

Luke 14: 1-14; “Taking the Lowest Place”, A Sermon preached on November 29th, 2020, by Pastor Paul Rendall, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

Exordium – Jesus went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread. Was He invited there on the Sabbath day? No doubt He was. But it wasn't so much hospitality and a desire to kindly interact with the Lord Jesus that caused this man to invite Jesus, but rather it was so that they and the others with him could “watch Him closely” to see what He would do in relation to a certain man who was there who had dropsy.

Define dropsy – Dropsy is what we call edema nowadays; tissues swelling from excess fluid being retained in them, and this is usually due to congestive heart failure.

Jesus addresses both the lawyers and the Pharisees who were there about the Sabbath. Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? If He healed this man on the Sabbath, they thought that they then had reason to accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath. Jesus healed him and let him go it says.

He then asked them a question in verse 5 – Which of you having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a it, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day? They could not answer Him.

The Real Issue was not that they could not answer Him. The Real Issue was their pride; their sense of spiritual superiority; their unwillingness to be taught by the Lord Jesus anything which contradicted the man-made additions to God's law which were a system which could not be violated if Jesus wanted to win their favor. But Jesus was not interested in winning their favor, but in teaching them the principles of truth and righteousness. And so He told them a parable, it says in verse 7, to those who were invited, when He saw how they chose the best places for themselves. This parable was an illustration of the principle of how God rewards humility. Are you making progress in cultivating a humble spirit?

3 Questions to determine whether you are making progress in becoming the humble, holy, and loving person that God and Christ would have you to be.

1st Question– How have I responded to the Invitation to the Wedding Feast?
(verses 7-9)

The invitation to a wedding feast was different from the Sabbath feast that Jesus was now at.

He was speaking about the feast which was and even is to this day, the greatest of social feasts.

People like to go to weddings. Some like to be seen during the feast which is held after the wedding. They want to be seen with the Groom and the Bride. But with a proud person it is more than that. They want to be seen as honorable and important in the eyes of other people.

Jesus reproves this. There are those who are more honorable than ourselves is the truth that Jesus would inculcate here. Because of their work, their faithfulness, their station in life, they deserve the best places at the table.

This principle of social truth is given out by Jesus as a parable in that it has a greater spiritual meaning and application that needs to be received by all of us. Our view of ourselves may not be the view which our God and our Christ have of us, in terms of honor and being honored. The gospel is a wedding feast that you are invited to, in order to be saved. When you answer the

invitation and come, you should have a fitting attitude of unworthiness and humility; not the attitude, I deserve one of the best places in the house. This was the problem which was pretty much common to the lawyers and the Pharisees which came to this Sabbath feast.

Matthew 23: 1-12.

But the Lord Jesus is inviting them, not to the kingdom of self-righteous religious men, but to the kingdom of God. He is telling them that when the One who invited you comes Himself to the feast and He sees that you have put yourself in the place of honor, you will be forced to “give place” to another who is more worthy than you are, of the honor of having the best seat at the table. There will be a sense of shame attendant upon this because you had a wrong view of yourself.

Are you thankful for the gospel?

2nd Question – Am I willing to taking the lowest position at the table? (verses 10 and 11)

The feast is the invitation to come through the gospel and feed upon the grace and truth which comes to you through the Lord Jesus Christ; seeing yourself as a sinner. The issue of honor and position are still there, set before you; even after you accept the invitation and come to Christ.

You will still have to ask yourself; am I thankful enough with what grace and gifts and talents that I have been given by God; to take the lowest position at the table? You see, the person who is thankful for the great salvation which has been given to them in Christ should be willing to humble themselves to be taught, and to take the lowest position. And yet, many Christians both young and old, are not.

Matthew 20: 20-24

Jesus does not say that there is no high and privileged position such as sitting on His right hand. It will take being able to take the lowest place at the table and then also suffering for His name.

God has plans and purposes which will be fulfilled. The reward in the coming eternal kingdom will be based upon faithfulness. Luke 19: 16-26.

3rd Question – Will I consider the poor as I wait to be called up higher?

Verses 12-14 - The problem here with the Pharisees was that they were all too prone to inviting their friends, their brothers, their relatives, and their rich neighbors to their feasts. They would probably very seldom, if ever, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.

Do you ever invite people to dinner who really have great physical needs? Do you make attempts to share the gospel with those who may have great difficulties in understanding all the major doctrines of the Bible? Do you come down to the level of the poor and needy so that you can truly minister to them? These are questions that we ought to ask ourselves as we come to the close of this sermon. Will you continue to have a thankful spirit; showing forth your thankfulness by doing the Lord's bidding in this regard? Let us think much about the kindness of God towards us, and then be kind to others, and that from a thankful spirit, one that is willing to take the lowest place at the table.