

Foothills Christian Assembly Sermon December 29, 2019  
Luke 14: 7- 11 – “He who Humbles himself”

1 Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. 2 And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" 4 But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. 5 Then He answered them, saying, "Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" 6 And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

7 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11 For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

12 Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just." 15 Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!" 16 Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. 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 here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' 22 And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23 Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "

I. Introduction

- a. So, in last week's text, we saw the first episode during this Sabbath meal in the home of a ruling Pharisee. Jesus has just finished healing a very sick man whose body was swollen and deformed with dropsy. Most likely, the Pharisees had laid a trap for him with this invitation, seeking to find evidence to accuse him. They cared little for the man with dropsy, using him as bait. Jesus' compassion shines through as He takes hold of the man, heals him completely, and then releases him. Jesus' silencing questions reveal the lawyers and Pharisees do not know God or God's Law. Their double-standards are sickening, even causing them to have more concern for their animals than for the poor man with dropsy.

- b. So, as we progress through the next two scenes at this Sabbath gathering, keep in mind Christ’s miraculous healing and silencing rebuke linger as He goes on to teach.
  - c. Today’s Sermon: Luke 14: 7 – 11 “He who Humbles himself”
    - i. The reason and audience for the wedding feast parable v7
    - ii. What not to do: v8,9
    - iii. What to do: v10
    - iv. The summary: v11
    - v. Questions to know, love and obey God
- II. The reason and audience for the parable v7
- a. 7 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them:
  - b. The reason: “when He noted how they chose the best places”
    - i. First, note that Jesus is the one watching them now.
      - 1. Bock “His teaching results from watching the guests head for the seats of honor. The tables are reversed from 14:1, since Jesus is doing the watching here.”<sup>1</sup>
    - ii. We are not told exactly what process was underway, but we know it is not good. Their method of choosing seats shows their need to be instructed about their pride.
      - 1. “they chose” - Bock “The middle voice ἐξελέγοντο (*exelegonto*, they elected) shows that the guests chose seats for themselves.”<sup>2</sup>
    - iii. “the best places” = protoklisia (first place)
      - 1. The first reclining place, the chief place at the table
      - 2. Matthew 23:6 “They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues”
      - 3. Mark 12:39 “Beware of the scribes, who desire ... the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts”
      - 4. Luke 20:46 “Beware of the scribes, who desire... the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts”
      - 5. Bock “Seating custom varied from culture to culture and even within cultures. ... In any culture, the seats by the host were the seats of honor. ... Evidently, rank (“the more eminent” in 14:8) is the issue at this meal. As Jesus watches the guests rush to claim the honored seats, he notes what such behavior reveals about them.”<sup>3</sup>
      - 6. They are exalting themselves. This self-exaltation appears to be routine in their culture and their seating custom.

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<sup>1</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1262). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>2</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1262). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

<sup>3</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, pp. 1262–1263). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

7. Calvin "It is constantly the case with men who are desirous of empty applause, that they cherish envy towards each other, every one endeavouring to draw to himself what others imagine to be due to them. Thus the Pharisees and scribes, while they were all equally disposed, in presence of the people, to glory in the title of a holy order, are now disputing among themselves about the degree of honour, because every one claims for himself the highest place."<sup>4</sup>
  - c. The audience: "to those who were invited"
    - i. Jesus has the attention now, not only of the Pharisee who invited Him, but the entire room. Jesus isn't speaking quietly to one corner of the room. Jesus speaks to the entire crowd.
    - ii. They all need to hear His parable. The whole culture of pride must be exposed. Jesus openly displays and critiques their previously unexamined and unchallenged self-exalting hearts and culture.
- III. Jesus tells them what NOT to do: v8,9
- a. 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place."
  - b. The setting of the parable: "a wedding feast"
    - i. Revelation 19:7-9 "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'" And he said to me, "These are the true sayings of God.""
      1. The surrounding context of Revelation 19 makes it clear that the marriage supper of the Lamb began with the dawning of the New Covenant age and especially with Pentecost, within the lifespan of the Pharisees and lawyers sitting there listening to Jesus in that home on that Sabbath sometime in the spring of 30AD.
    - ii. The eschatological theme is even noted by one of the guests in the next section about who to invite to your parties. The guest says in v15, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"
    - iii. So, while Jesus lays out this most critical lesson about pride and shame, He is pointing not only to being shamed at a meal, but much more importantly, He is pointing forward to being left out of the Kingdom of God because of the refusal to repent of sinful self-exaltation.
  - c. What not to do: "Do not sit down in the best place"

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<sup>4</sup> Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [\*Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke\*](#) (Vol. 2, p. 164). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

- i. So, instead of using your own sense of which seat you deserve, or trying to get into a higher seat you think you may not deserve, realize that the host has the sole authority to assign the seats.
- d. Why not to take the best seat: “lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place.”
  - i. Proudful self-exaltation will lead to shame when your presence in the wrong seat requires the host to ask you to give place to one more honorable than you.
    - 1. Such self-exalting individuals are plagued by this inner demand to get what they deserve. These individuals really believe they deserve better and more than others. This expression of the fallen flesh is always the same. In our sin, we focus on our own strengths, abilities, sacrifices and sufferings, while mostly blind to our own failures. Also, in our sin, we ignore the strengths, abilities, sacrifices and sufferings of others while magnifying and even fabricating weaknesses and failures in others.
  - ii. By self-exaltation, the proudful fool has offended both the host and the one more honorable than himself.
    - 1. The proudful fool has given himself more honor than the host by usurping the authority to assign seats.
    - 2. The proudful fool has sought to rob honor from the one more honorable than himself.
  - iii. Striving for the best place via self-exaltation will lead to frank (not called “friend” like in v10) public correction, humiliation and the shameful walk to the lowest place.
    - 1. Bock “In front of everyone, the guest must get up and move to the remaining seat at the end of the table. The Greek is graphic... depicting the shame felt with each very public step away from the center of action ... In effect, Jesus tells them that it is better not to overestimate one’s importance, which can put one at risk of public disgrace.”<sup>5</sup>
    - 2. It is good for us to feel the shame of this experience. Imagine being that foolish man, seeking self-promotion, yet caught, corrected and humiliated. Jesus tells of this hypothetical man in this parable so that we His people can learn from this cautionary tale and by His grace repent daily and fully of our pride.
    - 3. This moment of shame takes us deeper into the heart of the proud one. Even the darkest heart cannot totally erase its God-created longing for relational bonds of joy and acceptance. To delight in and be delighted in by others is the essence of what it means to be human. What is man’s chief end?

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<sup>5</sup> Bock, D. L. (1996). [Luke: 9:51–24:53](#) (Vol. 2, p. 1264). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

IV. What to do: v10

- a. 10 “But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you.”
- b. So, when it’s time to take a seat, don’t pick the best seat, put pick the lowest seat, the seat with the least honor.
  - i. Anyone remember sitting at the kids’ table during large family gatherings? Anyone remember trying to get to the adult table? Anyone remember the first time they got to sit with the adults? Now, imagine if one of the children tried to sit in mom or dad’s seat. Or, imagine instead if grandpa came and sat with the little children.
- c. Why to take the lowest seat: “so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you.”
  - i. The reversal is evident. Instead of the public correction and walk of humiliation of the prideful fool, the one who humbles himself by choosing the last seat will be called “Friend” by the host, will be given a higher seat, and will have the walk of commendation in the eyes of the other guests.
    1. This walk of glory in the midst of table fellowship again brings forth the deeper motives of us humans made in God’s image. Made by God for mutual delight, self-abasement brings us into the realm of relational glory with God and one another.
  - ii. Proverbs 25:6,7 “6 Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of the great; 7 For it is better that he say to you, "Come up here," Than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, Whom your eyes have seen.”
  - iii. Related: Proverbs 27:2 “Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips.”
    1. Bock “The main point is that it is better for others to recognize who you are than to suggest to them your “proper” (or improper!) place. Humility is the best course in all affairs. Station should be suggested by others, not seized by oneself”<sup>6</sup>
- d. But what about the dark motive of always taking the lowest seat in order to show the world how humble you are? (inverted form of self-exaltation)
  - i. Calvin “It must be observed, that Christ is not now speaking of outward and civil modesty; for we often see that the haughtiest men excel in this respect, and *civilly*, as the phrase is, profess great modesty. But by a comparison taken from men, he describes what we ought to be inwardly before God.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Calvin, J., & Pringle, W. (2010). [Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke](#) (Vol. 2, p. 165). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

- ii. Not only taking the lowest seat at man's feasts, but sincerely taking the lowest seat inwardly before God.
    - 1. This is how Paul saw himself before God. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." (1 Tim 1:15)
- V. The summary: v11
- a. 11 "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."
  - b. The meaning of the parable is quite simple.
    - i. Self-exaltation leads to being humbled by a higher authority.
      - 1. Calvin "This clause makes it evident that ambition was the subject of which Christ was speaking; for he does not state what usually happens in the ordinary life of men, but declares that God will be their Judge"<sup>8</sup>
      - 2. The proud are not always humbled in this life. But, a day is coming when those outside of Christ, still clinging to pride, still clamoring for the best seats, will be exposed, removed and cast out to the lowest place.
    - ii. Self-humbling leads to being exalted by a higher authority.
      - 1. Calvin "Humility, on the other hand, must be not only an unfeigned abasement, but a real annihilation of ourselves, proceeding from a thorough knowledge of our own weakness, the entire absence of lofty pretensions, and a conviction that whatever excellence we possess comes from the grace of God alone."<sup>9</sup>
      - 2. The humble are not always honored in this life. But, a day is coming when those in Christ, hating their filthy pride, astonished they have any place in God's Kingdom, will be given crowns for every faithful moment of self-abasement in this life.
      - 3. Are you like the psalmist? "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Ps 84:10)
      - 4. What seat do you have in the Kingdom, child of God?
        - a. Ephesians 2:1-7 "And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the

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desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

5. And where is Jesus Christ seated?

a. Ephesians 1:19-22 “...according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. 22 And He put all things under His feet...”

c. Could it be that if we walk in the awareness of where God has seated us in Christ that we will never pridefully seek the “chief seat” here because we know we always have the chief seat there next to our Heavenly Father, the seat that matters most, and matters forever?

d. Could it be that if we rest now in our Heavenly, highest, eternal seat in Christ, we are made able by God’s grace to happily humble ourselves to the lowest place during this brief vapor of a life?

VI. Questions to know, love and obey God

a. Have you ever pondered how Christ humbled Himself?

i. Q. 46. What was the estate of Christ’s humiliation?

ii. A. The estate of Christ’s humiliation was that low condition, wherein he for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.

iii. Q. 47. How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?

iv. A. Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth, in that, being from all eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased in the fullness of time to become the son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

v. Q. 48. How did Christ humble himself in his life?

vi. A. Christ humbled himself in his life, by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled; and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.

vii. Q. 49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?

- viii. A. Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.
  - ix. Q. 50. Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?
  - x. A. Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day; which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell.
- b. Have you ever considered specific ways you can humble yourself like Christ humbled Himself? (self-abasement is an active way of thinking and living)
- i. Self-abasement is not just waiting for God to humble us. Rather, it is an active process we choose to impose upon ourselves.
  - ii. James 4:6 "But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."
  - iii. James 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up."
  - iv. This entire section of James 4 teaches us how to humble ourselves:
  - v. Submission to God: self-humbling intentionally rejects self-rule and pursues a life of submission to God and His Word. Take the lowest seat.
  - vi. Resist the devil: self-humbling intentionally embraces the life of battle God has for us against all of His enemies. Self-humbling rejects the empty, easy paths laid out by our flesh, the devil and this world.
  - vii. Draw near to God: self-humbling means always pursuing closeness with God. Self-humbling gladly embraces all God's means of grace whereby we know Him and worship Him and love Him more. The Word. Prayer. Sabbath worship. Baptism. The Lord's Supper. Loving obedience.
  - viii. Do not speak evil of one another. Do not think evil of one another. Self-humbling crucifies our flesh with its envious desires to think and/or speak evil of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Submit to one another.
  - ix. Be judged by the Law, and be a doer of the Law. This is the practical outcome of submission to God. Self-humbling gladly submits the whole person to daily light from God's Word, daily repentance, and daily acts of obedience expressing our ongoing submission to God and hatred of our own sin.
  - x. Do not presume on the future. Self-abasement rejects prideful claims about the future. Self-humbling accepts the reality that only God knows and controls every single future moment.
    - 1. Do not presume on the length of your life. You could die at any moment. Self-humbling acknowledges that only God controls life and death.
  - xi. And, don't forget fasting as another way we can humble ourselves.