

Luke 14

Verses 1-6:

--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. And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

But they kept silent. And He took him and healed him, and let him go. 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?" And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

--(1) Jesus is invited into the home of a prominent Pharisee for a meal on the Sabbath. Once again, He accepts.

--We should not remove ourselves from all interaction or fellowship with unsaved people. That said, we should be like Christ as much as possible, and never compromise our message or behavior while with them. *We remove ourselves wisely when we are too weak to be the light and salt we should be.*

--(2) There is a man there with evident **dropsy**, which was a form of edema, or fluid accumulation in the body that causes swelling.

--The man seems to have been invited as a test for Jesus, but we do not know if he was personally aware of the Pharisaic scheming.

--(3) Jesus **answering** means He speaks right into the unspoken thoughts of the hearts present. He willingly springs the trap, asking: ***Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?***

--(4) ***But they kept silent.*** No conviction! Willful refusal to speak the truth is always a sign of personal sin or deception.

--Remember, these were not crazy cultists. They had the right creed. They knew the proper verses. They were respectable people. They were zealously religious. Still, they had no true heart for the poor, needy, suffering sinner.

--Jesus takes the man, heals him, and lets him go. The man is free, no longer a pawn in the games of those who care nothing for him.

--(5-6) Jesus unveils their hypocrisy *because* He is also concerned about healing them! Their malady was spiritual and not physical. *Look how simply dropsy was healed, and how much more Jesus must do and say to heal pride and hypocrisy!*

--They could not answer Him because to answer Him was to confess their own ignorance and sin. To answer would be to repent.

--It is such a sad sight, Jesus pleading with silent and hard hearts. The religious leaders imagined themselves at a heavenly banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but they never imagined Jesus Christ as being the King of that feast! *They were so close yet so far!*

Verses 7-11:

--So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: "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; 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. 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. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

--Jesus' healing and rebuke did not end the meal, so as He observes how people are taking their seats, He continues to teach.

--Typically, couches would be set around a low table on three sides in a U type shape. Certain seats were considered more honorable than others. The guests were actively jostling for the most prominent positions.

--Jesus plays out what would happen to the one who thinks too much of himself and the one who humbles himself. The crowds lack of humility was evident in the assumption of personal worth and in failing to consider the possibility that others may be more honorable or deserving.

Proverbs 25:6-7: Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of the great; 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.

--We all have a desire to be seen, recognized, and admired. Pride works to lift itself up for the admiration of others. John the apostle calls it the pride of life. *How many deceive themselves into thinking that more prominent lives equal more influence for Jesus?*

--Taking the lower seat is done by esteeming others as better than ourselves and being others-conscious instead of self-conscious.

Philippians 2:3-4: Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

--Do we ever actively and willingly take the lower place? Are we always battling for a higher position we are "deserving of" or do we rest until we are called up by our Master? *Think of Barnabas going and getting Paul, or Joseph in one accord and in one place on Pentecost with Matthias after he was chosen over him.*

--Jesus was the ultimate Example of this mindset as Paul expounds in **Phil. 2:5-11**.

--**(11)** This is a spiritual truth repeated by Jesus on multiple occasions (**Mt. 23:12; Lk. 18:14**), and is found in the OT (**Job 22:29; Prov. 29:23**), and NT (**James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5**).

--God gives us repetition because He knows we need it!

--Ultimately, anyone who exalts himself beyond where God would have him to be, *must* be put down. Similarly, anyone who humbles himself before God will be exalted by God.

Verses 12-14:

--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. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.*

--(12) Jesus has addressed the self-focused invitees and now turns His attention to His host. He has a word of instruction about feast-giving!

--**do not ask.** . . is in the present tense. Which means do not keep inviting or habitually invite all your family, friends, and wealthy connections. Fellowship with those close to us is fine but should not be exclusive.

--There is no real charity shown if we invite all our friends who can willingly return our kindness, and there is a level of selfish indulgence revealed if we enjoy large feasts with other rich folk while the poor are suffering within our reach.

--Do our tables show true hospitality? Do those we know who are in need, those who we have access to, become recipients of our hospitality as well? *Do we have a neighbor who is poor, a widow, an orphan, or in crisis? A co-worker in need?*

--(14) Jesus says doing so will bless us now and in eternity.

--We wouldn't have known anything like this about the resurrection if Jesus hadn't told us! Fittingly, as one who was influenced by post-resurrection Christianity, Luke gives us quite a few details about the resurrection (**Lk. 16:9; 20:35; 24:36-43**).

--The **resurrection of the just** is in contrast with the unjust. All men will be resurrected, the just to eternal life and the unjust to eternal death (**Rev. 20**).

--Christ says that in light of eternity, we can do better! We should be concerned about being eternally **repaid**.

--The NT clearly teaches the doctrine of eternal reward *according to works*, but not *by the merit* of works. We are bound to place hope in what God places before us as a means of holy motivation. Anticipating eternal rewards is not unspiritual or ungodly. It is an act of faith and obedience.

Verses 15-24:

--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!”***

Then He said to him, “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to those who were invited, ‘Come, for all things are now made ready.’ 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.’ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused,’ Still another said, “I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’ 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.’ And the servant said, “Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.’ 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. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.’”

--(15) I believe this was an honest exclamation from one who was in wonder at the gracious actions and teaching of the Lord Jesus (similar to **11:27**). *As an aside, eating clearly still seems to be a part of resurrection life as seen in passages such as: **Lk. 24:42-43; Rev. 2:7+17; 19:9; 22:2**; etc.*

--Jesus responds to the man’s outburst with a sobering teaching about a master who throws a great supper.

--(16-20) A great feast is planned and many have been invited (**16**). The master sends his servant to let those who were invited that the time has come to respond. What is their response?

--(18) Excuses! This is the central warning of the parable. The hour had come but those who were invited had not come. Why? Because of excuses—and not particularly good ones!

--Sadly, this was so much of Israel’s history, and it was even more true in the present with the Messiah right in front of them! *All of our excuses will one day be seen just as foolish in the eyes of the Lord.*

--(21a) The excuses anger the master, just as cold, hard, unbelief angers God.

****Hebrews 3:12-13: Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.****

--(21b-23) This master will have his house filled one way or another! He sends his servant to ***bring in*** and ***compel in*** all the poor and lonely who can be found.

--Those who are compelled are those who want to, but for some reason, are held back by a sense of unworthiness or fearful concern. They would be underdressed, unprepared, unfamiliar with the culture, smelly, dirty, and unworthy. The offer was too good to be true.

--The master's servants were there to help them ***come in, that my house may be filled.***

--Jesus' heart for those beyond the bounds of Israel was already hinted at in **13:28-30** as well as in other Scriptures like **Mt. 24:14; Jn. 10:16;** etc.

--What the master of the house has done materially our Heavenly Father has done spiritually. He has called and compelled us—the poor, maimed, lame, and blind from our city streets, lanes, highways, and byways where we were each lost to our ways.

--**(24)** Like Jesus' earlier teaching, when the master has risen up and shut the door, everyone else is shut out.

--There are no acceptable excuses for rejecting Jesus' invitation today!

Verses 25-33

--Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'?" Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

--**(25)** Jesus, followed by great crowds, turns and addresses them so that they are not left with false notions about what following Him really means.

--Jesus' goal was never to draw large crowds. His goal was to make disciples. Our goal remains the same through the work of His Holy Spirit (**Mt. 28:18-20**).

--**(26)** Clearly, Jesus is not commanding active hate. To ***hate*** is to love less, as Jesus expressed in a similar passage: ***Mat. 10:37: He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me.*** Jesus is claiming supremacy over all other human relationships—even the most natural and dearest.

--***Cannot be my disciple.*** . . . This is not a challenge. It is a fact. If another has our ultimate love, we cannot truly be followers of Christ. At some point, the loyalty of love will be challenged.

--How those early Jews needed this clarity! Faithfulness to Christ meant the severing of so many national, cultural, and familial bonds. *G. Campbell Morgan's memory of the English boys marching out of London to war. They were leaving family and friends for something higher. Something that would be best for their family and friends.*

--Are we afraid of what will happen to relationships if we put Christ first? We should fear what will happen if we don't! No one has ever actually harmed their family or friends through loyalty to Jesus Christ. Many have seriously harmed their family and friends by loving them more than Jesus.

*Ryle (Expository Thoughts On Luke, pg. 126): *"Thousands of Christians will bless God at the last day, that they had relatives and friends who chose to displease them rather than Christ."**

--(27) Notice the words: **his cross**. They are very important. We do not carry Jesus' cross, or anyone else's cross. We are each called to take up our own cross daily.

--A cross is the suffering we face in the path of obedience to the will of God. That path is different for each of us. We follow Him who carried the heaviest cross in full obedience to the will of God.

--**Cannot be My disciple**. . . This is not a challenge. It is a fact. It is the way things are. To follow Jesus will require me to take up my cross. To turn from my cross, to refuse costly obedience in the will of God, means I turn from following Jesus.

--(28-32) To further illustrate His point, Jesus gives two examples of common situations that require sober-minded consideration. None of His listeners would be flippant about deciding to start a building project or engaging in a war. Those are life-altering and life-threatening situations.

--Jesus is trying to shine light on hasty and shallow profession. He is not looking for followers who give no serious consideration to what following Him means.

--Anyone would sit down and think about how their life would need to change if they were to start a building project. Same with a war. Same with following Jesus Christ.

--(33) **So likewise**. . . In like manner, Jesus requires that His followers **forsake all** they have.

--The Greek word for **forsake** (*apotasso*) actually means to say *Goodbye!* It is translated *bid farewell*, *take leave*, and *send away* in the rest of the NT. Jesus is claiming ultimate possession of all our lives.

--We are saying *Goodbye* to everything. We are to live possessing nothing. Everything a disciple of Jesus has is no longer his own. He is only a steward of the things that are Jesus'. Everything we have is to be held with an open hand—not a closed fist.

--**Cannot be My disciple**. . . This is not the way things *should be*. This is the way that things *are*. If I cling to something more than Jesus, I am no longer following Him.

--Jesus sets discipleship right in the middle of our friends and families, our fears and sufferings, our life dreams and plans, and everything we believe is "ours."

--Who in the world could demand such unlimited and boundless loyalty? Only Jesus Christ! He is the One Mediator between God and men, and all connection between this life and the next passes through Him. In Him alone we live and move and have our very being.

--Why not give back to Him what is rightfully His?

Verses 34-35:

--Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, but men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

--(34) We have this saying recorded three times in the gospels (**Mt. 5:13; Mk. 9:50**). Jesus believes this is an important question for a disciple.

--***Salt is good***. Amen! But what is the point of non-salty salt? What is the purpose of something that is no longer able to fulfill its purpose? Nothing. You trash it. *We are not on earth simply to be Christians. We are here to be salt and light. Are you?*

--(35) Who had ears to hear what Jesus was saying? Look who did and who didn't in **15:1-2!**