you would have them do to you
and stay connected to your source of power
Jesus the Christ.**

I have two more sermons I wish to preach on **how we ought to live in light of the fact that we have a Saviour**. As I told you last week the theme for this morning is:

**M. A. D. FOR JESUS
Making a Difference for Jesus**

When I first began to consider this title I only thought about it being third Sunday and the Kingdom Seekers being in charge of the Music. I did not look at the liturgical calendar and realize this would be the second Sunday after Epiphany (Epiphany is the celebration of when the wise men came to see Jesus in some churches and in other churches it is the celebration of the Jesus' baptism. But Epiphany is also a word that describes a certain insight or revelation – it is when the light bulb goes on in our minds.) I did not consider the federal holiday calendar and realize that this is the Sunday before MLK Jr Day. Nor did I think about that within many churches this Sunday is also called Beloved Community Sunday. I was clearly focused on finding ways to bring home the point that living for Jesus may require some of us to make some changes in 2014. So I am amazed that the topic that I have had in my mind for the past two weeks fits with the religious calendar, the federal calendar and the African American Lectionary calendar.

I invite you to pray with me and for me as together we consider:

M. A. D. FOR JESUS
Making a Difference for Jesus

SHALL WE PRAY! Bread of Heaven, Awesome Ruler, Jesus, Son of a Living God we come this morning asking that you allow us into your presence. We need to hear from you, we need to feel you moving in our hearts and our heads. We need to be transformed inside out and outside in until we can't stop ourselves from telling someone that you are the Living Word and you want to be in relationship with us. I ask that you move me out of the way and allow your Spirit to speak through me. Let something I say make someone M.A.D for Jesus. We ask this and more in the name of Jesus the Christ. AMEN and AMEN.

M. A. D. FOR JESUS
Making a Difference for Jesus

Last week during Adult Bible Study we considered the question of what could we do to maintain the light of hope, the light of peace and the light of

_____ . We talked about how hard it is for one person without a public office or a lot of power to make a difference. I suggested that we continue to teach so that someone coming behind us might decide to get involved. Someone else suggested that prayer was the answer, God's people needed to pray for the changes they wished to see in the world. I believe that both answers are correct. Yet as I continued to think about the discussion I had an Epiphany.

We have each been charged with the responsibility to make a difference in the world. When we decided to follow Jesus, when we accepted

***²³ For the wages of sin is death,
but the gift of God
is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23)***

when we accepted that the Great Commission

***¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.***

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

was not just for disciples of the 1st century but for all disciples everywhere until Jesus returns we agreed to live our lives making a difference.

In the 2014 we stand on the shoulders of ordinary men and women who decided to make a difference. Gandhi and Mother Teresa in India, Mandela in South Africa, and of course Rosa Parks and MLK Jr in America. Ordinary people, who looked at the situations in which they were called to live and understood, that those situations of injustice were not what God had in mind. And they decided that they could do something about it.

That was my Epiphany! I might not, we might not, be able to start a movement but if we decide to get M.A.D for Jesus we can make a difference.

The parable of the Great Banquet that is included in our text this morning provides an opportunity for each of us to think about the invitation and the banquet in terms that make sense to us. We can think about it as any famous rich person we know preparing a meal and inviting us to attend.

But what if we think about it as an invitation to DWJD and live like we have a Saviour. Look again at the passage beginning with verse 16.

¹⁶ Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

This is Jesus inviting us to follow HIM

¹⁸ "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

**This is us making an excuse for why we cannot come.
my new house, new car, new opportunity**

¹⁹ "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

This is us going to test drive our car, our new skateboard, our...

²⁰ "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

This is us on our social network, our social life, our social commitments

²¹ "The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

**Jesus inviting those who may not have heard the invitation before
Sending us, His servants to do the inviting**

²² "Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

²³ "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.

Jesus is still inviting because there is still room.

*My Father's house has many rooms;
if that were not so,
would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you?
(John 14:2)*

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

I believe that Dr. King heard this call. A call had been issued before and others had answered but this time the call was for MLK Jr and he answered, for the work he was to do was the work Jesus had called him to do – get MAD for Jesus. I believe that only a man who had heard from heaven could write these words.

The end of life is not to be happy, nor to achieve pleasure and avoid pain,
but to do the will of God, come what may."
— Martin Luther King Jr.

"Use me, God. Show me how to take who I am, who I want to be, and what I can do, and use it for a purpose greater than myself."
— Martin Luther King Jr.

"If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as a Michaelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that all the hosts of heaven and earth will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"— Martin Luther King Jr.

How will I live in 2014? With Radical, Tough and Powerful Love – M. A. D. for Jesus – until He comes again.

Is there anyone who will join me?