



Banquet of New Life

The Parable of the Great Banquet

When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’

“But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’

“Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’

“Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

“The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘**Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.**’

“‘Sir,’ the servant said, ‘what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.’

“Then the master told his servant, ‘**Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.** I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.’” LUKE 14:16-24 (NIV)



THE INVITATION TO A BANQUET OF NEW LIFE

Dear Friend of Talking Bibles,

The gospel is God's plan and the faith to believe it is also His plan. Both come from him. ***Not everyone will believe, but everyone must be given the opportunity to hear the Good News about Jesus and the Father's plan for eternity.***

Jesus said the kingdom of God is like the man who put on a great banquet, but nobody wanted to come! *All the energy put into inviting guests to the great banquet went to people who rejected it.* They already knew about it and had experienced the great things they would see and eat at the banquet. So, they made excuses, the special performances and the exotic foods were not enough to interest those who had been invited.

Before the man even heard this bad news, that no one was interested, *his servants on their own accord went and invited the poor so the banquet hall would be full of people.* Why did they

do this? For the same reason we do. We want everyone that God has chosen before the foundation of time to be with Him in heaven for eternity, *to hear the Good News about Jesus while they are here on earth.* When they hear the Master's voice, they will respond. The Bible tells us this.

We are inviting the people who do not know what the great banquet will be like to come and partake freely. The Good News about the free gift of eternal life is the most precious thing one person can share with another.

Most of the energy and money in mission work is spent on trying to convince those who have rejected the Good News. They don't want to come to the banquet! The story says forget about them and get on to the people who do want to come. When they hear the Master's voice, they respond.

Let's give everyone an opportunity to hear the Master's voice speak to them through the Talking Bible.

Because they need to hear,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark S. Hoekstra'.

Mark S. Hoekstra
President, Talking Bibles International

The blessings of the kingdom are available to all who will come to Christ by faith.

An invitation to new life came to a remote village most people have never heard of...

Rising out of the Krishna River in the Indian State of Andhra Pradesh, Ants Island looks more like a pile of stones than home to 300 people from a low caste fishing community. **Many people are born, marry and die on the under one-square-mile Ants Island in the middle of a river named after a Hindu God.** Despite their struggle for life and being illiterate, the marginalized people have heard God's Word through Talking Bibles and have formed a church built on that rock.

When Pastor Kishore heard of the people of Ants Island barely surviving, his heart broke. Making the overnight bus ride and then a 30-minute boat journey to the island, he witnessed the suffering firsthand. Knowing his resources to help with the community's practical needs were limited; Pastor Kishore says his largest concern was that they had never heard of Jesus Christ.

Pastor Kishore arranged for a distribution of 30 Talking Bibles and committed to returning to the island as often as possible. Lack of time and resources for travel sometimes means it can be several months between visits. But the community kept listening to the Word of God, and with Pastor Kishore's encouragement, they formed a completely indigenous church.

Because there was no previous Gospel witness to them, the fishermen simply call their gospel community "Talking Bible Church." With oversight from Pastor Kishore, elders have been appointed and they have built a simple church house from discarded timber and plastic sheeting. Laying down woven mats, the islanders sit cross-legged on the floor to sing praises to God and listen to the Talking Bible every Saturday and Sunday. The small colorful room often overflows so people sit around the doorway to lean in and listen.

In the Ants Island church, the Talking Bible sits on a simple dais at the front of the gathering. The room is full and quiet as the congregation waits to hear the Word of God from the Talking Bible. After listening to a few chapters, some singing, and prayer, one of the elders makes a few comments and then the people politely file out into the sun. Some immediately go back to mending fishing nets, others prepare to go out for the afternoon fishing.

All of them can hear and worship in a church that formed because the Word of God came to a remote fishing community in a place most people have never heard of.

These are the people we are trying to reach. Those who have never heard the Word of God. Whether this is because they live in such a remote area, or they cannot read, God's Word on a Talking Bible reaches these people and shares the Good News of eternal life. 📖

The Talking Bible is their invitation to the banquet of God's Word and new life – a relationship with Him and the promise of eternal salvation.

[Visit TalkingBibles.org for more stories.](http://TalkingBibles.org)



Pastor Agele



Come to the banquet, People of God!

Agele pastors a church of 220 people in a small town in Southern Ethiopia.

But what about Godo? Godo is a place near Pastor Agele's town where people go to eat meat and get drunk.

"Godo is full of unbelievers," the pastor said. "Many drunkards and rebellious people live there."

"We have been going every Friday night to share the gospel. Our Talking Bible is the strongest preacher!" He says. "We see that people everywhere want to hear the Word of God."

"Through this Talking Bible, we have seen 18 people come to Christ! One of these people is Zenebech. She was a drunkard lady who was very rebellious, but now she is very calm and happy. She is a blessing to everyone."

Few people can read in this part of Ethiopia. The women are almost 100% non-readers and only a few of the men can read. That is why the people in Pastor Agele's church love the Talking Bibles and use them not only in their Sunday School, prayer meeting and Bible Study groups, but also for outreach to share the gospel.

In Ethiopia, God is using Talking Bibles to invite the poor and downtrodden, the drunkards and the rebellious, to a banquet of new life — to a relationship with Him and the promise of eternal salvation.

But what about Godo? God has called a group of Christians living near Godo to go share the Good News. When they take a Talking Bible, people listen and respond. 📖



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