



The Gospel According to Luke Wk. 74 "The Way of Humility" By Pastor Jody May

Luke 14:1-14 ESV

Healing of a Man on the Sabbath

14 One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. ² And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. ³ And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" ⁴ But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. ⁵ And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son^[a] or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?" ⁶ And they could not reply to these things.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

⁷ Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

The Parable of the Great Banquet

¹² He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be



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blesed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

Dinner parties, this is definitely something different than what our culture participates in now and that is because shared meals in the church have a different function. If we were to go to someone’s house for dinner most likely we would insist on bringing something to contribute to the work of the host. It is more important for us to spend time and fellowship than it is to be served a meal.

There are still dinner parties that happen in our culture. Political and University fundraisers, Business formals, and perhaps you have even attended one of these functions. I have been to a couple and I can’t even remember what they were for. **But most of us have at least been to one type, a wedding.** That’s where everyone, it does not matter your age or status, you are **served equally** just the same. At this type of function, you would notice that there is one group of people that are held in a higher position among everyone else and that is the wedding party. They get to sit next to the Bride and Groom and usually the closer they were in relationship with the happy couple the closer they were in seating proximity.

Dinner parties in Jesus’ day held to the same protocols. They were not potlucks, or BYOB, **people came with the expectation to be served.** While there they also played the game of ‘**who gets to sit at the big kids table**’. You see the closer you were to the head of the party the more important you must be. This game became very interesting because at these parties and functions, is where **people would literally “rub elbows” talk and share news and gossip.** It was where you learned the news of the day, and from here you would go home and share with your or neighbors what you discovered perhaps even elevating your status with them showing who you were rubbing elbows with.

So here we have a place where people are being social in a public platform that was intended to be shared outside that room. **(Social Media).** The equivalent to all of our news and media I guess you could say that the Dinner party was FB and the City Gates were like twitter, shorter and business like. The point of



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connection I want to make here, is that **people have a desire not to just know but to be known and culture has always had a way to promote that.**

Jesus has been invited at this particular time to the top religious player’s home in this town, a **ruler of the pharisees**, to a dinner party or a **social, publicly broadcasted, event**. It is important to **remember** exactly who the pharisees were other than just one of the antagonists of Jesus.

A pharisee was a religious man, the title meaning ‘**separate one**’ a separatist, that instead of going along with the norm in the land decided to separate themselves from other people, to be set apart, by their observance of the law. They had made a religious order, by which you could be noticed and admired for how good you followed the Jewish Mosaic Law. You also observed hundreds of smaller laws you created to be seen and admired because they kept you from breaking the bigger ones giving you a loftier appeal.

They had no interest in politics, no interest in the temple other than making their required sacrifices. The priesthood of the temple was corrupt, the zealots were out for bloody rebellion, the Essenes were essentially isolated monks, so the pharisees went out to the countryside, flyover land, to begin a new way of religious life. Similar to Europeans quest for religious freedom.

It started out as a movement of people set on teaching the Bible to the masses and to bring people back to God, to pull them away from false temple practices and worldly entanglements in secular culture. It grew in popularity because they became the hero of the blue-collar religious folk. It was a hard way of life so even though you may desire to attain to their status most could not do it. But for those that could do it, then your status in your town grew, you became more noticeable, people watched you to see how you handled life and situations. They **paid attention to your social engagements** to see what you like and what you had an opinion on.

It just so happens that eventually their notoriety got the best of them. They became intoxicated with their popularity and slowly they drifted into a stance of pride, because they believed the more popular, the more they could be known,



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the more they could be noticed, that it meant something about them. It meant that they were choosing the right way to get to God and they were being successful at it, all by how people responded to them **and it destroyed their humility.**

OUR NEED TODAY: They became Self-Serving instead of God-Serving, they had strayed into Seeking the good of Self instead of Seeking the good of their neighbor, their separate ways had separated them from God. BTW for church folk like us, it is the easiest way to **miss the Narrow door** when you **think life is about meeting your emotional and physical needs instead of distributing the bread of life to those in need.**

That’s what we want to learn about today, by looking at their mistakes and Jesus’ teaching **and discover, “The Way of Humility”**. As we are called to be Holy for He is Holy (1 Peter 1:15-16), to be set apart, we need to not fall in the same traps as the pharisees. Now, **let’s head back to our meal.**

This meal had a particular function, it was not to host or celebrate Jesus, but it was intended **to take Him down**. Jesus had taken away some of their popularity and had shown that there was something out there better to notice and not only that, Jesus’ nature was not to put too much stock in honoring himself. It would make how they conducted themselves actually look less holy. Nothing is as infuriating as when someone looks better than you, doing the things you won’t do, to the people’s attention you covet, **for it means your works don’t matter!**

Three Traits of Self Servers...

Seeking Devotion by Demeaning Others

We see this dinner is a set up and we know it’s s set up because in v.1 it says that from the beginning the pharisees were **watching him carefully**. Then the intent in v.2 with **‘behold’** is so that you, the reader, would know why they were watching Him. There was a man before Him with Dropsy, **or Edema**, a swelling of the soft tissues from water. They picked a person with an ailment that would look



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like he was suffering. Jesus lets you know it is a set up because He answers the pharisees right away.

³ And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?” ⁴ But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away.

The Pharisees had hand-picked a suffering man to put on display to bring Jesus down. These **self-serving seekers** sought attention by putting others down, **demeaning them**. Jesus, like a good and correcting teacher, removes the man he healed so He could address those that would use him.

For us many times, **this is what tells us we are heading down the road of a self-serving seeker**. We begin to find other people to be compared with and people we can tear down. Perhaps today you spend more time demeaning people, poking fun at other religious types instead of helping those that God has put in front of you, like this church family. Perhaps today even privately you are comparing yourself to an old acquaintance on-line and instead of praying for them when they stumble publicly you are little excited about it. That’s a warning sign, I have been there.

Jesus offered Himself to the cruelest people on earth so He could be demeaned, so that we no longer have to worry about comparing ourselves or being compared to others because by our Lord, we are all treated the same. **Really, His attention should be all we need...**

Seeking Approval from Seeking Status

Jesus continues to address the need in the lives of the people there, those caught up in seeking the approval of those that sought devotion by demeaning others.

⁸ “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place.



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Jesus is telling them and us, **don't be concerned about how close you are to those you idolize or to those you want the attention of.** That's what sitting in a seat closer to the host did for you, it portrayed how close you were to the host, how much you were liked and what respect you should receive.

Here's the danger with living like that. You risk being overlooked because if our **lives are about achieving status** from those we put on a pedestal don't you know that the one that outdoes your devotion will get the best seat? That's what Jesus is alluding to, it will happen eventually.

Seeking Favor from Seeking Reciprocity

Jesus then goes on to talk again to the Pharisee that had put on this whole shindig.

¹² He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid.

Jesus calls him out and states what He sees behind the guest list. Bro, you invited people to a dinner whereby you knew you would gain back ten-fold. You invited people that would call you to their house for a party, that would put out the good plate ware for you, that would kill their fatted calf. You were putting yourself on the invite list of all these people that you invited for you knew they would most certainly invite you back. You sought favor by ensuring that the people you invited would be those that would most likely invite you over showing that you were liked.

The tribe is now exclusive not inclusive, you have used the Gospel to build a wall around you of people that will praise you not rebuke you. You have only been hospitable to those that can afford to be hospitable back.

For us the church, isn't this what we do? **We like and hang with people that will treat us like we treat them.** As Christians we have to be careful because this is where cliques come from. We invite into our lives those that look like us because



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we know that our worlds will most likely remain the same. In reality people who look like us the most, usually have the least to say because of mirror imaging, they don't want you to say something to them. **Want an honest opinion about yourself? Find some friends that don't resemble you.**

At the end of **Matthew 6** there is this famous verse about **what we should be seeking:**

³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

What are these things? All the things you need to live. **You and I don't have to play all the games of a self-serving seeker to get assurance from others if we seek the Kingdom First.** Jesus gained notoriety for us, he earned the favor of His Father for us, He earned the disdain of the devil we get that too, and He earned the greatest fame in the earth that even rocks will cry out if no one is around! When we seek Him and what He desires we will begin to look like Him. **It is in this way that we will attract those that look like us and actually appreciate who we are.** You will also come to notice that you will not be liked by all because everyone didn't like Jesus.

In the scripture today there are three ways in which we practice seeking the Kingdom first helping to ensure that we are walking the Way of Humility:

Application:

1. Seek the Good of Others (5-6)

⁵ And he said to them, “Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?”

It wasn't against the law to heal this man on the sabbath because the law allowed to treat/heal the sick or save an animal if injured. The issue was that this man was a Hebrew and Jesus had the power to deliver him. **If you have the power to**



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do good for someone why wouldn't you do it? They pharisees should have desired to see Jesus heal for the right reasons.

The World today says make an enemy and make a name for yourself - seek the devotion of others by demeaning another individual. **BUT the Gospel says make a friend of an enemy (Mat. 5:43-48) and you will either become loved or hated for introducing them to the kingdom.** Either way **your popularity if not approval will increase** as you make it a point to love others as you love yourself.

Jesus has gained our devotion by devoting His life to our Salvation and in the same way when we devote ourselves to loving our neighbors and enemies well, we add to the popularity of Christ. This is what really matters!

2. Seek to Honor Others (10-11)

¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you.¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus. If you remember, uses the illustration of a wedding feast, the greatest of all party and social events. It is believed that the intent is to compare what the Pharisee is doing to possibly with what the wedding feast of God will be like. He has already used that picture of the servants waiting for the master to return after the party. Jesus is referring here to the **ignorant behavior** of those that have tried to manipulate their way to the top through seeking approval by seeking a social status.

Now, loved ones, doesn't that just sound crazy when I say it? But if we are honest with each other we all fall in that trap from time to time. We all find ourselves chasing approval of people so hopefully our status can change. **The reality is that when we seek to improve the honor of others, to treat other people with dignity, to treat others with kindness, and respect it actually elevates you in the Kingdom of God.** By which Jesus Himself one day will take the time to place you



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and serve you in proportion to how you served and honor people while you were here on earth (**Luke 12:37**).

3. Seek to Love the Less Fortunate (13-14)

13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, **14** and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

As Jesus addresses the Pharisee leader on last time and His correction for him is instead of inviting those that would love to reciprocate invite those that can't. Invite those people that would benefit from being around you even though it does nothing for your social status to help you feel important.

This is the great test of the Gospel to know whether you have found the Kingdom of God or not. **Can you love people that need your attention without ever running out of compassion for them?** The answer is **YES**, for the redeemed are connected to the eternal fountain of life, the eternal bread of life, Jesus, and if that is what we are feeding people with then we will never run out! In our lives let us seek out those that have need and serve them instead of seeking out those that will reciprocate our need for acceptance.

Let me close with one last word from Jesus, a warning that He gave the church that was getting caught up in their religious ways.

Revelation 2: 2-7 ESV

2“I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil, but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not, and found them to be false. **3**I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. **4**But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. **5**Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. **6**Yet this you have: you hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also



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hate. **7**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.’

Family let us not fall victim to the monster of Pride and Entitlement but let us strive together and encourage one another to love each other as Jesus has loved us.

PRAY

COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

Go in the name of the Father, patiently withholds justice so that we may still have time to turn back to our first love.

Go in the name of the Son, that humbled Himself for our sake loving us who were undeserving so that we may have true acceptance.

Go in the name and the power of the HS, that opens our eyes to the truth that humility is key for the Narrow Path, and helps us lead others to such a way.