

Sermon Text: Luke 14: 1, 7-14

Sermon Theme: Be Prepared: The Life of Faith is Humble

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.

⁷ When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: ⁸ “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. ⁹ If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

¹² Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Who ever wanted to be famous? I think most of us have thought about being famous. Why did you want to be famous? Did you want to do something amazing like travel to the moon? Did you want everyone to know who you were like a movie star or sports figure? Did you want to be the president for all the power and privilege that went with it? Or maybe you just wanted the fame, fortune and things that go along with being famous.

There is nothing wrong with wanting to be famous or even being famous. Maybe we have had a little fame from time to time in our life.

And yet as we look at those many things that come along with being famous, we realize that not all of them are good for the life of a Christian. The devil can use things like fame, fortune, power, and authority to tempt us. Getting them can feed our ego and lead us to sinful pride. Even if we are not famous we can still fall in love things with things like power and authority, money and privilege and want them more than anything else.

In the Word of God before us this morning, Jesus warns us to Be Prepared for these temptations. He tells us the life of faith is a not a glorious life, it is a humble life of faith and thanks to him.

How do you feel when you hear those words a humble life? They are not what you dreamed about when you were little. It’s not what you went to college for. It’s not what you promised your spouse or what they thought of when they accepted.

Often we think humility is a bad thing. In this world, we are often taught that we have to be strong to get ahead. We are taught that power and authority are two very important indicators of success. We are also taught not to show humility because that is showing weakness and people will walk all over us.

Because we hear this so often, we think that the life of power and authority is one that can easily stand side by side with the humility that Jesus wants in his children. Yet, when we look more closely, it is very difficult to balance a life that is striving for power and authority, where everybody notices us, and the humble life of faith of a Christian because they are lived by 2 different set of rules.

A life of power and authority is often lived by the rules of the world. The biggest rule that the world lives by is I take care of me first and everybody else second. I am going to do whatever I need to do to get what I want and need. I will do whatever it takes to look better and be better, make more, have the better job than the next guy. If I have to lie, cheat and steal to get what I want, that is fine because the end justifies the means. This kind life is always striving for more to feed our own sense of pride and is never content with station of life or the blessings that God has given.

The life of faith which shows humility is marked by some very different rules. **Love your neighbor as yourself. Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.** These are not rules that put us on top. In fact, they put others and their needs first and our needs second. Jesus says in the book of Mark. **If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.**

The life of faith is not marked by always striving for more, this humble life is marked by contentment with what God has given to us and where we are in life. Paul says to Timothy, **”But godliness with**

contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it.”

We also heard from the book of Hebrews, **“Be content with what you have.”**

This is often where we feel the difficulty between living a life that puts me first and strives to get what I want, and the life of Christian which puts others first and is marked by contentment.

Jesus illustrates the difference in the parable that he tells in our sermon text. You can almost see what’s going on in the room that prompts Jesus to speak. The Pharisees and others are sizing up the room to see who’s who. As Jesus explains, the seating of these dinners was very important. If you were seated close to the head of the table close to the VIPs, you might get recognized. As they were sizing up the room, they were deciding who they would honor by sitting next to them. Their pride was making sure that they had the best place of honor they could find.

As I was reading this I was reminded of the same thing that I used to do whenever I had meals in the college cafeteria. I would stand for a moment with my tray in my hand and size up the room to see who was there. There were always those I wouldn’t sit with because I didn’t know them. There were those I wouldn’t sit with because I did know them and didn’t care to sit with them, and then there were those who were left. I took that moment deciding who would get honor of my presence.

In the cafeteria nobody was in danger of receiving power and authority by me sitting next to them. But it was a popularity game for me and for them. For me, it was sitting with the cool kids to look cool myself, for them it was deciding whether they were going to allow me to sit next to them or have their coolness affected.

The most humiliating thing was walking up to a table and having them tell me that the seat or seats were saved for other people, or they would get up with their trays and walk about. Then I would have to walk away and find someone else to sit with.

There was power and authority at stake in the room where this meal was taking place. As these men are trying to figure out where they are going to sit Jesus tells them not to honor themselves more than they really are. He tells them that if they sit down at a place of honor that they don’t deserve, the person who is in charge of the meal will come and ask to move and you will be humiliated in front of everyone.

Jesus shows the opposite of pride when he teaches us how to be humble. ¹⁰ **But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”**

Instead of seeking glory for ourselves by pushing ourselves forward, be humble, let others honor us. In the cafeteria, I was always afraid that I would eat alone. Maybe it was my coolness factor wasn’t as high as I wanted to it to, but I was always worried that people would just walk by and sit somewhere else. It was always a good feeling when someone looked over the room and wanted to sit by me. There were even times when a group at another table would ask me to join them.

Jesus is saying something similar. Imagine what will happen when you are sitting in a place of less honor and the master of the dinner comes up to you and asks you to move to a place of higher honor in front of all the guests.

Jesus point is much more than the etiquette of Miss Manners. It is a mindset and an attitude of humility that flows from faith. It was a mindset and attitude that Jesus displayed himself,

If anyone should have been at the head table in that room it was the Messiah, the Lord and Savior of all. Yet, Jesus didn’t walk past them all and sit at the head of the table. If there was anyone who should have been recognized, honored and served as the King of Kings, it was Jesus. Yet, Jesus did not walk in and demand to be served with kingly banners waiving. Jesus lived the humility he was talking about. Paul says in Philippians, **[Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped; ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!**

Even though Jesus was God and deserved to be glorified, he humbled himself. He did not go after any of the earthly things that we think are so important. Instead, he chose a life that served us in all he did.

Jesus did this to do more than set an example for us. Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to many things to be a servant. He came to serve his own creation...who should have served death. Jesus willingly placed himself under the Law that he created, to live perfectly in our place. He willingly became

obedient to the laws of nature with pain, suffering and death so that he could free us from the pain and suffering of sin. He was willing to set aside his glory and honor in heaven, to come to earth to serve us and to bring us to himself.

Jesus humbled himself to be what we could not be for ourselves. Our humility will not get us one step closer to heaven because Jesus has completed the work that was necessary. Our humility reflects our loves and thanks to him for what he has already done.

This life of faith that we lead is humble because it realizes that since Jesus has put us first we can put others first. This humble life of faith does not seek honor from the world, but realizes the true honor has already been given to us by Jesus. Peter says we are honored by God **as his chosen people, a royal priesthood a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that.** This honor from God who has forgiven us, saves us, and continues to bless us, leads us to live and act humbly ourselves in thanks for what he given to us. **You may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness.**

Jesus tells us that our lives are to be humble. We may not live a life full of every creature comfort while we are here on earth, but we realize that the true blessings are not found here on earth. One day there will be blessings that overflow in heaven.

Pride in ourselves can lead to temptation. But having the proper knowledge of who we are in Christ will lead to a humble thankful life that seeks to praise and thank Jesus for what he has done for us.