Discussion Title: Don't Miss Out	**Category**: Character

Opening:
Play a game called "Please Excuse Me." Compile a list of very appealing invitations to an upcoming fictitious event:

- Would you come over this Saturday for steak and lobster?
- I have an extra ticket to Hawaii. Would you like to go with us?
- The governor wants to have dinner with us, can you also come? Etc.

Go around the room and make an invitation to each person. They are to make up an outrageous, ridiculous excuse for not accepting your invite. The most absurd, funny, outlandish, ridiculous excuse wins the prize.

Pick 4 individuals to share. 5 minutes total.

Q. **Has anyone of you ever been given a flimsy excuse? When? How did it feel?**

It's one thing for someone to give a flimsy excuse for not helping clean your garage or paint your house, but it would be odd to give an excuse to get out of something like a trip to Hawaii.

Let's take a look at a parable Jesus told about similar situation:

Lesson:

Luke 14:14-23 Recap

Pick 1-2 individuals to answer each question (Q).

Keep track of time during the discussion. Keep the discussion focused and on point. Avoid going off on a tangent topic.

Q. **What was this banquet going to be like?**
- This was going to be an incredible banquet.

A parable illustrates a great spiritual birth

Q. **The man giving the banquet is obviously God, but what does the banquet represent?**
- The kingdom of God, which is available now.
- We can be a part of the kingdom of God now. We don't have to wait until we die.

Q. **What makes the banquet (kingdom) great? What is on the menu?**
- Friendship, great marriages, obedient children, forgiveness of sins, freedom from guilt, relationship with God, peace, joy, purpose, etc.

Q. **What comes to mind when you think of American "Christianity"?**
- Dull, boring, ritualistic, oppressive, hypocritical, tradition-bound, etc.

It is obvious that Jesus' description of the great banquet and what is happening in "American Christianity" don't match up.

Q. **What conclusion may be drawn?**
- What we see in "American Christianity" is not the great banquet

Additional notes:

Q. **Why do people miss out on the great banquet that God offers?**
- Skeptical, cynical, fearful
- Haven't been invited

Additional notes:

- Don’t want to disrupt their schedule, it isn’t convenient
- Have gone to what they thought was the banquet and were disappointed

Q.

How do these reactions reveal the condition of their hearts?

Q.

What is significant in verse 67?

- Jesus gave even the twelve an opportunity to leave.

Q.

What does this tell you about who Jesus wants as followers?

- Wholehearted volunteers only – No force or coercion or because they “have to.”

Q.

What is the right reaction to the challenges of Jesus?

- Peter chooses to stay with Jesus. (vv.67-69)

Why are you a “Christian”? Why are you here (at the Bible talk)? Peter’s heart should be our heart! I may not totally understand everything, but I love(?) God.

If your heart is not right, or if it has drifted from this, don’t quit.
Just get it right and remember Jesus wants only real followers!