

THE BOOK OF LUKE
STUDY TWENTY SEVEN (LUKE 14:1-14)
PARABLES FOR THE RELIGIOUS
"THE WEDDING FEAST"
JULY 20, 2008

Memory Verse

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 14:11

INTRODUCTION

In a wonderful way, the parable of "The Wedding Feast," is an example of God's grace and the humble heart that we should have in response to this amazing gift. Jesus had been invited to dine on the Sabbath at the house of a prominent Pharisee. It appears the Pharisee's intentions were less than honorable in inviting Jesus to dinner. Shortly after arriving, a man with "dropsy" appeared before Jesus. Sensing their trap for Him, Jesus asked the Pharisees and the experts of law who were present, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" No one replied, so Jesus healed the man and sent him on his way. Looking around, Jesus noticed how the guests were scurrying to pick the place of honor at the dinner table. The closer a person was to the host, the greater was that guest's position of honor. After observing this scramble for social status and recognition, Jesus told the parable of "The Wedding Feast." This parable was designed to spur them to consider spiritual realities in relation to the kingdom message He had been preaching.

In this parable, Jesus taught two lessons. First, He addressed the guests and urged them not to seek the places of honor. Service and humility are more important in God's kingdom than status. During this discussion, he exposed the less than worthy motives of the people who were present. They were driven by selfishness and a desire for their own personal recognition. The second lesson pertained to the host. Jesus told the host not to be exclusive about who he invited to dine at his table. Just as God opens His kingdom to everyone, the host should expand his invitation to the hurting, the oppressed, the crushed, the brokenhearted and those who have nothing to offer him. The key message Jesus was communicating was the importance of humility in our lives. Some people try to give the appearance of humility in order to manipulate others.

Many times in the church we do the right thing, but with the wrong motive. Our motives are tarnished and soured. Yes, we can embellish it with spiritual jargon, but in our hearts, our motives are not pure and honoring to the Lord. We are seeking to advance ourselves, rather than serving and honoring the Lord and others. Some people believe humility means putting themselves down. Truly humble people compare themselves only with Christ. They realize their sinfulness, limitations and hopelessness without Christ. Humble people also recognize their gifts and strengths and are willing to use them as Christ directs. As you study this parable, examine your own motives and heart attitude. Ask the Lord to gently loosen the roots and weeds that have infested His plantation and to lift them out. Ask Him to reveal the areas of our lives where we have wrong motives, pride and self-serving agendas and replace them with an attitude of humility and gratefulness because of the love and grace that have been extended to us through Christ.

LEARNING FROM GOD'S WORD

1. Why do you think the man with "dropsy" was at this special dinner? What was wrong with the Pharisees attitudes and rationalizations concerning healing this man on the Sabbath (Luke 14:5)? What might have been the reason for the Pharisees repeated silence in response to Jesus' questions (Luke 14:4, 6)?
2. Why did the dinner party guests scramble to get the best seats at the table? What does this reveal about their heart attitudes (Luke 14:7-11)? What was the main point that Jesus was trying to convey in these verses?
3. In Luke 14:8-9, what does Jesus say will likely happen to the ambitious man who seeks to place himself in the seat of honor? What does He say will happen to the man who chooses to sit in the lowest place (Luke 14:10-11)? How do these contrasts conflict with the "world's truth" concerning this matter?
4. What was the host's probable motive for inviting Jesus to dinner? What dinner invitation strategy does Jesus recommend? Why is this so important? (Luke 14:12-14)

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. Why is true humility such a problem for most people? How does the world usually view humility? How does the world's philosophy conflict with God's principle for kingdom living that is reflected in Luke 14:11?

2. What are some of the key characteristics of a humble person? Why is true humility so important to God? Are there areas of your life where you need to be humbled? If so, what steps are you going to take to deal with these issues?

3. In this parable, Jesus makes it very clear how much he cares for the poor, the needy, the hurting and the downtrodden. He desires for His Church to have the same sensitivity and heart for these people. But, how many, within the Church, really ever see the needful? How many of us ever take steps to truly help the people in our own community who are needy, hungry, unsheltered and unsaved? After reading this parable, how might we truly live out the challenges and truths Jesus is communicating in Luke 14:12-14?

4. What kinds of excuses have you heard from people who are trying to evade God's invitation? Why would anyone want to evade an invitation to God's feast? Who are the people in your life that you need to tell about God's invitation of love and grace? What must you do to communicate this message of life and truth to them?

GOING DEEPER

Read 2 Samuel 22:28; Proverbs 11:2, 16:18, 21:4, 22:4; Matthew 18:4; Romans 12:3, 16; Galatians 6:3; Ephesians 4:1-2; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Peter 5:5-6. What do these verses further reveal to you concerning the importance of humility in our lives?