

**Notes from Sermon given by Ian Stackhouse – February 11<sup>th</sup> 2007**  
**Isaiah 25 v 6-12 & Luke 14 v15-24**

## **The Great Banquet**

Excuses are made for many things such as excuses for not going to Church

- The preacher moves around too much
- There are not enough good looking men
- I work 6 days and the 7<sup>th</sup> belongs to me
- There are too many sinners

In the passage from Luke the people invited by the man Jesus referred to come up with weak excuses. For instance who buys a field without seeing it first and who buys oxen without checking them out? The excuses are made because those invited just don't want to go to the great banquet. In fact the excuses are an insult to the host.

The host therefore ignores those who have refused and sends the servant to bring the poor the crippled, the blind and the lame. This shows that the great banquet is for the burnt out, the bedraggled and the beaten up, those who are not too proud to received God's grace. We should note that in the following passage in Luke that Jesus challenges his disciples to put him first before parents, spouse and children; the gospel demands everything of us.

The kingdom of God belongs to the least, the last, the lost, the lonely... We need to remember that no-one is indispensable to God as shown by the passage in Luke where those who declined the invite were bypassed. God is not dependent or indebted to us.

Church is not a social club where we are rated on what we can offer or who we are; it is a place where we are what we are in that we are loved by the grace of God. The excuse "I don't go to Church because there are too many sinners" is no excuse as that what the Church is; a group of sinners. You will never find your identity in money and status, as it is God's love that makes us accepted. It is God's grace that frees us from those things that can ensnare. We are broken as anyone else within the Church that needs to welcome the broken and ragamuffins.