



Bible Study—Episode 3: “Welcome” with Rex Jones

This accompaniment Bible study was created to be used after listening to each podcast episode. Each episode has a Bible story and questions that can be used with any age group.

Bible Text: Luke 14:12–24 (NRSV)

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.

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

And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

One of the dinner guests, on hearing this, said to him, “Blessed is anyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!”

Then Jesus said to him, “Someone gave a great dinner and invited many.

At the time for the dinner he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’

But they all alike began to make excuses...

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.’

And the slave said, ‘Sir, what you ordered has been done, and there is still room.’

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.’”

Framing the Story for the Group

In this passage, Jesus tells a story about a dinner party—but it’s not really about food. It’s about who belongs.

In the ancient world, banquets were about status. You invited people who could elevate your reputation or repay you later. But Jesus flips the script. He describes a host who invites those who cannot repay him. And when the “important” guests decline, the invitation expands even further.

Notice the line: **“There is still room.”**

The kingdom of God is not a private dinner party. It’s a table with expanding leaves. It stretches to make room for those overlooked, ignored, or underestimated.

Why This Story Matters for Listening to Youth

Young people often experience church as guests instead of hosts. They are welcomed into programs—but not always into decision-making, leadership, or shaping the culture.

- This story reminds us:
- Welcome is not passive; it is intentional.
- Real welcome costs something.
- There is always more room.
- The kingdom expands beyond our comfort zones.

Listening to youth means asking:

Are they just invited to sit at the table—or are they helping set it?

Discussion Questions

Noticing the Story

1. What surprises you in this story?
2. Who is initially invited? Who ends up being welcomed?
3. What excuses do the first guests give?
4. What emotions do you hear in the host’s response?
5. What does “there is still room” communicate about God’s heart?

Youth-Focused Reflection

1. When have you felt truly welcomed somewhere? What made it real?
2. Have you ever felt like an afterthought instead of a priority?
3. In church, do you feel more like a guest or a host? Why?
4. What would make church feel more genuinely welcoming to young people?
5. Who do you think is missing from our “table”?
6. Optional Activity: Invite youth to redesign the “church banquet.” What would it look like? Who would be invited? What would change?

Adult-Focused Reflection

1. How do we define “welcome” in our congregation?
2. Where might we confuse friendliness with true belonging?
3. What excuses do we sometimes make when change feels uncomfortable?
4. Who do we unconsciously prioritize at the table?
5. How can we move from inviting youth to empowering youth?

Shared Reflection

1. What does it mean for our church to say, “There is still room”?
2. Who are the people on the margins in our context?
3. What systems or traditions might unintentionally keep people out?
4. What is one specific action we can take to widen the table this month?
5. How can youth and adults practice welcome together?
6. Optional Action Step: Choose one concrete act of welcome (youth-led worship element, shared leadership role, community meal planned by youth and adults, inviting someone new intentionally) and commit to it.

Prayer

Hospitable God, you set a table that stretches farther than we can see. You invite the overlooked, the uncertain, the hesitant, and the hopeful. Forgive us when we shrink the table to fit our comfort. Forgive us when we confuse politeness with true belonging. Teach us to notice who is missing. Give us courage to widen the circle. Help our young people know they are not just invited— they are essential. Fill this community with your Spirit until there is always room, always grace, always welcome. In Jesus’ name, Amen.