

AUGUST 28, 2022

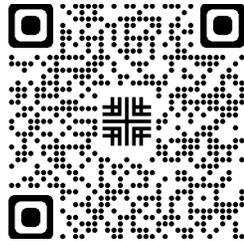
SUMMER SERIES: STORYTELLING

Lord of the Table

LUKE 14:1, 7-14

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Hospitality has rules in all cultures—when you're invited and when you invite. Often, this is tied to advancing oneself and networking. To Jesus, the networking that really matters goes way beyond the people that first come to mind. The early church was respected and looked down upon because of who it invited to the dinner table. How closed is your table? Our table? What if your table was messier and exactly where you might encounter the power of the Lord of the Table?

FIRST HEARING *Luke 14:1,7-14 (NET)* and then The Message

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of Wisdom, *Hebrews 13:8*
open us to the work of your Spirit,
that we may hear
and faithfully respond
to your holy Word. Amen.

Recent Story: We were invited to a wedding banquet...

*“From the reversals of social and economic power anticipated with jubilation in the Magnificat (1:46–55) to Jesus’ healings of persons living with conditions of impairment (4:41; 5:12–13, 18–25; 6:6–10, 18; 8:26–33, 43–44; 11:14; 13:11–13) and solidarity with tax collectors and other publicly stigmatized sinners (5:27–32; 7:36–50), Luke has signaled that the inbreaking divine realm heralded by Jesus will dismantle worldly hierarchies of social status and economic power. Luke 14:7–14 dramatizes these reversals through an illustration about social dynamics governing the seating of guests at a banquet, a parable found in no other Gospel.”*¹

- Carolyn J. Sharp, Professor of Hebrew Scriptures, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut

“...the Magnanimous hospitality of God, it is founded on the incarnational and pentecostal logic of abundance rather than that of human economies of exchange and of scarcity”

-Amos Yong, Hospitality and the Other, 118.

“Luke’s gospel has more meal-time scenes than all the others. If his vision of the Christian life, from one point of view, is a journey, from another point of view it’s a party. Several stories end with a festive meal.” This looks like it’s just advice, but it’s actually a parable, so it has a double meaning inside (N.T. Wright, LFE, 174-5).

THROUGH THE TEXT

¹Now one Sabbath when Jesus went to dine at the house of a leader of the Pharisees, they were watching him closely.

Luke 14:1 They were watching him closely

- Who are you watching closely?
- What are your motivations for doing so?
- “you saw me...I didn’t mean for anyone to see me.”

⁷ Then when Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. He said to them,

- Patronage and Honor systems
- During this time, people recline on couches to eat, with the centre being the place of honour. Often, people are chosen by wealth, power, or office.
 - If a more important/prominent man arrives late (as is often the case) someone of lower rank is asked to move to a less prestigious place.

⁸ “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor because a person more distinguished than you may have been invited by your host. ⁹ So the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your place.’ Then, ashamed, you will begin to move to the least important place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and take the least important place, so that when your host approaches he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up here to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who share the meal with you. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Sources: Feasting on the Word C:4; Workingpreacher; Luke Commentaries; Others.

- Jesus gives practical advice: choose the “one-down” location.
- Success for others, a society you want to live in, where others are elevated too.

But now Jesus addresses the host.

¹² He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you host a dinner or a banquet, don’t invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors so you can be invited by them in return and get repaid. ¹³ But when you host an elaborate meal, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ Then you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

- Don’t fall victim to _____.
- “Jesus is clear who should be invited: people who are the very fabric of God’s realm—the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. For Jesus, extending genuine hospitality to the least of these through acts of unselfish hospitality and kindness can wash God’s blessing over us and give us a sense of the great blessing that is to come in the resurrection” (Emilie M. Townes, FOTW:C:4, 24).

- **Luke 14:14** He does speak of reward, but how one receives it in the Kingdom is different.

THE CALL OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

- Be a _____
- **Choose the path** _____
 - Put yourself in a blessable position with God and others
- **Role Reversal:** _____
 - God blesses with gifts that are not trumpeted easily: peace, spiritual rootedness, love.
 - When we bless those who cannot repay, the Lord _____
- **Double Deeper Teaching**
 - “...All too easy for the well-off and the legally trained to imagine that they were superior in God’s sight to the poor, to those without opportunity to study, let alone practice the law _____ (NT Wright, LFE, 175).
 - The many cultured expansion of the church...against colonialism.