



Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?-

How does Luke 14 portray Jesus as guest and as host? Will you be found at the most important dinner party ever? Find the answers in the lead article beginning on this page.

PAGE 1

Hope in Times of Testing-

Will you put your trust in people, things, or God alone? What hope do we have? Is it real?

PAGE 5

The Singapore Story-

Read Betty's "God-story" about the highlights of the mission trip to Singapore. What did the dogs have to do with it? Find out.

PAGE 8

Mary Craig Ministries • News

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Guess Who's Coming to Dinner?

By Dr. Mary Craig



The Greek word for hospitality combines *philia* (brotherly love) and *xenos*, (stranger). Thus emerges the biblical concept of hospitality as



o you love a good meal with good company? Do you like to entertain and be hospitable? Maybe you've abandoned the whole idea of the dinner party because you find it exhausting and expensive, especially if

you're in a culture that struggles to surpass the expectations of cuisine and seeks to ensure just the right guest list. Maybe you find it's just not worth the effort, especially if you as host are expected to have your house so-so, a testament to some standard of impeccable taste, keeping up with the latest trends of color and design.

In the Bible we see the "power of the feast" with hospitality enjoined in the practice of the shared meal. Early on, Abraham entertained three men who turned out to be angels. They arrived out of nowhere and yet were welcomed without hesitation. Abraham mustered a great meal, the best that could be found, as he set himself to tending to the needs of these sojourners and strangers suddenly in his care and keeping. To Abraham the message is clear: care for the stranger will bring a blessing. (**Genesis 18, Matthew 25.35-40**)

■ In the Bible we see the "power of the feast" with hospitality enjoined in the practice of the shared meal.

demonstrating the love of kinship to those who are strangers. There's like this code of hospitality that is not to be broken, as it is, for example, in *Macbeth*, where someone who is guest, kinsman, and king gets murdered by his own host while sleeping in his bed. Hospitality should be about self-giving and care, not self-advancement and self-display.

In **Luke 14** a leader among the Pharisees invites Jesus to Sabbath day dinner. As Jesus went into the house, they watched Him. Basically, it was a set-up, a ploy to trip Jesus up in some heresy. It was hospitality with a hidden agenda. Now the Pharisees didn't normally invite someone with dropsy, but such a man was either invited and on his way to the dinner or was outside hoping for alms. The affliction would have been such that because of kidney trouble, a heart condition, or liver problem, tissues fill with water, causing great pain. The Pharisees used this man as "bait." Would Jesus ignore the man and so be charged as having no compassion? Or would Jesus heal the man and give them cause to accuse Him of violating the Sabbath?

Jesus had been there, done that, so what was the deal? (See **Luke 4.31-37, Luke 4. 38, 39, Luke 6.1-5, John 5.1-9, Luke 6.6-10, Luke 13.10-17, John 9.**) Their



From the guests, Jesus turns to address the host. If you're going to make a dinner or a supper, don't call your friends or your family or your kinsmen or your

rich neighbors. They are able to repay you in kind. They just might return your invitation and then you'll get recompensed. But when you make a feast [a public banquet], call the poor, the maimed,

the lame, the blind; and you shall be blessed; for they cannot recompense you. For you shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. (Luke 14.13, 14)

Get out! Who speaks like this? Don't we catch on sooner or later to the law of reciprocity, i.e., the law of repayment? But Jesus exposes the heart that desires to act always for the greatest earthly payoff. In that, even the giving is living but a half-truth. It is giving in order to be given to, in order to receive, in order to benefit



■ True benevolence (good will), true hospitality, gives to advance the kingdom of God.

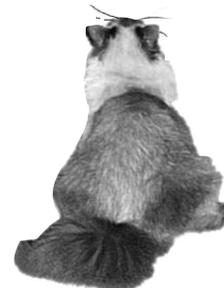
self. So it's not totally pure, honest, of good report. Jesus has the long look in mind. Oh, yes, repayment is coming. The law of reciprocity is a law and it works. But if your treasury is in heaven, you will not live for earthly repayment, seeking ease, convenience, comfort, and tranquility. You will not use your resources merely to secure in this life your own life and the life of your family, padding yourself with comfort and luxury, consoling yourself instead of also looking out for the needs of others. (cf. **Philippians 2**)

Jesus reminds His host that repayment is coming. If you invite those who cannot repay you in this life, you will be repaid in the resurrection of the just. See it as a blessing! True benevolence (good will), true hospitality, gives to advance the kingdom of God, not one's personal domain and household. Jesus implies that the idea is not to invite guests because you were returning an invitation or to invite them so as to put them into your debt so you would get invited to their party. That's entertaining, not hospitality. To practice hospitality we must invite those who cannot repay us. In Jesus' time it wasn't considered proper to ask poor and/or handicapped people to public banquets (or women). They couldn't advance your career or your status in the community. You wouldn't get anything out of it, at least not in this life. Taking care of family and friends is taken for granted, a given. Hospitality means seeing ourselves and others as sojourners in this world, living by the grace of God's hospitality and offering care to the stranger in need.

Now somebody was listening, because he speaks up to say, "*Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom*

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of God." So Jesus shares a parable. The Jewish people envisioned their future kingdom as a great feast with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets as honored guests. **(Luke 13.28, Isaiah 25.6)** In Jesus' day, the host put the day of the feast on the invitation, but not the exact hour. When everything was ready, the host would send his servants to each of the guests that had said "yes" to the invitation to let them know everything was ready. The hour had come. The party was about to begin.

The only thing was, when everything was ready, the people who had said "yes" to the invitation started making excuses. One had to go and see some real estate he had purchased. Another had to test ten oxen he had purchased. The third said he couldn't come because he had married a wife. Billy Sunday defined an excuse as "the skin of a reason stuffed with a lie." Forget just what place you're going to get at the banquet. First, you better be sure you're going to be there when it's time!

These three guests excused themselves but expected to get another invitation in the future. That invitation never came. The host decides to go on with his dinner anyway. The food is all ready. Everything is ready. He wants a crowd, so he says to go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. Seems like it's consistent with those Jesus came to save. **(Luke 15.1, 2; 19.10)**

These people are going to be coming to the dinner? The host will accept these people? What, he wants me? Oh my, there could be people of every tribe and tongue included here, and even women and Gentiles. There could be people who couldn't afford to buy oxen or have eyes to go check out their real estate, or people who would be disqualified from being given in marriage. But they would be hungry and lonely and maybe only too happy to accept an invitation to a fabulous and free banquet.

The host not only gets other people to sit in the places of honor, but he also shuts the door so that the excuse makers have no opportunity to change their minds and come in (cf. **Luke 13.22-30**). In fact, the host gets angry because his call has been treated lightly and with contempt, even rejected with lame excuses.

The servant went out to bring people in, but there was still room. So he was told to go back out and compel them to come in until the house was full. Thus Jesus deals with false security and presumption. All are prospects for the gospel without distinction. Jesus

opens the free gift of eternal life to all kinds of people.

Later, Paul would write:

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
(Galatians 3.26-28)

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation."
(Ephesians 2.13, 14)

The Pharisee and his friends didn't know it, but the Host of a great public banquet was in their midst. He, too, has invited guests and is making a great feast. When you get the invitation, the call of Christ to come, don't delay or make excuses. Do not harden your heart when it is the day of your salvation. Do not treat the call lightly. In one sense, God is saying, "Come; for all things are now ready." Jesus Christ has finished everything necessary and sufficient for salvation when He lived the life God required, died the death, and rose again from the dead to sit at the right hand of the Father. It's not for those who deem themselves good and great, but it is for those who are worms and wise. **(Psalms 14, 15, 22, 111, Proverbs 4, 9.10)** It's not for those who reject and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life **(Acts 13.46)** but it is for those who see their need and respond gladly when invited to come to God's great public banquet.

Likewise, Jesus is coming again when all things will be ready. There will be a resurrection of the just and the unjust. Will you take a long look through this life into eternity? Make room for the stranger. Guess who's coming to dinner.

*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude,
Which no man could number; of all nations, and kindreds,
And people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb,
Clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried
With a loud voice, saying,
Salvation to our God who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*

Revelation 7.9, 10 ■



Hope In Times of Testing

By Jackie Collins Clanton, R.N.



Psalm 46 encourages us to hope and trust in God and His power in the worst of times. This psalm directs us to give God glory for what He has done for us in the past and for what He will do in the future.

*God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.*

*The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.*

*Come, behold the works of the LORD,
What desolations He has made in the earth...*

*Be still, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the heathen.*

I will be exalted in the earth.

*The LORD of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.*
(selected, **Psalm 46**)

Hope that is seen is not hope. To hope is to wait with a confident expectation in spite of how grim things may seem. To hope is to continue waiting for those things to happen that seem impossible now. To hope is to never throw in the towel even though you may feel like it. To hope is to seek God for strength, perseverance, patience, comfort, refuge, love, understanding, wisdom, and divine intervention. Hope is found in God and in Him alone.

Will you put your trust in people, things, or in God alone? **2 Corinthians 4.17, 18** reminds us that *“for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*

The test when it comes is for you and you alone. Your test comes to destroy the flesh. Your test comes to

bless you. Your test comes to make you in the image of Jesus Christ. Your test comes to bring you in complete vital union with God trusting no one else. We need to know that we can trust God and that He will remain faithful to us. God is our refuge and strength. He lifts us up and quickens our spirits when we are oppressed by troubles. Not only will He lift us up; He will place us in the right place at the right time to be encouraged by others.



■ Jackie Collins Clanton

Many of our scars, hurts, aches and pains are hidden from others, so that we say with **Psalm 62.5**: *“My soul waits silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him.”* **Proverbs 18.10** assures us that the name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run to it and are safe. God promises to be with us and to be our comforter. He is faithful. Proclaim it as you put your faith in Him.

Do you ask, “If I am a Christian, why is it that I am always going through something?” **1 Peter 4.12, 13** says, “Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is

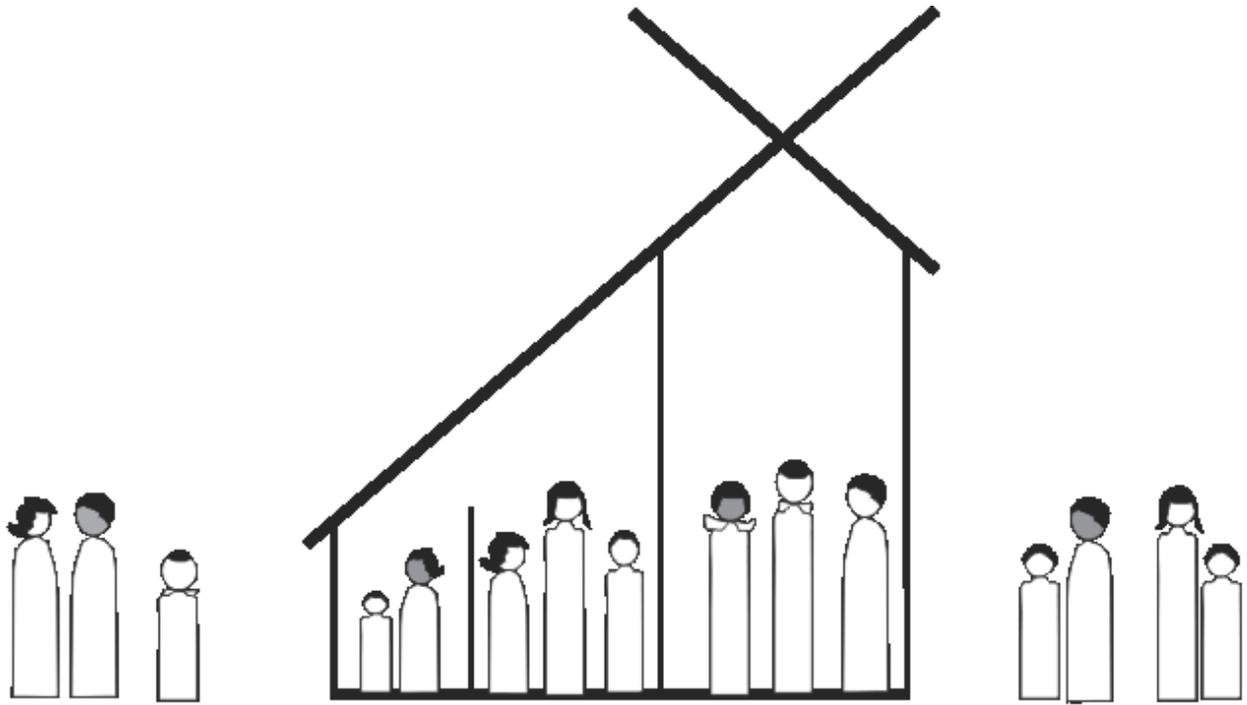
to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy.” The point is...you will be tried, not ruined. Our trials make us conformable to Christ. He is in them with us.

How can you maintain hope?

1. Submit more of yourself to God who holds your future. Have a personal relationship with Him and seek vital union through Christ. The Spirit of God



Continued on page 11



Craighouse

A Commission of Mary Craig Ministries

Craighouse- Concept of Refuge

Craighouse as a Christ-serving refuge is Scripture based-

"The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy from before you..." Deuteronomy 33:27

"...the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you are come to trust." Ruth 2:12

"The lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; the God of my rock, in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior..." I Samuel 22:2,3

"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble." Psalm 9:9

"...be You my strong rock, for an house of defence to save. For You are my rock and my fortress; therefore for Your name's sake lead me, and guide me." Psalm 31:2,3

"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Psalm 46:1

"He only is my rock and my salvation, He is my defence..." Psalm 62:2,6

"...You are my rock and my fortress... You are my strong refuge." Psalm 71:3,7

"I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust: His truth shall be your shield and buckler." Psalm 91:2,4

"But the Lord is my defence; and my God is the rock of my refuge." Psalm 94:22

Vision Statement

Craighouse is a Christian community refuge for those seeking help and hope in Jesus Christ.

Craighouse exists to offer refuge, times of refreshing, and restoration to the spiritually orphaned and wounded of the Christian community in an atmosphere of grace.

Goal

Craighouse aspires to minister the resurrection power of Jesus Christ through worship, witness, the Word, and the Holy Spirit to those God brings to its doors.

Objective

Craighouse purposes to present the truth of Christ in a paradigm for living by the Word and by the Holy Spirit.

Motto

People bringing people to help and hope in Jesus Christ.

Concept of "Craighouse" Name

The name "Craig" is an ancient Scottish name originally given to the peoples who dwelt among the highland rock clefts and crags of Scotland. Craighouse is an appropriate name for a place of spiritual refuge. Scriptures speak of the importance of "crags" for those seeking refuge.

"The conies (rock badgers) are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks..." Proverbs 30:26

"She (the eagle) dwells and abides on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place." Job 39:28

The Singapore Story

By Betty L. Patten, Esq.



I always love a "God-story"-a chain of events that could only happen through the guiding hand of our Father. Such stories demonstrate that He is Adonai-the Lord who is sovereign over all aspects of our lives-and they encourage us during those times when we wonder where He is and/or what's taking Him so long.

The genesis for the Singapore trip began in the fall of 2000 with a series of "God stories." At the Lord's instruction, I was searching for a mentor for my ministry work. It "just happened" that one of my close friends knew a woman minister from south Florida with whom he thought I would be compatible. I spoke with Mary on the phone several times and arranged a weekend trip to meet the Craigs in November 2000. A few days before my trip, it "just happened" that Mary was watching an exposé on TV about the cruel treatment of dogs in Asia, especially by the Koreans. This really upset Mary in the spirit, and she mentioned throughout the weekend how much it bothered her.

On Sunday, during services at the Craigs' home, Mary spent much of the morning prayer time praying about what she had seen on the TV program. As the group prayed, I said to Mary, "You know you're supposed to go to Asia and pray about this." The Lord continued to lead. After a while, Mary asked aloud, "Where's Singapore?" Mary had just met me and had no idea that I had a number of friends in Singapore who were active in ministry throughout Asia. At the time, neither one of us knew that Singapore was known as the "Gateway to Asia."

I showed Mary and the group where Singapore was on the globe and commented that it was where she "always had a place to stay." The Singapore trip was "on" and Mary and I were going. Asia would be the sixth continent called to repentance and resurrection.

Actually getting to Singapore took over a year. I was searching for a job in south Florida, which took far longer than expected. I had hoped to be in south

Florida by May 2001 (and we were looking at doing the trip in November 2001), but I wound up not moving until October 2001. After my move, Mary and I were looking at taking the trip during either the second or fourth week of March 2002. After coordinating schedules with my contacts in Singapore, we settled on the last week of March. We would hold the "service" part of the missions trip at the Friday night

fellowship meeting that is hosted by Gim Hock and Su Mien Thio, our hosts in Singapore. It was not until after we scheduled the trip that we learned we were traveling during Easter week and the service was on Good Friday. This was Divine Scheduling, because God knew we needed the extra level of spiritual protection that comes when spiritual warfare

(especially the breaking of blood curses, as with the dog situation) is done on Good Friday.

The trip itself was short and sweet. At the Lord's instruction, we had already done the prayer part of the Asia mission during services at the Craighouse in October and November, 2001. The Singapore trip focused on doing a service on Asian soil and on praying at key locations in the city.

I arrived on March 26, about 36 hours ahead of Mary, and spent the time with my Singaporean friends-including Gim Hock and Su Mien's daughter and a friend of mine from law school; Yvonne Lee who has become a



■ Betty Patten



friend of mine; and Harpreet Nehal, another friend from law school. After Mary's arrival, we spent a lot of time praying and discussing the nature of the trip and the order of the Good Friday service with the Thios.



■ Gim Hock and Su Mien Thio

During one meeting with the Thios, their two dogs, Wolfie and Jamie, literally "opened" the door and walked into the room. We have no natural explanation as to how they got the door open. Since a part of our trip was to pray for the treatment of the oppressed in Asia, both people and animals, we felt that somehow Wolfie and Jamie "knew" they were an important part of our trip and they wanted to be in on the meeting!



■ Li-Ann with Jamie



■ Mary with Wolfie

The Good Friday service went well. Between 70 and 100 people attended the meeting. Su Mien Thio felt the Lord leading her to use the service as an opportunity to gather key intercessors from Singapore and start a network to get them to pray for Asia. We were impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of the Singaporeans and their commitment to pray for Asia.



On Saturday, Su Mien, Mary, and I joined three other intercessors for a prayer walk around downtown Singapore. Su Mien recently moved her law firm to a building that overlooks the government offices and waterways that form the



■ Betty and Mary fellowship with Singaporeans after the worship service.



■ The "Merlion" at the Gateway to Asia

core of downtown Singapore- a fact that we believe is no accident. We prayed over the "gateway" to Asia from Su Mien's



offices and then headed outside.

Our first stop was the statue of the Merlion. The Merlion is half lion and half fish; it is like a mermaid, only with a lion at the top. The statue has been like a demonic "guard" to the gateway to Asia, so we prayed that the

statute would be rendered powerless, and that Jehovah Gibbor, the Mighty Hero Who Saves, will guard the gateway to Asia. At another stop, we prayed over a statue of Sir Thomas Raffles; the plaque on the statue read that Raffles "changed the destiny of Singapore,"



■ Intercessors prepare at Su Mein's office.

so we declared that Jesus, and no man, controls the destiny of Singapore and Asia.

Another reminder of the animals that we were praying for appeared along



■ View of Singapore from Su Mein's office

the Singapore riverfront. I noticed three cats, seemingly with no owner, lounging under a stool. All of the cats had



■ Mary giving the cats loving care.

been mistreated: one had a broken tail, one had a broken ear, and the third had its tail removed.

After our prayer walk, we had dinner with the Thios and I packed my bags for an early morning flight back to the United States.

Going forward, please join us in prayer for the following things: that God will manifest Himself as Jehovah Gibbor to call in the elect of Asia to a saving knowledge of Christ, that God will protect the people and animals



■ Intercessors at prayer

who are powerless and oppressed, and that God will encourage the people and churches in Singapore to protect the "gateway" to Asia. Pray also for special wisdom and protection for our hosts, the Thios.



■ Mary with gracious hosts in Singapore, the Thios

Thank you for your prayers for Mary Craig Ministries and its members; they are an important part of its activities and the foundation for these missions' trips.



Continued from page 5

within you comforts and strengthens.

2. Walk in obedience. Seek God and pray to find out what He wants you to do. God is a covenant-keeping God.

3. Ask God for wisdom, knowledge, and understanding while you are going through the fire.

4. Hang in there. Endure and press on. Graduation is glorious.

5. Seek the Lord for a fresh anointing, new life breathed into you.

6. Let God carve the "religion" out of you. See His desire to be in constant fellowship with you.

7. Wash yourself daily in the Word of God.

8. Put on the whole armor of God (**Ephesians 6.10-18**)

All things are possible with God. Miracles, healing, prosperity, peace, joy, and happiness are just some. God wants you to really enjoy life. The Holy Spirit is in you, with you, for you, on you, and working through you. God says, I will be your God and you will be My people. Consider who is with you, and hope in God. ■

Prayers



III

MARY CRAIG

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-for the human spirit

-for breaking pride

-to be a person of honor

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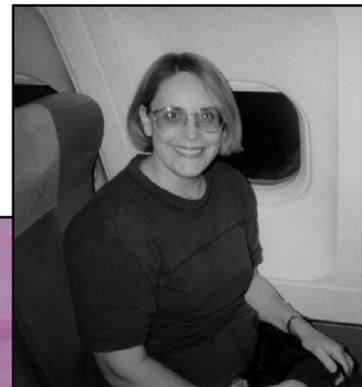
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