

Luke 14:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

Analysis

The final commission: 'And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.' After those originally invited refused and others from the city were brought in, the master orders a third search: 'go out into the highways and hedges' (ἔξελθε εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς καὶ φραγμούς, exelthe eis tas hodous kai phragmous)—outside the city entirely, to rural roads and field boundaries where the utterly destitute live. The verb 'compel' (ἀνάγκασον, anagkason) doesn't suggest force but urgent persuasion—these outcasts won't believe they're truly welcome without strong encouragement. This pictures the Gentile mission—God's invitation extends beyond Israel to all nations.

Historical Context

The progression of invitations reflects salvation history: first to Israel (those originally invited), then to Jewish outcasts (tax collectors and sinners in the city), finally to Gentiles (those outside the city altogether). The phrase 'highways and hedges' refers to field margins and rural paths where beggars, the homeless, and desperate travelers would gather. That such people would need compelling to enter a wealthy person's feast reflects their status—they'd assume the invitation was mockery or mistake. The early church's Gentile mission faced similar disbelief—pagans couldn't fathom being welcomed into God's kingdom on equal terms with Jews (Ephesians 2:11-13, 3:6).

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does the progression of invitations illustrate God's redemptive plan from Israel to all nations?
2. What does the need to 'compel' the destitute teach about grace's surprising, almost unbelievable nature?
3. How should this commission shape Christian evangelism and missions—who are today's 'highways and hedges' people?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἶπεν	ό	κύριος	πρὸς	τὸν	δοῦλον	Ἐξελθε	εἰς
And	said	G3588	the lord	unto	G3588	the servant	Go out	into
G2532	G2036		G2962	G4314		G1401	G1831	G1519
τὰς	όδοὺς	καὶ	φραγμοὺς	καὶ	ἀνάγκασον	εἰσελθεῖν		
G3588	the highways	And	hedges	And	compel	them to come in		
	G3598	G2532	G5418	G2532	G315		G1525	
ἵνα	γεμισθῇ	ό	οἶκος	μου				
that	may be filled	G3588	house	my				
G2443	G1072		G3624	G3450				

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 1:28 (Parallel theme): Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:

2 Corinthians 5:11 (References Lord): Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences.

2 Corinthians 5:20 (Parallel theme): Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

2 Timothy 4:2 (Parallel theme): Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Acts 18:6 (Parallel theme): And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

Acts 28:28 (Parallel theme): Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it.

Colossians 1:23 (Parallel theme): If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

Psalms 98:3 (Parallel theme): He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Romans 10:18 (Parallel theme): But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

2 Corinthians 6:1 (Parallel theme): We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.