

Fill My House

Luke 14:16-24 New American Standard Bible (NASB 1995)

¹⁶ But He said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; ¹⁷ and at the dinner hour 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 one said to him, ‘I have bought piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ ¹⁹ Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’ ²⁰ Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’ ²¹ And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ ²² And the slave said, ‘Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ ²³ And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that **my house may be filled**.’ ²⁴ For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.”

Introduction

Sometime in the fall last year, I was praying about this year’s goal for our congregation. The Lord impressed on my heart about ‘Filling His House’ with people using today’s text.

After that, I continued praying about the idea of filling God’s house with people for worship, fellowship, and ministry (which I am going to share with you throughout the year).

I believe we can fill God’s House with three things. With People. With Prayer. and With Praise. In turn, God will fill His House with His presence, His glory, truth, and light. Let’s go over them one by one.

1. Fill His House with People.

Let me take you back to today’s parable. The master invited his friends to come to his banquet but all of them didn’t come for various excuses. Notice here that the excuses these men gave weren’t for ‘sinful’ activities. They weren’t out committing crimes; they were managing property, tending to their business, and celebrating a marriage. These are all good things—blessings, even. But here is the challenge for us today: the greatest enemy of the ‘best’ is often the ‘good.’ Often, it isn’t ‘bad’ things that keep us from God’s house, but the ‘good’ things—our careers, our hobbies, and our family obligations—that we have allowed to take the wrong priority. When we become so preoccupied with God’s blessings so that we have no time for the Giver himself, we have missed the heart of the invitation.

So, the master commanded his servant to *Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame*. Even with that, there was still room. This time, the master commanded his servant *‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.’* Let’s pay attention to the master’s words. His desire is clear: he wants his house filled—with anyone willing to come.

The lesson? The invitation to the Gospel will be rejected by some people in the world, but we ought not to be discouraged with their rejection. Christ commands us to still go out into the streets and bring in everyone we meet. Even after we do that, there will be still more room.

And Jesus used the word “compel” them to come in. So that His house may be filled. Why does God compel people to come in? Not that He is harsh and insensitive. Nor that He doesn’t respect our free will. But that God is a host who loves a full table. Also, that He knows how much it is worth the Gospel. And because of what He has done for us in Christ. He sent His only begotten Son to the cross to redeem us from our iniquities. To forgive our sins. To include everyone in salvation and in His kingdom. And to have us forever present in His presence.

Let us ask God to fill our hearts with such conviction that this Gospel is too precious not to share with others. Compel them—not by pressure, but by love, conviction, and joyful urgency. Later, they will appreciate our insistence. E.g., Friend of mine doggedly shared the Gospel with his unchurched friend. At first, the unbelieving friend rejected but, in the end, after he became a believer, he truly appreciated his friend’s relentless efforts to bring him to Christ. Let’s remember: Gospel is worth sharing, because it matters eternally to all people. Let us also remember that we do not share the gospel to grow numbers, but because we have been loved first. God’s love compels us to share the Gospel. Let us fill God’s house with people.

2. **Fill His House with Prayer** (Luke 19:46, Matthew 21:13).

If we fill God’s house with people, what must sustain them once they come? Prayer. If people fill God’s house, prayer keeps them rooted.

One day, Jesus went to the temple in Jerusalem and cleaned up the court. He overturned tables and chairs of merchants. Sellers of animals and money changers. Although they were a convenient arrangement for pilgrims who came afar to worship the Lord in God’s house, Jesus reminded the worshipers one important thing: Fill my house with prayer, not with commercialism.

When Jesus overturned the tables in the Temple, He wasn't just protesting the sale of animals; He was protesting the noise that drowned out the Spirit. The courtyard had become a place of transaction rather than transformation. If we are honest, we often bring our own 'tables' into this sanctuary. We bring the 'noise' of our to-do lists, the 'transactional' mindset that says, 'I'll give God an hour today so He will give me a good week,' and the 'commercialism' of a busy life that leaves no room for silence. Filling this house with prayer means more than just speaking words; it means clearing away the clutter of our schedules and the noise of our anxieties to make room for a genuine encounter with the Living God. We must move from a 'checklist faith' to a 'presence-focused faith.'

Reality check. Have you ever considered to fill our sanctuary with your prayers? Do you pray every day to fill our church with your prayers? When you come into the sanctuary, do you spend a few moments in prayer? Each time you do, imagine that you are filling every corner of the sanctuary with your prayers. When everyone of us does that, we will clearly see and experience the difference in our worship on Sunday morning and every time we get together here in this sanctuary.

As for me, not only I fill the sanctuary with my daily prayers, but I also fill every room with prayers: downstairs, offices and classrooms, restrooms, Sunday school classrooms in the basement, Fellowship Hall, and the entire church premise with my prayers. I do this because I believe prayer isn't just something we **do** in a room; it's something we **leave** in a room. E.g., Every time I enter a new place, silently I pray for God's peace to dwell in that place. Afterward, I always experience His peace while I stay in. Let's fill God's house with our prayers, and we will enjoy His presence and peace.

3. Fill His House with Praise

2 Chronicles 5 describes how King Solomon completed the Temple and brought the Ark of the Covenant into the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies) with great ceremony, sacrifices, and the unified worship of priests and Levites. As the people praised the Lord with one voice for His goodness and everlasting lovingkindness, the glory of the Lord filled the temple in the form of a cloud, so powerfully that the priests could not continue their service.

Now, listen to the rest of the story (2 Chronicles 5:11-14).

“¹¹ When the priests came forth from the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to divisions), ¹² and all the Levitical singers,..., clothed in fine linen,... and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets ¹³ in unison... and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and when they praised the Lord saying, “He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,” then... the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud, ¹⁴ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.”

What did the people of God do before the glory of the Lord filled the house of God? They lifted up their voice and praised the Lord saying, *“He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”* Their praise and worship filled the house of the Lord with a cloud and with His glory. Folks, let us pray that the Lord will fill this sanctuary with His glory and presence. But, before we expect that to happen, there’s one thing we must do: fill God’s house with our praise.

Typically, we think of praise as singing hymns. But it doesn’t stop there. Any words of joys and praises that lift up God’s name among us. Any actions or good deeds we do in God’s house that also will glorify God among us.

But Scripture not only shows us how God fills His house—it also warns us what causes His glory to depart. It is worthwhile to mention one case in the Bible where God’s glory departed from God’s temple. In other words, we don’t want to bring this to God’s house in any time. That was idol worship among God’s people. Praise invites God’s presence, but our private 'idols'—the things we value more than Him—can create a barrier to God’s glory and presence.

In a vision, Prophet Ezekiel saw the glory of God departing from His temple (Ezekiel 10:18): *“¹⁸ Then the glory of the Lord departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim.”*

Then, he also heard from the Lord why He departed from His temple: because of Israel’s sin, mainly idolatry, worshiping other gods. Later, the same Lord promised to return to His Temple when His people put away their idolatry (Ezekiel 43:9). Let us make sure that we don’t bring any idol worship, jealousy, injustice, or violence (Ezekiel 8) into God’s house and into our hearts.

Conclusion

Brief recap:

God calls us to fill His house—with people, prayer, and praise.

When we do, God fills His house with His presence and glory.

Let us be a church that invites all people, prays faithfully, and praises joyfully—so that God’s house may be filled with His glory.

Let us pray.

Gracious God, Master of the Great Banquet, we thank You that there is always room at Your table for us.

Father, we ask for a fresh conviction. Help us to see the 'good things' in our lives that have become distractions, and give us the courage to put You first. Give us a heart for our neighbors, that we might joyfully compel them to join us here. Purify this sanctuary, Lord—overturn the tables of our agenda and our checklists, and make Your church a house of prayer.

And finally, Lord, we lift our voices in one accord. We praise You because You are good. We praise You for Your everlasting lovingkindness. As we fill this house with our worship, we pray that You would fill it with Your glory—just as You did for Solomon, and just as You did for the Early church. Let Your light shine through us to this community.

In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. **Amen.**

Action Points

Folks, the Master's table is set, and the invitation is open. This year, we are not just maintaining a building; we are building a dwelling place for the Most High.

I challenge you today:

- **Fill this house with People:** Think of that one person you've been hesitant to invite. Compel them with your love and your story of what Christ has done for you.
- **Fill this house with Prayer:** Don't let these walls be silent. Let them be saturated with your cries, your intercessions, and your quiet moments of communion with God.
- **Fill this house with Praise:** Let us cast aside our idols of 'busy-ness' and 'self-reliance' and lift a unified voice that says, 'He is good, and His mercy endures forever.'

As we do our part to fill this house with our devotion, God will do His part—He will fill this place with His presence, His truth, and His transforming glory.

Amen.