

# Party!

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let me ask you a question, okay? Can you be holy and still enjoy your life? Okay? Can you be holy, like kind of really holy, like kind of really serious about God, and enjoy your life?

You see, I met a guy who, John, as a non-Christian, he said to me, I believe Christianity is true, but I can't become a Christian because I'd have to give up sleeping with my girlfriend.

That's what he said. I met another lady, we'll call her Pam. She's a Christian. She said, I'm worried about getting too serious about my faith because Christians who are serious about their faith have like this whole list of things they shouldn't do.

And I want to have fun, so I don't want to get too serious. I know it's true, but I don't want to get too involved. And with both of those kind of people, and that may be even some of you here today, I know it's definitely been me at times, the implication is if I follow God too seriously, if I get too holy, in inverted commas, then that's going to restrict my life in some way.

It's like saying kind of, come and be a Christian and amputate your leg, and it will be fun. You know, that's not very appealing. But we're looking at this series in Deuteronomy, and this series in Deuteronomy is how God has brought the people of Israel to the promised land, this land of incredible blessing.

[ 1 : 38 ] And Moses is giving a final pep talk before they're going in. And what he's going to say is, this is, I've saved you. This is how I want you to live now as my people in this land. And around you, there's going to be a whole load of people.

And when they look at you, if you keep following me, they're going to see something so attractive, so intriguing. You're going to be this holy people to me that people are going to want to say, who's the God that you follow?

Because there's something about you which is different. That's what Deuteronomy is really about. And today, I want to look in three things at how God wants to make us these kind of holy people who can enjoy life with Him.

So we're going to talk about tithe, party, and invite. Okay? Tithe, party, invite. Simple. So have your bulletin with me, open with me.

And look at verse 22. It says, Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce every year.

[ 2 : 43 ] Okay? Basically, this says, Tithe. Okay? Now, we have a lot of misconceptions about what tithing is. So I want to give you a little bit of background to help you to understand what's going on in this context.

Okay? I want you to picture this. It's a farming community. Okay? Not much of that goes on in Hong Kong. But this is a farming community, and your income is to produce what you get. So what you get from the land, there's no welcome or park and shop.

Okay? Everything you get for your life, your wealth comes from your land. And so giving away the tithe, and the tithe simply meant tenth, was a part of giving away the very thing that was sustaining your life.

And there were three types of tithe. I don't know if you knew that. There were three types of tithe. One tithe was called the priest's tithe. Basically, it went to the Levites, who were kind of like the church staff of the time.

They made sure the religious system was working well. Okay? That's one tithe. There was a second tithe, which was a party tithe. And this goes to kind of having this amazing family meal together.

[ 3 : 47 ] We're going to talk a bit more about this later. And the third tithe was the tithe, what I call the poor tithe. It's basically every three years, you were to give so that those who had no access to the land, who weren't landowners, could benefit and be blessed.

Okay? And scholars kind of debate whether these tithes were three completely separate tithes, because if they are, they add up to about 23% of income. Okay? And even if they're not necessarily all completely different, what we know from another parallel passage, Deuteronomy 12, is this, that the Israelites would not just bring the tithe.

They'd also got to bring burnt offerings, sacrifices, special gifts, free will gifts, and even your firstborn cow and sheep. Okay? So, what's happening, Old Testament believers didn't give just 10%.

Okay? They didn't give 10%. They gave far more than that. So, what's going on? Imagine the scene. Okay? There's your average Israelite. Let's call him Ian. Okay? Ian the Israelite.

So, he would be going, one time a year, he'd go up with his donkey, and on his donkey would be olive oil, wheat, bottles of Chardonnay, lamb chops, beef steaks. He'd take them all up with him to the place of worship, which later on would become the temple in Jerusalem.

[ 5 : 06 ] Okay? And he'd do all of this, and he'd bring it all, and he'd give it there as worship to the priest. And he'd do it with his whole family was there, and the whole community was there, and it was this great festival.

I mean, it looked like a mix between, just picture the scene. You've got all these animals, everything. It was more like a mix between a farm, a slaughterhouse, a butcher's, and a festival. It wasn't a nice church service. Okay? This was a fun, exciting activity. And God commands this. Okay? Which is a little weird.

Why does God command this kind of bringing of everything up to the temple? Well, in the culture around, tithing wasn't unusual. Okay? Other people, other than the nations around them, also did tithes, but they were actually more like a government tax.

Okay? So, just to kind of keep the administration running. And you know how we love taxes. Right? Um, you know, because with taxes, you're always thinking, can I find a loophole to pay less?

[ 6 : 11 ] Right? What's the minimum amount I can get away with? I mean, just ask Donald Trump, Lionel Messi, anyone storing their money in the Cayman Islands, or Mossack Fonseca. Okay?

We're all, taxes are not our fun favorite thing to do. Right? You know, this year, I actually got, I got two tax bills. I got the first tax bill, came through, and it said, \$365.

And I was like, yes! I then got a second tax bill. Which wasn't \$365. And said, oh, the last tax bill was just making up what you didn't pay last year.

Here's the real one. And I went, no. Because, it's my hard-earned money, and they're taking it before I can even enjoy it. Right?

That's tithing as tax. But Israel was to be different. Their tithing wasn't a tax. The difference was, their God wasn't the government.

[ 7 : 12 ] Their God was the one who was the source of all their material blessings. And so when God tells the people, I want you to come and give this, it's a call to, a couple of things, it's a call to perspective, and it's a call to joy.

To actually enjoy. Perspective, he's calling people to recognize, everything you've got, everything you've got, is a gracious gift from God.

You know, the act of giving, it says in verse 24, you have been blessed by the Lord your God. You know, if you have nothing to give, right? You have nothing to give.

You haven't been given anything. If you've been given something, you have something to give. And so, when you looked in your bank account, or your barn, as it would have been, and you're then sorting out, okay, I'm going to give a tenth of this, it's this reminder, I've been blessed, with enough that I can give.

And you know, the temptation, when you kind of hold on to your money, is always to think, for them it would have been, my great agricultural techniques, have got all of this stuff in this barn.

[ 8 : 19 ] Aren't I great? I deserve to keep this for myself. And it's really interesting, the richer you are, often the less tax you pay.

Do you notice that? Like, think of Google, Apple, Amazon, in fact, most large countries, they're all trying to get out of paying tax. Because when we feel like we've got something, and we're not free to give, we always feel like we want to hold on.

And what happens is this, when you give, it unlocks gratitude. And gratitude releases joy.

You know, Jesus says, it's more blessed, that means happy, fulfilled, content to give, than to receive. And we know that. You know when you give a present, and you see the joy in somebody's

face, when they give it.

That is actually more satisfying, than just getting it yourself, than after a day or so, kind of wanting another one. Right? You see, I've seen, when your hearts just want to hold on to things for ourselves, we become entitled.

[ 9 : 27 ] I've seen a mom, slaving in the kitchen, cooking dinner, and a child's waiting for her to bring her food, telling her, hurry up. I've seen this. And then she brings it, and the only comment the child makes was, okay, you can go now.

And you know, sometimes, I've also seen it where, you know, they've produced all this food for you, and then there's complaints, that there wasn't enough dessert. And there weren't enough potatoes, or rice, or pasta, or they wanted something else.

Right? Have you seen that? Have you been that person? Yeah? You see, what happens when you feel entitled to something, you don't express gratitude for it, and you don't notice how much you've been given, and how much you're blessed with.

But what, and you know, entitled people are always complaining. You notice that? They're never happy. And when God says, I want you to give, what he's saying is, I want your heart to recognize how much I've given to you.

And out of gratitude, give back a portion, out of appreciation, because that's going to release your heart from entitlement. Because you see, everything you have is gift.

[ 10 : 41 ] You know, kids who always want to keep the toys for themselves, always feel hard done by, when they've kind of got to let go of it. But the ones who are generous, there's a contentment about them, when they let others share with it.

So God's saying, if you want to enjoy, as part of God's holy people, you've got to give. But let me, let me just kind of give a little, um, proviso on this.

This is the Old Testament, right? This is the Old Testament. So should New Testament Christians tithe? What do you think? Should you give 10% to the church or to anything?

Well, the New Testament has no command for you to tithe. There isn't a command for you to tithe. Did you know that? Here's what Tim Keller, Pastor Tim Keller says.

People have often asked me, you don't think now in the New Testament, believers are required to give away 10%, do you? And he says, I shake my head and say no. And they give a sigh of relief.

[ 11 : 54 ] But then I quickly add, I'll tell you why you don't see the tithing requirement laid out in the New Testament. Think. Have we received more of God's revelation, truth, and grace than Old Testament believers or less?

Usually there's an uncomfortable silence. Are we more debtors to grace than they were or less? Did Jesus tithe his life and blood to save us or did he give it all?

He says, tithing is a minimum standard for Christian believers. We certainly wouldn't want to be in a position of giving away less of our income than those who had so much less of an understanding of what God did to save them.

What he's saying is this. You don't need to tithe. But if that's a relief to you, then you've never understood what giving is all about, what the tithing was meant to be about.

The New Testament says again and again, when the gospel works in your life, when you realize how much God has given you, then that always bears the fruit of generosity, whether that's to the church, whether that's to your family, whether that's to the poor around you, whether that's to gospel ministry like with Amelia, it always responds with that because God loves a cheerful giver.

[ 13 : 09 ] You know, some of us give, and I can put my hand in this category, but we're miserable givers, because we see giving as like a tax that we kind of want to get out of, but we've got to do because that's what we've got to do.

But you don't understand that when you give, God's saying, I want to release joy to you, to release you from entitlement, to see how much I have given you, and it to be a blessing.

Gospel generosity and gratitude are like an inseparable married couple. You can't have one without the other. Okay. So let me ask you the challenge. Are you in a regular rhythm of giving?

Whether it's to the church, whether it's to anything outside, whether it's the poor, whether it's those things. If you're not, you may be missing out on joy in Christ. But if you are, can I ask you, how often do you give thanks that you can give?

I find this convicting. How often do I give thanks every time I go to give, whoever I'm giving to?

Because what God wants to do, if you want to find that pleasure in the grace of God, get in the habit

of every time you give, give thanks that He's been so generous to you.

[14:30] And when you start doing that, you'll begin to see His grace and His love in your life in new and exciting ways. Gratitude is a beautiful thing.

But this isn't a sermon just about money. Because the holy people give, but the holy people do something else. They also party.

I love this. I haven't heard many sermons on partying. But this is great. Because giving is not just here about our joy. This giving, this tithe, was about building a God-centered community together. Okay? Look in verse 23. Eat the tithe of your corn, new wine, and olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His name, so that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always.

Did you see what he said? Eat. Did you get that? That's a command. Okay? Eat, he says. And he says, eat all this great stuff, like lamb chops, steaks.

[15:46] You know, think of all this large amount of stuff that Ian, the Israelite, is bringing up. They're taking up. They give it to the priest. And then as a portion, he says, now, the priest gives some back to them and says, now go and have fun.

Go and have fun. He says, basically, enjoy this in the presence of God. Enjoy it. Okay? I didn't know if you've had that command before. But, and he says, if you've got too much stuff to take, like, you're thinking, I need a degree in logistics to be able to bring all this stuff up to Jerusalem.

He says, basically, change it into money. Verse 26, spend the money to buy plain congee. Is that what he says? He says, spend the money to buy whatever you like.

Okay? Wagyu beef in truffle sauce, rosemary crusted lamb chops, marinated in red wine, chocolate pudding, whatever, anything your heart desires.

Anything you wish. It says, literally, that means whatever your soul asks for. Okay? Whatever your soul asks for. And he says, then you and your household, eat there in the presence of the Lord your God, and rejoice.

[16:56] What's he saying? He's saying, meals are about belonging and strengthening yourself as part of a community.

And this community is a community that God is wanting you to find joy in. I, I visited India once.

And, it was an amazing experience. It was just a great time.

But, we, when I was in India, we had curry three times a day. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I know, Vijay, you're, you can tell me afterwards.

But, after a few days, I have to admit, I just never wanted to see another curry in my life. I mean, it was good curry, but, like, three times a day.

You know, I like my muesli. And, I was salivating over the thought of having anything that wasn't curry. When I, when I got back home, to the UK, I enter the house of my door, and I could smell, a roast lamb dinner cooking.

[18:03] And, you know what? I knew I was home. Because, food, is one of those things that make you know that you're home. Right? That you belong.

That you're welcome. It binds you together as a family. Like, so many of my Hong Kong friends. Do you know, I've asked them, how do you know your mom loves you? And, they say, because she makes chicken soup for me.

there is something, very powerful, about food, which brings you together, brings a sense of welcome, belonging, and closeness.

And, God has designed it like that. And, when God says, I want you to eat, and rejoice together in my presence. You see, it's in his presence.

It's not just together. It's a worship experience. I want you to taste, experience a taste of what it's like to be at home with me. To be at home with me.

[19:02] Together as my family with me. I want you not just to hear about my love from a sermon. I actually want you to literally taste my love for you.

In a meal. Every day. And, that's one of the reasons why, as a church, we want to have a regular rhythm of eating together.

Did you know? That's, it's, it's one of the reasons why we have community lunches. It's one of the reasons why we have food in our community groups. Food, food, binds, unites, is a worshipful, can be a worshipful experience when you're doing it for the glory of God.

With gratitude in your heart. Thanking him for what he's given you. Some of you are gifted in cooking. Some of you are gifted in organizing parties.

Some of you have homes, but you've never realized that actually God has given you those things as part of the body to enable us to be the community that God wants us to be. And so if you have those gifts, you need to use them and invite people and go and eat meals with people.

[ 20 : 13 ] In this community. There's also a flip side. If you don't ever eat or drink coffee or whatever with people in this community, you're never going to truly feel at home here.

You're never going to truly feel at home here. That's why when people come in and out of church and don't connect, it's never going to be your home. You're going to have your home somewhere else. And God says, I want you to know my home with me, with my people together.

So there's a challenge. Eat with people. This week, eat with people as worship to him. But the second thing is, and this is really extraordinary, he says, do this, eat, so that you may learn to fear the Lord.

Did you see that? Have you ever thought of the connection between eating and fearing God? Because this is what it says. Now think about it.

Fear is the heart response when you hold something so precious. Like if I give you a Ming vase, I have a Ming vase, I say, here's a Ming vase, now hold it. You know a Ming vase is so priceless that if you drop it, you know there's that fear of something, you fear hurting it in some way.

[ 21 : 38 ] And fear of God is in a similar way, that sense of knowing he is so precious and so awesome that you don't want to do anything to in one sense hurt him.

You're not going to break God like a Ming vase, but there is something of his preciousness. You do not want to hurt him by sinning. And so, when he says, I want you to eat together so that you may see how precious and valuable I am, he's saying, I want you to see that everything that is good in your life comes from me.

And the more precious I am to you, the more you will fear me and the more that you will love and obey me. So when you eat and you eat together, here's one thing.

If you want to find that pleasure in God through this meal, give thanks. Okay? Give thanks. Now, I had a revelation about six months ago because I'm used to saying grace before a meal.

Whoever says grace before a meal? Anyone? I was brought up like that. I had a, here's how I used to say grace. I used to say, thank you Jesus for this food, I'm in. Eat.

[ 23 : 04 ] Eat. It was a religious ritual to me. A few months ago, I had this revelation. When I sit down and eat and there's this food before me, this is a personal gift of a God of grace to me, telling me that he loves me.

This is grace on a plate. Right? Grace on a plate. And, I have become so taking it for granted that I've stopped treasuring and savoring him in these little moments of life.

Because when you do that and you see how thankful you can be that he's given you so many things, then it stops your heart from just being discontented all the time when you don't get what you want because you see he loves you.

So build in that habit of grace, that habit of saying thank you. Simple. But that's how you can find some pleasure in knowing the love of God.

Now, some of you are kind of thinking, ooh, food. Great. That now helps me to indulge in everything that I wanted to. But there is a twist to this.

[ 24 : 24 ] And I want you just to think about this for a second. We are called to eat together, to enjoy God's goodness, to thank him for all these things. But there's a twist because you can go through the whole Bible story and tell it through the theme of food.

Do you know that? I challenge you, go and read the gospel stories and you'll see food is everywhere. What causes Adam and Eve to sin?

Food. Food. Right? You see, God has created this banquet in the Garden of Eden.

He says, every tree you can eat from. And what do they say? Yeah, but I want that one. I don't want what you've given me. I want that one.

You see, all sin is seeking to satisfy natural God-given appetites and cravings. In a way that God has said, no, that's not the way to do it.

[ 25 : 21 ] At a time when he says, no, not now. God says, wait, you want it now. God says, no, you say, I'm going to get it anyway. Right? In Hong Kong, there's a lot of partying.

There's a lot of drinking. There's a lot of eating of meals. There's a lot of laughter on the outside, but on the inside, there's a lot of emptiness. There's a lot of loneliness. There's a lot of hurt.

We overeat. We overdrink. We comfort eat to fill that emptiness. Anyone done that? You know, you're feeling a bit down until you get a bar of chocolate. We do these things because we use food to replace God as the source of our joy.

And we look to his gifts rather than looking to the giver to provide what he says, I will provide you with. And so we are like Adam and Eve saying to the God, the host who has provided all these things, whether it's financial, whether it's the food, and we say, you can go now.

Just give me this stuff. You can go now. And I'll call you when I want dessert. I'll call you when I need you to help me with my kids getting into the school. I'll call you when I need you to help me get a boyfriend. I'll call you when you need to help me get a better job.

[ 26 : 34 ] But I'll do the rest for myself. If someone invited you around and said, you know, you invite somebody around to your house for a meal, you put on this amazing banquet, and then they come to you and they say, okay, you can go now.

I'm going to eat this. And then they go and raid your fridge when you told them not to. Would you invite them back again? Like, they would be the kind of people I'd be avoiding.

Right? But I realize when I take everything that God gives me for granted, I am just like that. Daily. And I want to get things my way, but I don't want to recognize Him as the source of things. So I go elsewhere and I expect Him to provide for me now. And when He doesn't, I'm like, God, how do you love me?

I can't believe you don't love me because you didn't give me this. But all the time, He's providing and providing and providing and I don't realize it because I've taken it for granted.

[ 27 : 42 ] and that's very much at the heart of what the Bible says sin is. Do you know Romans 1 says sin was we didn't give thanks to God.

We didn't give thanks to Him. We wanted it our way. And do you know what the amazing thing about this story, if you traced it through with meals, when Jesus comes, what's the greatest accusation that is made against Jesus?

He eats and drinks with sinners. That's what they say to Him. He eats and drinks with ungrateful, disobedient sinners like you and like me.

And you see, there's something as you look in this picture of the community in the Old Testament which was pointing forward to the church that He was going to create later on.

And there's something that we forget when you look at this family meal, when you look at the way God has set things up in this celebration, unless you're Jewish, anyone Jewish?

[ 28 : 59 ] Not too many hands. You're not invited. You weren't invited to the fact because you're not part of the family. I'm not part of the family. You know, you don't have the WhatsApp invite.

You're left out of the group. And frankly, if I was somebody else, I wouldn't want to invite somebody who's ungrateful and feels entitled like me who takes everything for granted.

But that experience, I don't know, have you experienced that being left out before from a group, from a meal? You know, you come to church or you come to work and nobody wants to speak to you.

Everyone has their own little circle and you're on your own. Well, that's what the Bible says spiritually. That's what we're like. We're outsiders because we deserve to be outsiders.

but Jesus is the one who comes and says, I eat and drink with you, with sinners like you. You know, the words of Revelation, he says, I stand at the door and knock.

[ 29 : 59 ] If anyone opens the door, what will happen? Do you know the verse? I will come in and I'll eat with you. I'll pay that place of belonging and welcome.

When you were left outside and I wanted you to be left outside, I have brought you in and I brought you into relationship with myself so you can enjoy my goodness.

If you keep chasing after everything else to satisfy you, you're going to be left empty. We will do communion later.

What is communion? It's a meal. It's a meal which is meant to say, this is how much it costs me to invite you.

It costs me my whole life to invite you so you can join in with a family meal. Heaven and the new creation, what's it described as?

[ 31 : 04 ] A wedding feast, a banquet because God wants you to be there in the meal. If you're not a Christian, the challenge to you is God says, I want to invite you to the meal.

Are you just going to say, I want your gifts, I want the food but I don't want you? Or are you going to say, you are the host and I want you and when I get you, I get everything else.

The gospel says, calls us to be a holy, generous, giving people who are enjoying God in His way as worship to Him, partying in a regular rhythm of partying.

But the last thing is, invite. Okay? Because this is not a self-centered kind of parting from myself.

Verse 27 says, don't neglect the Levite living in your towns. At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns so that the Levites and the foreigners and the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

[ 32 : 22 ] Okay? So here's this community which are enjoying the celebration and the blessings of God and then he says, it's not meant to be just kept for you. This is not a holy huddle just for you.

Because in the land there were immigrants, people who didn't have families to celebrate with. There were the fatherless and the widows who weren't able to join in them because they had nobody there who could bring them to.

They were those on the outside. And Israel was called to be distinctive because their enjoyment with God's blessings was meant to overflow to others so that they could find a home and belonging too.

You know, this is the story of the whole church. This is the story of how God brings people into his family and then in Acts it says, the church came together and they were rejoicing with glad hearts praising God, eating meals together in each other's homes and then it says, and people were added to their number daily.

There is something of eating that is a context for mission. One pastor tells a story of how he went to Honolulu traveling 3.30 in the morning and he's hungry.

[ 33 : 38 ] So he goes down out of his hotel room, goes down on the streets trying to find somewhere to eat and there's nothing's open and then finally he ends up and he finds this little kind of seedy bar on the corner and he goes in there and he goes to sit down on the kind of greasy stool by the counter and he's looking at it, looking at the menu and just then as he's looking at the menu, in walk about eight sex workers and they come down and they sit all on either side of him and he's thinking, I hope my congregation don't see me now.

And as he's sitting there kind of trying not to look too interested in anything, he overhears a conversation and one of the ladies says to her friend, he says, hey, it's my birthday tomorrow and her friend says to her, Agnes, which is the other person's name, why are you telling me that? Why should I care? What do you want? A birthday cake or something? The Agnes replies, hey, don't be so mean to me. Like, I'm only just saying, I wasn't asking for anything and the conversation carries on for a little while.

Eventually, the ladies leave and all that's left is this pastor with the barman and he says to, the pastor says to the guy, hey, what do you think about holding a birthday party for Agnes tomorrow? The barman goes, wow, that's a great idea. I'll get the cake. So what they do together, they organize this birthday party. Next night comes, word's gone out, the bar is packed full of sex workers and all kinds of people like wall-to-wall prostitutes everywhere and this pastor in the middle of them.

[ 35 : 31 ] It's Lark, they shut all the lights off and then Agnes walks in. They turn on the lights and then suddenly everyone starts singing happy birthday to her.

You should have seen her face. She's stunned. Somebody carries Agnes over to the stall, sits her down and then they bring out the birthday cake.

At that moment, Agnes loses it. She's crying, just tears falling down her face and everyone's saying, cut the cake, cut the cake, go and get on with it, cut the cake and she says to him, hey, do you mind if I just take this cake to my mom?

Because I've never had a birthday cake before and the pastor's like, well, okay, sure, it's your birthday cake and he's like, oh, she just lives a couple of doors down the road so Agnes goes off with the birthday cake and they're left in there, this guy with all these, all these people in there and he says, he says he just felt the thing to do was at that moment to pray.

So he prays and says, God, please, we pray for Agnes, we pray that you'd heal her, we pray that you'd do a restoration in the work, in her life and then after, at the end of it, he opens his eyes and the barman's looking at him and saying, what are you?

[ 36 : 49 ] Are you a preacher or something? And the guy says, well, yeah, not really, you know, and he said, listen, which church do you go to?

And the guy says, in that moment, I go to the kind of church that throws parties for prostitutes. The barman answers, that kind of church doesn't exist.

If it was, I would go to it. What's the point of that story? You see, that's the kind of church Jesus died to create and it may not be sex workers.

It may be people in your office. It may be people who are just around you but people who are on the outside who are lonely, who are hurting, who are desperate and the church that God has died to create is one that is not just living, eating with its own tribe but is welcoming others to experience it. I sat in Friday in Starbucks. I was doing a Bible study with somebody and all the time, I could see someone just eavesdropping on me. At the end of our conversation, I go to stand up and this woman turns around and says to me, hey, hold on a second.

[ 38 : 06 ] Can I ask you a question? And I said, yeah, sure, fine. She said, I'm lost and confused. I don't know where to turn. I've been looking for someone to answer my questions and I don't know where to go and then, as I've felt no one to ask them, then you guys sit in and you come and sit next to me because you see, this city is filled with lost people and the thing is, when we just eat with the people we want to eat with, when we just hang out with the people we want to hang out with and we don't see outside, we've lost the gospel because Jesus, we were the outsiders and Jesus went over and reached out and invited us in.

And you know what? Some of us, we're so wrapped up with our lives that we don't see the people around us. So here's my challenge.

Who are you eating with this week? As a community group, my challenge is for you this week, this month, organize a party, organize a food, a barbecue, whatever it is and think of who the people you can invite who you don't normally invite.

Pray for who those people that God has placed around you could be. because you see, a holy people is a generous people but a people who come together and feast together.

They also fast together but they feast together and then they invite others to join in. At your workplace, the greatest missional context you may have is to invite someone for a meal, for lunch, your colleague.

[ 40 : 02 ] who are you eating with? Because and who are you gratefully thinking God has blessed you with so much stuff? Can we lead a community of thanksgiving and grace which extends that for others to enjoy?

Let's pray. Father, thank you that you have invited us to the greatest meal of all.

A meal with you. A meal where we are welcome. We belong. I pray that we be a church which is not so wrapped up in ourselves.

Lord, I realize as a church so many of us including myself we just go and eat with the people we want to eat with.

We hang out with the people we want to hang out with. We eat the community lunch just with the same people and we don't see the people sitting next to us that we could invite to join us. I pray challenge us, convict us, help us to see that the world needs to see a community which is not simply about ourselves but is enjoying you and enjoys your grace.

[ 41 : 25 ] Please make us that kind of people. In Jesus' name. Amen.