

**TRUST, HUMILITY, AND REWARD**  
**(SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023)**

---

**SCRIPTURE:** 10 COMMANDMENTS; LUKE 14:7-14

**INTRODUCTION**

The message of salvation is not simply you can be a better more kind, successful person that people will really like.

The magnificence of God's grace is seen in the great humiliation, shame, and obedience of our Lord Jesus Christ to die for sinners and redeem us from our bondage to Satan, sin, and death.

When we truly understand who we are and what we deserve, when we come to see the beauty and perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done and trust in Him, then the commands and calling that God gives to us take on a much different light.

Consider from last week the beautiful and powerful scene of Jesus in the home of a leading Pharisee.

Jesus has just shown His power in healing a man with a serious, probably life-threatening condition.

He has silenced all His opponents.

Everyone present should have bowed before our Lord and cried out for His mercy.

Jesus used this situation to speak on the subjects of **humility** and **reward**.

These two subjects are not simply personal virtues.

*These two subjects are vital when you think of the larger picture of the church and the spread of the gospel.*

**If you are truly trusting in the Lord and His work, then you will not simply seek for earthly recognition and reward.**

1] Exaltation and Humiliation, Luke 14:7-11

2] Seek for True Blessing and Reward, Luke 14:12-14

### **1] EXALTATION AND HUMILIATION, LUKE 14:7-11**

I mentioned last week that all of Luke 14 likely took place in one day.

The first part of the chapter took place in the home of a prominent Pharisee.

Verse 25 moves to a new section, but the final part of the chapter does appear to be connected to the first half.

In verse 1 we saw that Jesus' opponents were carefully watching him.

In verse 7, we see also that Jesus was watching those who were at the banquet, specifically those who were looking for the best seats at this Sabbath meal.

The **verbs** in verse 1 and 7 are not the same, but there is a connection.

It is good to be observant and to notice things. The book of Proverbs has a lot of instruction related to noticing how people act.

Jesus observed that at least some of those invited to the Sabbath meal found the best places.

The word translated as **best places** is used in other passages in the gospels.

**Matt. 23:6** They love the **best places** at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues,

**Luke 20:46** “Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the **best places** at feasts,

We cannot be 100% certain, but we do have some records from the time of the NT of how people sat at special meals or banquets.

One commentator describes the background this way.

The basic item of furniture was called a *triclinium*, a low couch for three people.

A number of these low couches, *triclinia*, would be arranged in a U-shape around a low table.

You would recline on your left elbow.

The place of highest honor was at the base of the U. The second and third places were those on the left and right of the central position.

Depending on the size of the banquet, there would be other tables that would have lower positions of honor.<sup>1</sup>

We have evidence of this seating style in John 13.

---

<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3 of Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. IVP/Accordance electronic ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 249.

**John 13:23** Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. **24** Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

**John 13:25** Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

Assuming that Jesus was in the central position, then John would have been reclining in the place of honor right by Jesus.

This is a very different way of sitting than we are used to.

I think the closest idea that we would have today is a wedding reception.

Traditionally there is the table for the bride and groom and their attendants. This is the table of highest honor.

And then spread throughout the banquet hall are the other tables.

We don't like to think so much in terms of positions of rank, but it is somewhat inescapable.

But in the culture of Jesus' day, the ideas of **honor and shame** would have been much more central.

Jesus noticed what was going on.

He used this to speak on something even more important than just where you sit at a wedding feast.

**Warning:** Don't sit down in the best place.

**Reason:** Someone more honorable could come and you would be asked to take the lowest place, with shame (great embarrassment).

This word **shame** is used just 6 times in the NT. This is the only place in the gospels.

**Phil. 3:19** whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things.

**Heb. 12:2** looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, **despising the shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Positive Command:** Go and sit down in the lowest place.

**Reason:** Your friend might ask you to sit in a higher place. Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at table with you.

Then we have a **conclusion** in verse 11:

“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

There are a number of Scripture passages that parallel the words of Jesus here.

**Psa. 18:27** For You will save the humble people,  
But will bring down haughty looks.

**Prov. 29:23** A man’s pride will bring him low,  
But the humble in spirit will retain honor.

**Matt. 23:12** And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

**James 4:6** But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

*“God resists the proud,  
But gives grace to the humble.”*

John Calvin correctly observed Jesus is not just giving tips on life and where you should sit at a banquet.

It is very possible to appear humble and contrite.

The greater issue is the sin of desiring earthly recognition and honor and even more the issue of humility before God.

What is a practical application of this?

It is not that we seek to beat ourselves up constantly.

- 1] Watch out for pride and arrogance. They are powerful forces.
- 2] Seek to often confess our sin.
- 3] We must fight against that desire to be celebrated by men.
- 4] We seek to not exalt ourselves in importance with respect to other believers.
- 5] Most important we always seek to be in submission to God.

**3John 9** I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us.

## **2] SEEK FOR TRUE BLESSING AND REWARD, LUKE 14:12-14**

Jesus used this setting to speak of something very closely related to the previous topic.

Are we motivated in our service by earthly reward or resurrection reward?

Notice that verses 12-14 have a very similar structure to verses 8-11.

There is a warning or negative command and reason followed by a positive command and reason.

**Warning:** Do not ask your friends, brothers, relatives, or rich neighbors to come over for a feast.

**Reason:** Lest you get invited and basically repaid for your invite and hospitality.

**Positive command:** Invite the poor, maimed, lame, and blind.

**Reason:** You are blessed; They cannot repay you.

**Conclusion:** The repayment takes place at the resurrection of the just.

What is the application of this text for us today?

The main application is not don't invite friends and family to your house. You can only invite strangers.

The heart of this text is what motivates you in your service to the Lord?

Are you motivated simply by earthly recognition and payback or is there a much deeper motivation focused on the resurrection?

I think it is a shame, but we have to confess that a lot of Christian service is not always done for the right reasons.

There is a great danger when we just do things to get the approval of others.

- Application for children
- Important vs. unimportant (preview of the next parable)
- Reward and Heaven...

R. C. Sproul also mentioned a powerful application of this passage.

“There are moments in our lives when every Christian has to face this question: Do I please these people, or do I please God? The Bible is a history of what happens to people who faced that choice and decided to please God rather than man. It’s a bloody history. It’s not a pleasant thing to lose friends. It’s not a pleasant thing to have your reputation tarnished because you wouldn’t play ball. With respect to the gospel, it’s never, ever, ever a game. It’s a commitment where eternity hangs in the balance. It’s better to lose a thousand friends or a thousand relatives than to lose the gospel. If you seek to please men rather than God, it might get you into the most honored seat in the house—until He comes and says: “Please move. Go to the back of the house. Will those who have kept the faith, honored Me, and sought more than anything to please Me rather than seeking the applause of this world come up here and sit at My Father’s table?” Whom do you want to please? The world or the Lord of the world?”

## CONCLUSION

**If you are truly trusting in the Lord and His work, then you will not seek for earthly recognition and reward.**

Lord’s Supper

- Humility & Strength
- Suffering of our Lord & Victory
- We must be humbled but not to inactivity or weakness but for bold service.



Prayer

Hymn 357

**BENEDICTION – HEBREWS 12:1-3**

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls.