

# The Kingdom of God and Disability

## A Commentary on Luke 14:1–24

*By Rev. Steve Bundy*

People with disabilities are shown as central to the teaching on the kingdom of God in Luke 14:1–24. However, to understand Luke’s message regarding those with disabilities, we must also recognize the eschatological or “future-oriented” nature of the broader section of Luke 13–14. One commentator notes:

In two sets of units in sequential parallelism (13:10–35; 14:1–35), Luke explores a series of reversals and paradoxical inversions associated with the manifestations of the kingdom of God, both in connection with its present manifestation and in connection with its manifestation at the time for the consummation of all God’s purposes.<sup>1</sup>

For our study we will examine only Luke 14:1–24. Although we see the theme of “contrast and reversals” throughout the Gospel of Luke, it is seen most clearly in chapters 13 and 14, where Christ challenges various religious and social practices of the day and begins to introduce the “now and to come” nature of the kingdom of God.

### **Religion that Does Not Reflect the Kingdom – Luke 14:1–6**

Christ was invited to eat on the Sabbath with a prominent Pharisee and other guests. Similar to what Luke recorded in chapter 13, Christ’s teaching here takes place on the Sabbath in the midst of religious leaders, with a person with a disability as the focal point. The focus highlights both the here and now and an emphasis on the future: “The language for the meal, φαγεῖν ἄρτον [*phageiv arton*], ‘to eat bread,’ anticipates that of v. 15 (in connection with the Kingdom of God): in Luke’s literary handling, this Sabbath meal anticipates the eschatological banquet.”<sup>2</sup>

This is the fourth time Luke records controversy over the Sabbath (Lk. 14:1). It is obvious that this is a major issue between Jesus and the religious leaders (see also Lk. 6:1–5; 6:11; 13:10–17). Three of the four occurrences involve a person with a disability.<sup>3</sup> A “prominent” host had invited Jesus—literally, one of the “ruling” (ἀρχοντων των Φαρισαων/*archontōn tōn Pharisaōn*), meaning he was possibly a member of the Sanhedrin. The significance is that: 1) those invited were likely of the upper class (Lk. 14: 7, 12), 2) those invited were other religious leaders, including “experts in the law” (Lk. 14:3), and 3) “he was being carefully watched” (Lk. 14:1).

From the context it appears that they were still gathering to eat when a man with dropsy appeared before them. The language is similar to that in Luke 13:11 which divides scholars on whether or not the man was an actual “plant” by the religious leaders. Given the context that “he was being carefully watched” (Lk. 14:1) and the apparent group of “experts,” it is likely that the man was planted there so that Jesus could be

caught in some trap of his own words or actions.

On a technical note, dropsy is an abnormal accumulation of fluid in the body that causes the body to swell. It can be quite painful, not to mention making it physically difficult to move around. It is not only serious in itself but is also a sign of illness affecting the kidneys, liver, blood, and/or heart. Rabbis of Jesus' day were of the opinion that a person so afflicted had committed a grievous sin (Nu. 5:11–27).<sup>4</sup>

The NIV translation renders verse 2 as “There in front of him was a man *suffering* from dropsy” (emphasis added). The Greek here is literally, “And behold, a man certain there was dropsical before him.” There is no use of the root word for suffering (πασχω/*paschō*, used in many NT texts to communicate suffering; see Rom. 8:17). In other words, the NIV translators inserted the word “suffering” to best communicate what they believed was the meaning of the text.

It has been said that suffering is the common denominator among all humans. Everyone will suffer in some way. While some with a disability would not consider themselves “sufferers” any more than the rest of humankind, most, I have found, would reasonably argue that there is a very real suffering that does come with certain limitations and challenges resulting from (or associated with) their disability. This argument, of course, grows in strength as we consider the plight of the disabled in less developed countries. It is also important to note that suffering does not necessarily have the connotation of “victim.” We see from Romans 8:20 that creation itself longs for redemption. Notice it is also in the context of suffering that Paul wrote his letter to the Roman Christians (see verses 17–18). Due to the fall of man in Genesis, all creation—especially humankind—experiences suffering, whether disabled or not.

While Christ certainly came to relieve suffering (Lk. 4:18–19), he also indicated that the poor would always be among us (Mk. 14:7). In other words, not all healing means complete relief from suffering, for everyone that Jesus healed eventually died. I have concluded that there are four main categories of suffering that people experience at some point or another in their lifetime, disabled or not:

1. physical (including cognitive and mental suffering),
2. spiritual (a consequence of sin and separation from God),
3. emotional (circumstances of life such as heartbreak, divorce, loss of loved one, and other disappointments), and
4. social/cultural (including socio-religious, socio-economic, socio-political, discrimination, segregation, and the like).

It should be acknowledged, however, that in some cases the degree of suffering may differ for persons with and without disabilities. In many cultures, it is fair to say that some of those with disabilities have experienced deeper levels of suffering in all four categories than those without disabilities—and this experience is often lifelong, rather than a one-time “crisis” that has a beginning and ending point. Much of this suffering has to do with the culture and society in which they are born.

Jumping ahead in this chapter for a moment, we see that while Jesus did provide physical healing for this man (Lk. 14:4), he later exhorted the host of the meal to include in his life the “poor, the crippled, the lame [and] the blind” (Lk. 14:13). While not every person on this earth is physically healed—in fact, the majority are not—what Jesus provided here was a model that brought healing (relief) in all four categories of suffering, the context for this healing being spiritual and social relationships.

Think of what spiritual encouragement and support is found in a community of relationships connected to God; what emotional support is found when people around you can relate and “bear one another’s burdens” (1 Cor. 1:3–7); what a change for the good in culture and society takes place when we learn to accommodate and include “differences” that teach us about life; and what a difference shared resources can make for those whose physical or intellectual limitations prohibit them from making gains or having access to certain structures that they would otherwise not achieve or have access to! Christ was, in a very

real sense, creating the model he would later call the Church.<sup>5</sup>

As with the woman with a disability in Luke 13, Jesus took immediate notice of this man with a disability at the Sabbath meal. Knowing the hearts of those in this “hostile” gathering, Jesus asked the experts in the law: “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?” (Lk. 14:3). There was a prevailing opinion among rabbis that healing of the sick or disabled was not allowed on the Sabbath unless there was a distinct probability that a person would otherwise die that day.<sup>6</sup> The question created a dilemma for the religious leaders; what they had intended to be used against Jesus had now been turned on and used against them. The text tells us they “remained silent” (v. 4). In his commentary on Luke, Alfred Plummer explains:

The dilemma, if they had planned one against Him, is now turned against themselves. These lawyers were bound to be able to answer such a question: and if rigorist Pharisees made no objection when consulted beforehand, they could not protest afterwards. They take refuge in silence; not in order to provoke Him to heal, but because they did not know what to say. They did not wish to say that healing on the Sabbath was allowable and they did not dare to say that it was not.<sup>7</sup>

In their silence Jesus healed. Taking the man, Jesus—as he often did—touched him during the healing process. After he was healed, Jesus dismissed the man from their presence, likely in order to remove him from the situation where those present had a dislike for Jesus and now for this man whose presence had brought about such embarrassment for them. Caught in their own trap, their concern for their own religious traditions outweighed their concern for the disabled.<sup>8</sup>

Sensing the tension, Jesus once again posed a question to expose the wickedness of their hearts: “If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?” This is a parallel to the context of Luke 13:15–16, with the exception that Jesus here did not call them hypocrites. This is not because they were any less hypocritical than those he addressed in chapter 13, but rather because those present had not yet spoken up against the healing—they were still stumped over not being able to answer the first question regarding the law. Now, once again, they “had nothing to say” (Lk. 14:6).

In the structure of this sentence Jesus placed the stress on “of which of *you*” (τινος υμων/*tinus humōn*), framing the question as a specific question posed to each one who was present. Jesus also used the word “immediately” to convey to them that just as they would not delay (another day) but would think nothing of it being the Sabbath to rescue their son or animal if it were in danger.

There do not appear to have been any restrictions on rescuing a person or animal on the Sabbath in Jewish Sabbath regulations. There were, however, restrictions among the Qumran people found in *The Damascus Document XIII*: “Let not a man help an animal to give birth on the Sabbath day and if she lets her young fall into a cistern or ditch, let him not lift it out on the Sabbath.” Jews in general, however, would not hesitate to rescue their family members or animals.<sup>9</sup> Once again, the religious leaders were “red-faced” over their self-centered lives of caring more for their own children and animals than the children of God. We also see that it is a person with a disability through whom the lesson comes—as will also be the case in the remainder of chapter 14, where Christ illustrated the nature of the kingdom of God in the consummation of the age.

### **Blind Hosts and Dishonored Guests – Luke 14:7–11**

In verses 7–11 Jesus noticed that the guests were jostling for the places of highest honor. The irony here cannot be overlooked. Jesus had just healed a man with a disability who had not been invited to the meal. Rather than celebrating with this man over this miraculous intervention, inviting him to the table and “hearing his story,” the guests were trying to gain recognition of their importance by means of claiming the best seats. Jesus had just “claimed” this man with a disability for the kingdom and they were busy

claiming seats of recognition in their religious tradition.

Jesus told them a parable about places of honor at a wedding feast. Jesus likely chose this example because the places of honor at a wedding were more clearly delineated than they would be for a meal at the house of one of the Pharisees. In other words, even though it may not have been obvious that their intentions were to obtain the seats of honor, he used a clear example in order to reveal what was really happening. The point of “feast,” however, could also have been intended as a direct segue into the instruction about “whom to invite to a feast” that Jesus was about to give to the host. In the parable of the wedding feast it is the host who has the final say over who has the seats of honor. Do not overlook the parallel in this story with what we read in Luke 13 and are about to see in the rest of chapter 14. Who has the seats of honor in God’s economy, in God’s kingdom? The “Host” will decide.

Jesus stressed *humility* over pride and *promotion* over humiliation. Instead of having a self-righteous attitude that one deserves and should take a seat of honor, Jesus taught that humility recognizes honor is not determined by class, status, position, or wealth—rather, it is determined by God.

It would be a mistake to think this is a new teaching for the religious leaders. Jesus’ teaching here echoes Proverbs 25:6–7: “Do not exalt yourself in the king’s presence, and do not claim a place among his great men; it is better for him to say to you, ‘Come up here,’ than for him to humiliate you before his nobles.” The problem for this group was not a problem of knowledge, but of the heart. Though they knew well the teachings of Scripture, they were full of pride and self-arrogance. Jesus ended this parable with the words, “For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted” (Lk. 14:11), much like the way he concluded his teaching in Luke 13:30, “Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last.” In the minds of these spiritual leaders, the man with a disability was last and they were first. Jesus made clear this is not true with the kingdom of God.

As if it were not already explicit enough, Jesus now turned to the host in verses 12–14 and spoke directly to him.

### The Host—Luke 14:12–14

Here we see one of the most descriptive explanations of the nature of the kingdom in the Book of Luke. Similar to the pattern in chapter 13, Jesus moved from ministry to those with a disability (Lk. 14:1–6), to a lifestyle of humility and placing others first (Lk. 7–11), to a lifestyle of daily inclusion of those with a disability (including the Gentile, poor, outcast and outsider), and concluded with a future view of the kingdom.

Jesus gave this instruction to the host: “When you give a luncheon or dinner . . .” (v. 12). Similar to the personal application Jesus stressed in Luke 14:5 (“If one of you has a child . . .”), Jesus also made his “commission” to the host personal: “When *you* give a luncheon . . .” It is important to note that we find here the first of two “commissions” in which Jesus gave clear instruction on the inclusion of those with a disability into our personal lives and the life of the church. The first “commission” is to us individually. If our lives are to reflect the kingdom of God, then we should live like the King, a lifestyle inclusive of those with a disability. The second “commission” here is to the Church, the representatives of his kingdom. This is found in Luke 14:15–24, which we will look at shortly.

Notice that Jesus used both “luncheon” (αριστον/*ariston*) and “dinner” (δειπνον/*deipnon*), which suggests that Jesus was not merely referring to one particular meal, but rather was communicating the notion of a comprehensiveness of meals to be encompassed by one’s hospitality. In other words, Jesus was not suggesting just a special occasional meal; rather, one’s normal lifestyle should be that of inclusion of those with disabilities, those “others” not normally invited to a meal in their culture—those outside their comfort zone of traditional association, those they considered “lowly” and would not find in the seat of “honor.”

More specifically, Jesus mentioned here the typical guest list of a Pharisee, including “your friends, your neighbors, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors” (Lk. 14:12). He added that

the motive of the heart is usually that of reciprocity, a desire to be repaid in some fashion or form. He then provided an alternative guest list for the host, one that comes from the “Host” of all banquets and has the places of honor already reserved: “But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed” (Lk. 14:13). The contrast in lists was obvious to those present. The first list included those currently present at the meal; the second list represented the man with a disability who had been healed (and those with him) but who had not been invited.

This reversal and contrast is one that had been displayed in the life and teachings of Jesus. As Jesus walked the earth and ministered to the needy he revealed the Father; (Jn. 1:18), showing us the character and nature of God. Here he taught that the nature of the kingdom, which reflects the King (the Host), is such that it has a place of honor for those who have been rejected, marginalized, and cast out of religious and social settings because of disability or status. This text sets an understanding of the nature of the kingdom that influences all that the Church is and does. For if the kingdom is one in which people with a disability have a seat of honor, then the Church would do well to understand the heart of the King and his love for the overlooked.

A lifestyle of inclusion of persons with disabilities will indeed return blessings, that is, blessings of the kingdom.<sup>10</sup> As Hendriksen comments, “What minister cannot bear testimony to the fact that some of the finest lessons he ever learned were given to him by the poor . . . the small, the sick, the handicapped, the dying?”<sup>11</sup>

Not only will there be an earthly blessing, but a heavenly one as well: “. . . you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous” (Lk. 14:14). Once again the immediate context for discussion is earthly ministry (here and now) set in the broader context of eschatology (the yet to come).

## **The Great Banquet—Not What They Expected—Luke 14:15–24**

Once again we see the parallel of emphasis in chapters 13 and 14, with a focus on contrast and reversal:

By setting 14:15–24 (with its rounding up of totally unlikely guests for the banquet of the kingdom of God) in parallel with 13:22–30, Luke establishes a dialectic between human responsibility stressed here and the priority of God’s grace and initiative . . . The reversal here is of the expectation of those who experience the earthly ministry of Jesus and expect to be present at the banquet of the eschatological kingdom.<sup>12</sup>

As soon as Jesus brought up the resurrection of the righteous, someone at the table quickly jumped on the topic of the “feast in the kingdom of God” (Lk. 14:15). From the context and Jesus’ response it is clear that the tone of the one who spoke up was quite “pious.” Having just been rebuked by Jesus about not caring for the disabled and outcast and being told about places of honor in God’s kingdom being reserved for the poor, this guest tried to give a corrective reply regarding his (and the other guests’) position in the great banquet of the kingdom.

This only added fuel to Jesus’ fire. In a sense, he responded with, “You want to talk about the kingdom? Okay, let’s talk about the kingdom. . . .” He then launched into a parable that is unmistakably a climactic point in the Gospel of Luke. In chapters 13 and 14 Jesus had ministered to two persons with disabilities, had twice rebuked the religious leaders for their hypocrisy and their greater concern for their animals and own affairs than for the outcast children of God (all in his name), had foretold of Gentiles and outsiders becoming “insiders” in the kingdom of God and “insiders” becoming outsiders, and had specifically communicated that a lifestyle that reflects the kingdom was in fact a lifestyle of inclusion of those with disabilities. Jesus now threw the final punch: all he had been teaching up to this point was simply a reflection of the kingdom to come!

To those present, a discussion of the “feast in the kingdom of God” (Lk. 14) had a clear meaning. Jews

viewed the Messianic kingdom of God in all its fullness as that of a great banquet, with lavish amounts of food, drink, and fellowship, with God ultimately ruling all the earth, including Gentiles: “On this mountain the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines” (Is 25:6).<sup>13</sup>

The thing symbolized in this way is the full enjoyment of blessedness in the perfected kingdom of God. The lost are not only humbled so that they submit to the Lord, but they also take a part in the blessedness of his Church and are abundantly satisfied with the good things of his house. Although the feast is on Earth, it is on an Earth that has been transformed into Heaven; for the party-wall between God and the world has fallen down; death is no more and all the tears are forever wiped away.<sup>14</sup>

To better understand the radical nature of what Jesus was saying to those present, it is necessary to reflect upon the common Jewish theology of the day relating to this 700-year old conversation of “The Great Banquet” in Isaiah 25. Kenneth Bailey in his book *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* provides insight into the beliefs held.<sup>15</sup> When the Jews returned to Judea from the Babylonian exile, the language had changed from Hebrew to Aramaic.

About the time of Jesus, an Aramaic translation of the Hebrew Scriptures known as the Targum was used in the synagogues. Some of the translators of the Targum took great liberty in translating the texts. As a result, the Targum gives us insight into how people in the first century understood some of the biblical texts.

It is apparent that the translators of the Targum did not care for Isaiah’s all-inclusive vision of the great banquet: “Yahweh of hosts will make for all the peoples in this mountain a meal. And although they supposed it is an honor, it will be a shame for them and great plagues, plagues from which they will be unable to escape, plagues whereby they will come to their end.”<sup>16</sup>

Following in similar footsteps of the Targum translation, the Book of Enoch (2nd Century B.C.) speaks of a great banquet with the Messiah except that it affirms the presence of the Gentiles. “But the angel of death will be present to destroy those Gentiles. The banquet hall will run with their blood and believers will have to wade through it in order to reach the table!”<sup>17</sup>

The Qumran community (1st Century B.C.) was certain that no Gentiles would be present at the great banquet. Only pious Jews who obeyed the law would be there. What is also clear from this scroll is that no one with disabilities would be present. Listen to their Scroll of Messianic Rule as it relates to the disabled: “No one can attend the banquet who is smitten in his flesh, or paralyzed in his feet or hands or lame or blind or deaf or dumb or smitten in his flesh with a visible blemish.”<sup>18</sup>

By the 1st Century, Isaiah’s vision of the inclusive great banquet is completely obscured by certain prejudices against the Gentiles and the disabled.<sup>19</sup>

Turning to the self-righteous man, Jesus reiterated in parable form what he had already said about “seats of honor” and “guest lists” that had on them the names of the disabled and outcasts. He now indicated that this “feast of the kingdom” in which they had put such self-confidence would in fact be filled (Lk. 14:23) with those about whom he had just spoken. In the parable, “a certain man was preparing a great banquet” and had invited a large number of guests. In those days it was not uncommon to first invite and then send a reminder. The story does not indicate that any had declined at the first invitation, so they were expected to attend once the banquet was prepared. As the host eagerly waited for his guests to arrive and enjoy the well-prepared feast, his servant returned with the message—no one is coming—as if they were of one mind not to participate in this banquet. Luke makes it clear in verse 18, which can literally be translated as, “And began with one (consent) to excuse themselves all.” As Plummer comments, “There was no variation; it was like a prearranged conspiracy: they all pleaded that they were at present too much occupied to come. And there was not a single exception.”<sup>20</sup>

Notice that of all the excuses mentioned, not one was a legitimate excuse that would justify “disgracing” the host and his banquet. Buying a field, buying oxen, and getting married are all insufficient excuses for dishonoring the host. What a powerful analogy for those who will not partake of this great eschatological

feast! It is as if something in their hearts led them to conspire together to hide behind excuses in order to avoid honoring the host.

As the host listened to the servant he became angry at the illegitimate excuses and ordered his servant to “go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Lk. 14:21). A reiteration of the “guest list” mentioned in Luke 14:13, Jesus was now stressing once again that the kingdom belongs to such as these. That the servant had to go to the “streets and alleys” (v. 21) conveys the socioeconomic position of the poor and disabled. Similar to what we would experience in a downtown urban setting, a “street” was the broader, more traveled road where you would expect to find beggars who are poor and disabled; “alleys” were more hidden, off the path, and usually where the least of the least would be found. As Hendriksen explains, “the servant is now sent into that part of the city where the underprivileged people were living; the poor, crippled, blind and lame, the very people already mentioned in verse 13.”<sup>21</sup> Notice the segregation of the disabled from the mainstreamed—the servant had to go out past the neighborhoods, hotels, schools, and even the synagogues to find the disabled.

The master told the servant to “bring [them] in” (v. 21). Hendriksen goes on to comment:

This was probably necessary, not so much because, for example, the blind would not have been able to find the banquet hall unless they were taken by the hand and led, but rather because all of the groups here mentioned might well entertain serious doubts with respect to the question whether a sumptuous banquet *could really be for them*.<sup>22</sup>

A lifetime of neglect, abuse, and discrimination had driven the poor and disabled into the outcast places of the city. Why would anyone want to celebrate them? Jesus’ teaching and lifestyle redefined for the Jews of his day what the kingdom of God was all about.

James, the half-brother of Jesus, seemed to have “caught” what Jesus “taught” when he wrote:

My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not *discriminated* among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? (Jas. 2:1–5, emphasis added)

In verse 23, the servant reported that all the master had requested had been done, but there was still room for more. The master then told the servant to go out again, but this time to the “roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.” This host was gracious and wanted nothing he had prepared to go to waste—for he had plenty to lavish upon those who had been neglected by society. “Roads and country lanes” were locations outside the city. Now that those inside the city had been gathered, his servant was to go outside the city where the “untouchables” would be living in small shacks and dwellings, many segregated according to disability or disease. The servant was now to literally *compel* them to come in (v. 23). The language conveys a strong urging or compelling, something that was necessary for them. The host desired that his house be “full” of people who were poor, crippled, blind, and lame; he would not start the banquet until they had all been gathered and had a place at the table. Those who in the comfort of their lifestyle and self-confidence made excuses would in no way participate in the banquet. But for those with a disability and others marginalized in their society, the host made it clear: the kingdom was made up of “the least of these brothers and sisters of mine” (Mt. 25:40).

As he ended the parable in verse 24, it is clear from Luke’s writing that Jesus switched from a parable of a host to himself as host, speaking directly to those present: “I say to you (plural).” He now made it a personal address to those listening: you are the guests who made excuses; those who did *not* make excuses are the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame (v. 21).<sup>23</sup>

What Jesus makes clear in these verses is his heart for those with disabilities. There should be no doubt where Jesus stands in his love and compassion toward those affected by disability. Likewise, there should be no doubt among an unbelieving world where individual Christians and the Church stand in our care and concern for those touched by disability. As Jesus taught in the account of the Good Samaritan, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37).

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## Notes

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1. John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35B (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), p 721.
2. *Ibid.*, pp 745–746.
3. There are numerous other recordings of Jesus with the disabled in Luke and the other gospels, but three specifically on the Sabbath in Luke.
4. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), p 720.
5. Much of the thoughts here on suffering and the church comes from my personal experience working professionally with the physically and developmentally disabled—as a licensed minister, pastoring families affected by disability and as a staff member at Joni and Friends International Disability Center—but also and especially, from my experience as a father of a son with physical and developmental disabilities.
6. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), p 720.
7. Alfred A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (Edinburgh, UK: Morrison and Gibb Limited, 1989), p. 355.
8. See also Luke 13:14, where the synagogue ruler rebuked the woman with a disability and those with her for coming for healing on the Sabbath.
9. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), p 720.
10. For further study on the blessings of friendship with the disabled, refer to Joni Eareckson Tada and Steve Jensen, *Barrier Free Friendships* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1997).
11. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), p 725.
12. John Nolland, *Luke 9:21–18:34*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 35B (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), pp 734, 736.
13. See also Ps. 23:5; Mt. 8:11-12; 22:1ff.; 26:29; Mk. 14:25; Rev. 3:20; 19:9).
14. Carl F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, Trans. J. Martin (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1969), p. 439.
15. Kenneth Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* (Downer’s Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008).
16. *Ibid.*, p. 310.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 311.
19. I am grateful for the work of Dr. Kathy McReynolds in summarizing Kenneth Bailey’s chapter on Isaiah 25.
20. Alfred A. Plummer, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Luke* (Edinburgh, UK: Morrison and Gibb Limited, 1989), p. 361.
21. William Hendriksen, *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978), p 732.
22. *Ibid.*
23. J. M. Creed, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Indices*. (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1957), p 192.

## About the Author

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**Steve Bundy** brings 25 years of experience in nonprofit leadership, both domestically and internationally. The last 17 years have been at Joni and Friends, where he has launched multiple initiatives and now leads our international efforts around the world. Previously he has served as an executive at the US Center for World Mission, as a missionary in Eastern Europe and as a pastor of disability ministry. He is a published author and co-author with Joni Eareckson Tada on projects such as *Beyond Suffering: A Christian View of Disability Ministry* and the Telly-Award winning television episode, *Making Sense of Autism*. He has also co-authored, *Another Kind of Courage: God's Design for Fathers of Families Affected by Disability*. Steve and his wife Melissa know firsthand the joys and challenges of parenting a child with disabilities, as their own son, Caleb, was born in 1999 with muscular dystrophy, intellectual disability, and autism. Their second son, Jaron, is a musician and produces Christian worship music. Steve holds a B.A. in Theology and Missions from Bethany Global University, an M.A. in Organizational Leadership from Biola University, and certificates in executive management from Harvard and Stanford.