

The Ambitious Guests

Matthew 13:34 “*All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them.*”

A Sabbath Day Meeting with the Lord

In Luke 14:1 Jesus visits at the house of a high-ranking “chief Pharisee” on a Sabbath day. It seems in the Scripture that this gathering with Jesus in the midst is spoken of in great length ending in Luke 17:10. Jesus, like the others in attendance, was likely there by invitation. The stated purpose of the gathering was to “eat bread,” verse 1. Yet, the tone of what Christ has to say at this meeting leads one to believe Christ was called there so that those gathered could “watch Him,” verse 1. They, being Pharisees, did not desire to watch Him for the purpose of learning from Him. They desired to *trap* Him in a lie or catch Him violating the Sabbath. Critical, cynical eyes were upon Him.

As we study the many parables in the Word of God, it is with great interest that we look at those spoken by Christ. In this Sabbath day meeting alone, Christ spoke many parables. In this chapter, Luke chapter 14, there are six parables spoken by the Lord. I doubt Christ found much pleasure in being invited to a gathering only to be placed on *probation*. Little did those gathered that day know they were speaking to the omniscient Lord. They would not trap Him “for never man spake like this man.” They did not dominate Him, but He dominated them. In verse 2 through 6 he healed a man with dropsy on the Sabbath. Though given a chance to criticize the Lord for healing on the Sabbath Day, they held their peace, verse 6.

We always remember a parable is spoken that a truth or principle may be conveyed. A parable is used to “get the point across.” Jesus made plenty of points at this meeting. Parable after parable is uttered. Let us look at one of them:

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Please read Luke 14:7-11. Looking at verse 7, we see the Lord “*marked*” the crowd this day. While they “*watched*” Him in verse 1, He “*marked*” them in verse 7. There is a difference. When we as men watch, we look on the outside. When He marks, He sees the inside of a person. As the crowd arrived that day, that is, those that had invitations, the Lord observed how folk chose their seats. Seems everyone wanted the “*chief rooms,*” verse 7. Everyone wanted preeminence. They sought out the places to sit where they would most likely be noticed. They desired to be seen of men!

As the Lord saw their actions, it signaled to Him that it was time to speak a parable. You see, God does observe. God does notice. I am not attempting to tell you God is a tyrant from which we fear our every move. I am telling you God has the time and the ability to see who is sitting where. He is the same God who numbers the hairs of our head and attends the funeral of every sparrow. Be sure your sins will find you out, for He has already found this crowd out. Yes, He is a God capable of knowing who sits where. He is easily capable of knowing if you gave your tithes, and if you are exercising your calling and talent for God. If He knows where you sit, He knows where you *stand* and where you *lie down*.

The Lord, seeing their actions in selecting their seats, then spoke a parable. Verse 8 tells us the spoken parable centers around a wedding. There are other parables in the Bible regarding a wedding. The Lord thought a lot of weddings and still does. In fact, the family is as dear to God today as it was when he spoke it into existence 6000 years ago.

This parable addresses humility. Have you ever heard that word? Humility is the opposite of pride. Christ speaks of one invited, that is, “*bidden*” to a wedding. One who receives a wedding invitation is blessed. You are going to an event God sanctioned when you attend a wedding. Some of whom the Lord spoke apparently felt the opposite. Instead of feeling humble and honored by being invited to a wedding, they felt others should feel humble and honored that they would attend! You see, the wedding attendee is not the honoree. The bride and groom are the honorees! The honor in the life of a believer is the groom, Jesus, and His bride, the church of the living God. If Jesus and His church are not first and foremost in your life, your

priorities as a believer are incorrect. By the way, Eternity is also about the groom and His bride.

So, some guests entered the door of the wedding chapel looking for the “highest rooms,” verse 8. Was it because they wanted to be able to better see the bride and groom? Did they desire a good view of the wedding feast? No. Their desire was to be seen by others. Reality is that when they walked in the door, *pride* had arrived. They should have been introduced as “Mr. and Mrs. Pride.” I doubt many were late for they were all competing for the “chief rooms” which get taken fast. You needed to arrive early to get the best seats. “Chief rooms” were those rooms elevated as on a stage or in a balcony.

We live in the most prideful age in history. To realize this, you need do no more than take a trip to the shopping mall or restaurant. Look around at how folk dress. Listen to their speech. There is no longer such a thing as “style.” Vanity reigns. *Vanity* has replaced *style*. Vain people don’t recognize style. A vain person looks appropriate any way they choose to dress. Their proud heart and proud look are the center of attention. This society is in competition to see who can be the most outrageously *decorated*. In times past, we used to compete to see who could be the best *dressed*. Today, people don’t dress when they go out in public. They decorate.

Today’s dress is awful. Remember when we dreaded wearing clothes that had holes? Remember when it was important whether or not our clothes fit properly? Remember when we used to be concerned that we look presentable in the eye of others? We used to wash dirt off. Now, we tattoo it on. Rings used to go on the finger, and now they go anywhere except the finger. Ball bearings belong in the wheel of a car, not in the tongue. Anything one can drape over their body and strap on their foot and parade down the street qualifies as appropriate attire. Just so it gets *attention*. Pants can’t be low enough. The men want the crotch down at the knees, and the women need the waist a third of the way down on the buttocks. Undergarments need to show. That’s cool. I’d like to go up to some of these 30 year old men and say “hey dummy. Your hat is on backwards and pull up you pants.”

If there is a style in this age, it is called “outlandish.” It came out of the pit of hell. What was once a civilized nation now has the look of

barbarians. I don't prefer cold weather. However, one good thing about winter is folk have to wear more clothes to cover their nakedness. If you are comfortable in today's world, get born again. If a Christian dress code offends you, get saved. Then, you will dress in a way pleasing to the Lord. One who does not believe how a person dresses matters has not read the Bible. Dress code started in the Garden of Eden when God made clothes for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21).

Christ knew the guests were looking for "chief" seats because their hearts were filled with pride. Pride is still on that list of 7 things God hates (read Proverbs 6:16-19). His instruction to these proud guests was "do not choose the highest seat when you arrive." Why? What was his message for them? It was, in essence, "regardless of who you are, there is likely someone more honorable than you in your presence." What a thought! Wouldn't that keep us all humble? Carry that thought with you to church the next time you go. If we would read the Bible and take heed to its words, we would be humble people. If we would listen to Christ's parables, we would not struggle so mightily with pride.

I am sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but you are not *the star of the show*. I am not *the star of the show*. You do not belong in the "chief" seat. Christ's instruction was when you arrive for the wedding, take a lower seat lest you be *embarrassed*. Christ spoke of how the host may come to you and say "move. This man is more honorable than you. He is going to sit where you are seated." This, the Lord said in verse 9, would bring shame to you as you leave your high seat and take a lower seat. I doubt anyone or anything could shame this reprobate-minded age. Men marry men; women marry women. This society kills the babies and rescues the whales. This is an age of perversion. We are turned upside down.

Verse 11 provides the summary message of this parable which is this: *never forget, wherever you are, you are not the most honorable person present*. Jesus is. Jesus is everywhere. He is at your home. He is at the market. He is at school. Jesus was the most honorable in this assembly. Yet, He likely sat in the lowest seat. What we could learn from him!