

Luke 14:1-14

Introduction: Today we begin a section (14:1-24) dealing with Jesus' criticism of the religious leaders, primarily the Pharisees. One wants to think that perhaps things have changed for them after hearing more of Jesus' teaching. Sadly, we simply see more of the same.

Jesus silences His critics by healing a man—14:1-6

- 1) The setting for the healing—14:1-2
 - a) An environment of suspicion: ¹ *Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on the Sabbath to eat bread, that **they** (emphatic) were watching Him closely* [παρατηρέω]. (cf. 11:53-54)
 - i) Surprising in light of 11:37-54 where Jesus denounced the Pharisees
 - ii) The Jews of this time normally ate 2 meals per day, but on Sabbath they ate three. This one appears to be the noon meal after the service at the synagogue.
 - iii) They are lurking, wondering “What will Jesus do this time?” (Bock)
 - iv) Theophilus would naturally find this repulsive.
 - b) An environment of misery: ² *And behold, there was a certain man before Him who was swollen with fluid (edema/dropsy)* [ὕδρωπικός].
 - i) Luke, a medical doctor, uses this technical term to identify the swelling resulting from the accumulation of lymph in the body tissues, especially in the legs.
 - ii) This ailment, a symptom of some other medical problem (cancer, liver, or kidney problems), was often viewed as a sign of God's judgment, either for sin or uncleanness. (Bock)
 - iii) It is possible that this was a set up to catch Jesus doing something wrong.
- 2) Jesus challenges the religious leaders with two questions—14:3-6
 - a) Question # 1; the timing of showing mercy toward someone who is chronically ill: ³ *And having responded, Jesus spoke to the law experts and the Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”*
 - i) Their unwillingness to respond: ⁴ *But they kept silent.*
 - (1) If they say that healing is permitted, it raises problems about their tradition and their view of the law. If they say that it is not permitted, they will be seen as standing against doing good and showing compassion on the Sabbath. In addition, if they have invited the man and not desire to prevent Jesus from acting, it will raise questions about their motive in inviting the man to the meal. (Bock)
 - ii) Has anything been learned since 13:10-17? He gives them an opportunity to defend their position from Scripture, and they won't or can't.
 - b) The healing: *And having taken him, He healed him, and sent him away.*
 - i) Jesus demonstrates His authority and ability to heal with God's power and approval. (Bock)
 - ii) It is undeniable that the healing came through Jesus.

- c) Question # 2; the appropriateness of showing mercy toward someone in an emergency situation: ⁵ *And having responded to them, He said, “Which of you^{pl}, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a cistern, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?”*
 - i) Their inability to respond: ⁶ *And they were not able to respond to these things.*
 - ii) The leadership stands condemned.

Jesus teaches the other guests concerning humility—14:7-11

- 1) The setting for the teaching—14:7
 - a) ⁷ *Then He told a parable to those who had been invited, when He noticed how they were choosing for themselves the places of honor (πρωτοκλισία; those closest to the host), saying to them,*
- 2) Jesus condemns a self-focused mindset—14:8-9 (cf. Proverbs 25:6-7)
 - a) Don’t assume you deserve to be honored; the honor derived from self-promotion is short-lived while the shame of humiliation is long-lasting: ⁸ *“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor [πρωτοκλισία], lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you and him come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then begin, with humiliation, to take the least important place [ἔσχατος τόπος].*
- 3) Jesus reminds us of the willingness to be in background—14:10-11
 - a) ¹⁰ *But when you are invited, go and take the least important place [ἔσχατος τόπος], so that when the one who invited you comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will have honor in the presence of those who are at the table with you. ¹¹ Because everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* (cf. 1:52-53; 6:21; 10:15; 18:14)
 - b) Begin with the attitude of, “I am not worthy, but I will accept the host’s invitation on His terms.” It is better for others to recognize your worth than for you to do it yourself. (Bock)

Jesus teaches His host concerning the motives behind one’s generosity—14:12-14

- 1) Negatively: don’t invite just the cool kids—¹² *Then He also said to him* (cf. 14:1; this leader of the Pharisees) *who had invited Him, “When you give a dinner [ἄριστον; the earlier meal of the day] (cf. 14:15) or a banquet [δέιπνον; the later meal of the day] (cf. 14:16, 17, 24; 20:46), do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest **they** (emphatic) also invite you back, and you be paid back.*
 - a) Don’t think like the world around you. People in this time would be offended if someone of equal social standing did not invite them.
 - b) Someone once said: the best hospitality is that which is given, not exchanged.
- 2) Positively: especially invite the outcasts—¹³ *But when you give a banquet/reception [δοχή] (cf. 5:29; like the one Jesus is currently attending!), invite the destitute, the maimed, the crippled, the blind, (cf. 7:22) ¹⁴ and you will*

be blessed (by God), because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid (by God) in the resurrection of the righteous.”

- a) Ironically these types of people were not even permitted on the premises at Qumran.
- b) Inviting the outcasts would not make the man righteous; it would testify that he was in a righteous standing before God. (Martin)
- c) Cf. Proverbs 19:17; God notes and approves of such generosity. (NET)
- d) Someone also said: hospitality is generosity when no motive exists besides giving.

Importance

- 1) This is not a lesson on good table manners. It is a parable addressing their attitude toward the kingdom of God. The Pharisees have wrongly assumed they have a place of privilege, but are truly heading toward an unexpected humiliation. They think they are first, but will end up being last. Their need is to humble themselves before God. (Magill)
- 2) God honors selfless graciousness to those in need.
- 3) Before the Lord, selfishness, pride, and arrogance are the signs of a hypocritical person. With the Lord, only genuine humbleness and repentance can be accepted. (Couch)

Take-home truth: God honors selfless graciousness to those in need