

Sermon Mark S. Aites
THE PARABLES OF HUMILITY

TEXT: LUKE 14:1-24

INTRODUCTION:

1. Jesus was probably in Perea at this time: (ancient Rabbis called it, “the land beyond Jordan” -- eastern side of Jordan River).
2. Here we learn the Lord had been invited to dine with *one of the rulers of the Pharisees* (**Luke 14:1**).
 - 1) No doubt this man was well known and greatly respected; a man of prominence and distinction.
 - 2) Possible: member of Sanhedrin.
3. Setting: the Sabbath Day -- 7th day of week.
 - 1) Reminder: this day was to be set aside.
 - 2) **Exod. 20:11** *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*
4. Jesus had been invited to this man’s home for a reason, to entrap him.
 - 1) Important to our understanding, the Jews had added many legal restrictions to the sabbath.
 - 2) Many were added during “intertestamental period.”
 - 3) Many of these can be found in the Talmud (available in many public libraries or on line).
 - 4) Example: in what is called the “shabbath”, it lists 39 things which they added as being prohibited on the sabbath.
 - 5) “Sowing, plowing, reaping, gathering into sheaves, threshing, winnowing, cleansing, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking, shearing wool, washing it, beating it, dyeing it, spinning it, making a wrap of cords, making two cords, weaving two threads, separating two threads, making a knot, untying a knot, sewing two stitches, tearing to sew two stitches, catching a deer, killing, skinning, salting it, preparing its hide, scraping off the hair, cutting it up, writing two letters, lighting a fire, beating with a hammer, and carrying from one property to another.” (Zondervan’s Pict. Bible Dict.)
 - 6) There were other added restrictions: a Jew was permitted to travel only 2,000 cubits (3,000 feet) from one point to another on the sabbath day.
 - 7) A reference is made to this in **Acts 1:12**: *Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.*
 - 8) Very little was actually permitted except food and conversation.
 - 9) **Neh. 8:10** *Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.*
5. It is against this backdrop and setting that Jesus asked: *“Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?”* (**Luke 14:3**).
6. In their midst they had a man who had *dropsy* -- today referred to as *edema* -- “a condition in which the tissues retain too much fluid. It may be caused by heart disease, kidney disease, or local infection, and may terminate fatally.” (Ibid.)
7. They didn’t respond, so Jesus healed the man; then proceeded to teach them with a rhetorical question.
 - 1) *Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull*

him out on the sabbath day? (Luke 14:5).

- 2) The point was well made: if it was alright to save an ox, then surely it must be alright to save a man. (Is not a man of greater value than an ox?)
- 3) Matthew renders a similar account, but uses a sheep (**Matt. 12:12**).
8. Beginning in **vs 7** Jesus then begins a series of parables with the intent to teach humility.

DISCUSSION:

I. THE PARABLE OF HUMILITY.

- A. **Luke 14:7-11** *And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them.*
14:8 *When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him;*
14:9 *And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.*
14:10 *But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.*
14:11 *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*
- B. In **vs 7** Jesus made the observation that they were choosing the best places (chief rooms).
 1. Actually, a better rendering; they were choosing the *chief seats*.
 2. In ancient times they did not have seats, as we do at the dinner table. Instead they reclined on couches.
 3. In ancient times, among the Jews and Romans, they would recline at a couch which would hold three
 4. With more than one couch in a room, the “chief seat” was the middle couch, and the middle part of that middle couch. (H. Leo Boles)
 5. The text indicates that Jesus noted this practice; i.e. it caught His eye.
- B. In the parable itself, Jesus used the illustration of a wedding, which was usually accompanied by a feast or banquet.
 1. He pointed out that a person who takes the chief seat should avoid that lest he have to move, as it surely would be embarrassing.
 2. Lord’s advice: **14:10** *But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.*
 3. **Illus.** “Hot shot” humiliated; company gathered to honor the founding president, but a young hot shot executive took the seat reserved for the man to honor, and then was forced to be moved to the back in front of everyone as the manner of honor was escorted to his rightful seat.
 4. As Jesus tells us: **Luke 14:11** *For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*
- C. The subject of humility is echoed throughout the entire New Testament.
 1. Jesus referred to it many times: **Matt. 23:12** *And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*

2. In the beatitudes, Jesus opened with a statement concerning humility: **Matt. 5:3** *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- D. In the Old Testament humility was also emphasized.
 1. **Prov . 16:18** *Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.*
 2. Judah had it attitude of arrogance for which they were indicted by the Lord: **Ezek. 21:26** *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.*
- E. Application: Many times the temptation is for us to “take the chief seat”; to set ourselves higher than we should.
 1. With Christianity, we learn that exaltation comes after we have learned humility.
 2. **Rom. 12:3** *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.*

II. THE PARABLE OF THE FEAST.

- A. **Luke 14:12-14** *Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.*
14:13 *But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:*
14:14 *And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*
- B. This parable deals more with a person’s motives rather than pride, although it is a contributing factor.
- C. There are several points to note about the reason for this parable.
 1. This parable appears to be directed more to the host, whereas the first one was directed more at the guests.
 2. This is directed to one who invites someone and in turn expects to be invited by his guests.
 3. Jesus apparently surmised that there was a selfish motive involved in this man’s invitation.
- C. The parable itself:
 1. Jesus indicates that one should not invite his *friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.*
 2. Now don’t read into this that it is wrong to invite family, or friends, or relatives, etc. for a meal.
 - 1) The point: this man only gave an invitation in hopes to be invited to everyone elses home in return.
 - 2) If there was some monetary or material compensation he would likely fair better being invited to a number of homes.
 3. Jesus then explains that if one really wants to be compensated in return, let it be at the resurrection (spiritual reward).
 4. Jesus sets in contrast a difference in motives: one that is selfish, another that is charitable.
- D. **Matt. 25:37-40** *Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?*

25:38 *When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?*

25:39 *Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?*

25:40 *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

- E. The desire for reward should not be in this world, but in that which is to come.
- F. Application: Even today, many people refuse to do something for someone else unless they are compensated in some way.
 - 1. Christianity differs from the world greatly, as the Christian does not expect to be compensated.
 - 2. Our reward is yet to come.

III. THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT SUPPER.

- A. **Luke 14:15-24** *And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*

14:16 *Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:*
14:17 *And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.*
14:18 *And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.*
14:19 *And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.*
14:20 *And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.*
14:21 *So that servant came, and shewed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.*
14:22 *And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.*
14:23 *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.*
14:24 *For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*
- B. At this point in time, these Jews did not have an understanding of the Messianic Kingdom.
 - 1. It is possible that this guest was thinking of a great feast that would be held when the Lord's kingdom would be established on earth.
 - 2. Some scholars speculate that this man had a correct understanding of the coming kingdom, but to me, this seems unlikely.
 - 3. Even the disciples, who were with Jesus constantly, did not understand it (**cf. Acts 1:6**).
 - 4. Jesus responds with a parable to correct the idea that the whole Jewish nation would be invited to the great supper.
- C. This parable deals with a very wealthy man who had the resources and ability to invite a great number of guests.

1. A lot of preparation went into this effort, and then the host sends out his servant to notify the guests that all things were ready.
 2. But **vs 18** indicates that those invited began to make excuses as to why they couldn't attend.
 3. It is interesting to note: *And they all with one consent began to make excuse. One consent or accord* suggests that their excuses were similar in nature; that they came out of the same mind and heart.
- D. Important to note: these excuses were not valid.
1. One was going to buy land, and he picked that moment to go and see it.
 2. Another had just purchased some oxen, and he picked that moment to go to the field to try them out.
 3. And yet another just got married, and instead of taking his bride to the great supper, he excused himself.
- E. The host, unhappy with their frivolous excuses, instructs: *'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.*
1. These were the outcasts of society, but also those who would welcome such an invitation to attend.
 2. But there was still room for more.
- F. **14:23** *'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.*
1. *Highways* -- public roads which would lead into the city.
 2. *Hedges* - included the paths in the vineyards and in the gardens.
 3. The master of this feast was determined to have a full house, even if it meant inviting those who were outcasts to the Jews.
- G. **vs 24** *For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.*
1. This parable had been directed to the Jews.
 2. They thought they would be invited to the great supper -- after all they were the children of Abraham; they almost demanded to be invited.
 3. Yet because of their rejection of Christ, they would not be invited, so Christ would turn to those in society that they despised.
 4. Paul encountered this also with the Jews at Antioch: **Acts 13:46** *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.*
- H. Application:
1. The Lord sensed the pride in the guest's statement, and used this parable to slap down this pride.
 2. The Lord has never been pleased with a proud spirit.
 3. The notion today that, "the Lord has to save me, after all I am a good person," is very prevalent in our society.
 4. But Jesus says plainly, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:3).*
 5. Those who are willing to humble themselves can gain entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

6. Jesus Himself learned humility (**Heb. 5:8-9**).
7. How tragic that so many refuse to obey our Lord because of pride.

CONCLUSION:

1. Those who are not Christians: are you willing to humble yourself and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins?
2. Don't let pride be your downfall. Humility is the key to eternal life.