

MEET YOURSELF IN LUKE'S PARABLES

Part 7: Parables about Selfishness (Luke 14:1-24)

INTRO – Ever noticed that one of the best times for learning is mealtime? Sharing food tends to break down barriers and start meaningful conversations. Jesus, the Master Teacher, certainly understood this concept. Many of our Lord's significant lessons took place over a banquet table or a hillside picnic. Most of us have probably seen these words hanging on the wall in a home: "Jesus Christ is the head of this home, the silent Listener to every conversation, the unseen Guest at every meal." But, I wonder how many of us would *really* want the Lord at our table? He can be a very dangerous Guest! One influential Pharisee would soon discover this fact. The Lord's table talk was anything but idle conversation. During this meal, Jesus tells several parables (climaxing with the parable of the great supper). In them, Jesus rebukes four people or groups for their selfishness, and what it revealed. Warnings against selfishness (Ph. 2:3, 21; 2 Tim. 3:2; Jam. 3:14, 16). Map...

MAIN TRUTH: Selfishness reveals itself in a variety of damaging practices.

I. THE PHARISEES – Lack of SYMPATHY (14:1-6)

- A. *SCENE* – 3 Tables set in U-shape (triclinia)... Jesus is an invited dinner guest under close scrutiny (v. 1). A man suffering from dropsy appears (v. 2). Don't know if wandered in or a plant. Modern day edema, where body swells grotesquely, often indicating a serious condition. Taking the initiative Jesus asks controversial question (v. 3). . .
- B. *DILEMMA* – Isn't first time Jesus dealt with healing on Sabbath – at least six prior times. If Jesus did not heal the man, He was *heartless* and showed no compassion. But if He did heal him, He was *lawless* for breaking the Sabbath. Pharisees were heartless people who exploited people and tried to use their weaknesses for selfish advantage. What did Jesus do?
- C. (vv. 4-6) *REBUKE* – Jesus heals the man and rebukes them with a parable (v. 5). In their eyes, it was okay to save an animal on the Sabbath but not to relieve a man's suffering! They cared more about animals than people and more of their religious structure than ministry. Their selfishness showed in no sympathy.
- D. *THOUGHT* – Many treat animals and pets better than people, who are made in God's image. Spend more money on dog food than foreign missions! Keep meeting needs and ministry ahead of rules and structure.

II. THE GUESTS – Lack of HUMILITY (14:7-11)

- A. *SCRAMBLE* for best seats and places of honor occurs. Grown-up musical chairs! Where you sat was a status symbol. The guests like many today were status seekers, pyramid climbers, popularity hounds. They thought only of themselves. Jesus saw their pride and tells a parable.
- B. *PARABLE* (vv. 8-11) – Very opposite of today's mentality that says to get ahead you must sell yourself. Jesus turns self-promotion theory on its ear and says, "Be content with the back row. If God wants you on the

front row, He'll move you." Don't be proud, be humble. They had phony view of success – has nothing to do with where you sit, but with who you are!

III. THE HOST – Lack of GENEROSITY (14:12-14)

- A. (v. 12) *WRONG GUEST LIST* – You only invite them so they will invite you back. You only entertain those who will entertain you. It was a closed "supper club." They were buying recognition. In their selfishness, they had little kindness or generosity.
- B. (vv. 13-14) *RIGHT GUEST LIST* includes those who have nothing to give in return. Don't be exclusive and cliquish. Don't show partiality or favoritism (Jam. 2:1-10).
- C. *LESSON* – Forces all of us to look at our social calendar. Are we exclusive? Only hang around and help people who can boost our career or add to our social status? Jesus says be kind and generous to all. Get past the color of a person's skin or size of wallet and see through Jesus' eyes.

IV. THE JEWS – Lack of AVAILABILITY (14:15-24)

- A. (v. 15) *JEWISH BELIEF* held all Israel would be in God's future kingdom. Jesus tells them a parable that participation in God's future kingdom has nothing to do with physical heritage, but with their individual response to God's invitation to salvation.
- B. (vv. 16-24) *PARABLE* of Great Banquet – 3 Scenes:
 1. Scene One – *PREPARATION* (vv. 15-16) – Salvation is a banquet and the Christian. life is a feast (not funeral). God has made all preparations for salvation.
 2. Scene Two – *INVITATION* (vv. 17-20) – All had previously accepted but now that all is ready, they begin to make excuses for refusing to come. A person good with excuses is not usually good at much else. Excuses were worthless. Much usually made of each excuse, real issue is that any excuse at all would be made!
 3. Scene Three (vv. 21-24) – *CONDEMNATION* – Primary warning to Jewish people who had false confidence because of national heritage. Also a warning to all who are unavailable for God's invitation (13:22-30). No real excuse for saying no to salvation.

MAIN TRUTH: Selfishness reveals itself in a variety of damaging practices.

CONC – Selfishness has many faces – saw four in passage: Pharisees had no sympathy, guests had no humility, host had no generosity and Jewish people refused opportunity. See yourself in passage? Don't follow their route (v. 6 "nothing to say"). Instead, confess all kinds of selfishness.