

Theme: Sinful humanity desires to be in the places of honor and power reaping an earthly reward. But God calls us to humble ourselves before Him that He might repay us with a heavenly reward.

Background & Introduction: “Some are last who will be first, and some first who will be last.” Jesus gives three examples of the principle at a Sabbath day dinner party.

I. Difficult Dinner Conversation (1-6)

- A. Jesus still reaches out
 - In spite of opposition he accepts the invitation
- B. Jesus put on the spot
 - 1. “And behold” - It’s a trap.
 - 2. Man with “dropsy” (edema)
- C. Putting the Pharisees “on the spot”
 - 1. First question –
 - a. “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath”
 - b. Answer? Silence!
 - 2. Second Question –
 - a. “Which of you...”
 - Hypocrisy exposed again
 - b. A dangerous place (for them)
 - Their hardened hearts will condemn them
 - c. Answer? Nothing to say.

NOTE: Who was “first” and who was “last”?

II. Your Seat At The table? (7-14)

- A. The guests arrive
 - 1. Proper etiquette
 - a. A practical lesson - (Proverbs 25:6,7)
 - Your place at the table doesn’t depend on you
 - It depends on the discernment of the host

NOTE: Honor and Shame were important. Can the same be said of our culture?

- b. Take a lower seat
 - You may be asked to come up higher
 - 2. A spiritual lesson
 - a. Recognize the true Exalted One!
 - b. See ourselves before Him
 - Go to lowest place – Like the savior
 - c. Your place at the table of the Lord?
 - Depends on the discernment of the Lord!
 - At His table – Every place is one of honor

- B. The host's dilemma
 - 1. Invite your friends?
 - 2. Invite the needy.
 - 3. Then you will know blessing indeed!

III. A Place At The Banquet? (15-24)

- A. A confident assertion
 - 1. *Our* great banquet!
 - He expected full agreement from Jesus
 - 2. "Don't count on it!" "Last will be first!" (Matthew 8:11,12)
- B. A casual acceptance
 - 1. A gracious invitation
 - a. For this banquet
 - b. A heavenly banquet
- C. A crucial rejection
 - 1. Lame excuses.
 - a. No *real* reasons to forego the banquet.
 - b. No *real* reasons for rejecting Jesus
 - c. Today's excuses?
 - 2. Dreadful consequences
 - a. For those in the parable? No more invitations. Door is shut.
 - b. For those who were listening??
- D. A compelling invitation
 - 1. Not the "righteous but the sinners"
 - 2. Living in the highways and hedges
 - The table will be *filled!*

IV. Preparing For The Feast

- 1. Jesus raises up and brings low.
- 2. Look for the seat of honor - the one that is by Jesus.
- 3. Don't miss the invitation to the banquet!