

Luke Chapter 14

Luke 14:1 "And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him."

“Sabbath”: Luke shows Christ healing on the Sabbath more frequently than any of the other gospels. Christ seems to have favored the Sabbath as a day for doing acts of mercy.

“They watched Him”: Evidently the Pharisee had less than honorable motives for inviting Him to a meal.

These religious people were all eyes seeing if they could catch Him in any transgression of the law. This invitation to eat with the Pharisee was probably so he could watch Jesus and catch any little thing He might do so that he could accuse Him. Jesus didn't seem to bother with all this, He knew their intentions, but didn't care.

Luke 14:2 "And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy."

“Dropsy”: A condition where fluid is retained in the tissues and cavities of the body, often caused by kidney or liver ailments, including cancer.

This was a plot to catch Jesus, and these Pharisees were using this very sick man for their purpose. This was an incurable disease by man's attempts. They possibly were testing to see if His healing powers were a hoax, as well as trying to work up a case against Him as a breaker of the Sabbath.

Luke 14:3 "And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?"

“Lawyers”: I.e., scribes.

“Is it lawful”: He had repeatedly defended Sabbath healings, and His arguments consistently silenced the nay-sayers (6:9-10; 13:14-17). Here and (in 6:9), He questioned the scribes about the legality of healing on the Sabbath beforehand, and still they could give no cogent reasons why they believed healing was a violation of Sabbath laws (verse 6).

This surely shocks these who are trying to trap Him. Now if they say no, they will incite the anger of the people. If they say yes, they have fallen into their own trap.

He is saying; you know the law so well, tell me whether we should leave this man in this terrible condition or should we heal him. You interpret your law for me. They are dumb-founded, they cannot speak.

Luke 14:4 "And they held their peace. And he took [him], and healed him, and let him go;"

Jesus has done what their physicians or holy men had not been able to do. He is healed and released. He is released not only from their presence, but from this dreadful disease as well.

Luke 14:5 "And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?"

“An ox”: (13:15; Matt. 12:11-12). Common humanitarianism (not to mention economic necessity), taught them that it was right to show mercy to animals on the Sabbath. Should not the same principles be applied in showing mercy to suffering people?

Jesus shows them lowly animals that they have more concern for than they do for this pitiful man. Put it this way, how can they protest? They know He is telling the truth.

Luke 14:6 "And they could not answer him again to these things."

Their trick had backfired upon them. Any answer they gave would have humiliated them. They did not answer.

Luke 14:7 "And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,"

“The chief rooms”: I.e., the best seats at the table (11:43; Matt. 23:6).

We see here, these men were trying to place themselves around this table in a place of importance. They wanted everyone to appreciate how important they were. Jesus was watching carefully how they were acting over this seating arrangement.

Luke 14:8-9 "When thou art bidden of any [man] to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him;" "And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room."

We see here, Jesus is speaking of someone who has exalted himself up to where He does not belong. These Pharisees, Jewish doctors of the law, had elevated themselves to a position far above the average man. They felt if there was a seat of importance, they should be in it.

Jesus puts a story before them to make them think. The one thing they did not want to do was to be embarrassed. Jesus tells them the embarrassment they would feel if they had to step down from their seat of importance to allow someone else this elevated position.

The way these lawyers felt about the uppermost seats in a room was exactly apposite to Jesus' teaching. Jesus taught that the great of this world are the humble.

Luke 14:10 "But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."

Jesus is showing how the humble will be elevated in the end. There will be no embarrassment for Him. He has taken a lowly seat and is bidden to come up higher. This is God's way.

Luke 14:11 "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

“Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased”: Jesus favored this sort of paradoxical play on words (9:24; 13:30; 17:33; 18:14; Matt. 23:11-12). This comment made the point of verses (8-10), clear. The point of this whole lesson closely parallels (Proverbs 25:6-7).

This is a direct reprimand by Jesus to these learned men of the law. It left no doubt at all who this parable was for.

Luke 14:12 "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor [thy] rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee."

“Call not thy friends, nor thy brethren”: Clearly this is not to be taken as an absolute prohibition against inviting friends or relatives to a meal. Christ employed similar hyperbole (in verse 26). Such language is common in Semitic discourse and is used for emphasis.

His point here is that inviting one’s friends and relatives cannot be classified as a spiritual act of true charity. It may also be a rebuke against those prone to reserve their hospitality for “rich neighbors”, who they know will feel obligated to return the favor (Deut. 14:28-29).

Here is a lesson these self-righteous men did not want to hear. They also were very selfish. Like many people of our day, they invited people to a dinner party at their home, expecting to be invited to the next dinner party the other person had. He is saying don't give dinners to prove your importance to your rich neighbors, relatives, and friends.

Luke 14:13-14 "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:" "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

“Recompensed at the resurrection”: I.e., with treasure in heaven (18:22).

Jesus, in a sense here, is saying again lay up treasures in heaven. Jesus explains, if you feed those who cannot feed you in return, you will be rewarded of God in heaven. You will not only be in the first resurrection, but will be rewarded of God. Remember, Jesus said "In as much as ye done it to the least of these, you have done it also unto me".

Luke 14:15 "And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed [is] he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

“Shall eat bread in the Kingdom”: The man probably held the common view that only Jews would be invited to the heavenly feast. Perhaps this was an idle or pious saying, made without much serious reflection. Christ replied with a parable that pictures the inclusion of Gentiles.

One of the men sitting at the table got the message and received it into Himself. Perhaps this whole thing was set up for this one man to receive the Lord. He had been there when the man with dropsy was healed.

This undoubtedly got his attention because the physicians and all these learned men in the law had not been able to help the poor sick man and Jesus had healed him. He had heard Jesus use a parable to make these self-centered Pharisees realize that it wasn't the thing to do to try to get the uppermost seats at the banquet.

I believe he was touched by the boldness, the sincerity and the power of the great teacher. Perhaps his eyes were opening, and he was looking at Jesus for the very first time as the Messiah. In (verse 15), the man at the table is speaking to Jesus. He has realized that the best thing a person can receive is the kingdom of God.

This does not tell us who this man is, but that this day he met the Savior of the world and received Jesus into his heart. This statement he made ("Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God"), was a spontaneous statement from a heart filled to overflowing.

Luke Chapter 14 Questions

1. What was the Pharisees' purpose inviting Jesus to eat with them?
2. What illness did the man have that was before Jesus?
3. Who had probably put him there? Why?
4. Who did Jesus ask, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath"?
5. What did they answer?
6. What did Jesus do for the sick man?
7. What example did Jesus give them to show that it was right to heal on the Sabbath?
8. Why did their plan backfire on them?
9. What did Jesus notice about their seating arrangement?
10. In the example Jesus gave, how was the proud man embarrassed at the wedding?
11. The truly great in this world are the _____.

12. How will the lowly be elevated in the end?
13. Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be _____.
14. Who did Jesus tell them not to invite to dinner?
15. If you invite the poor to dinner, what reward do you get?
16. People of our day usually expect what from you if they invite you to have dinner with them?
17. What were 3 kinds of people that Jesus said to invite to dinner?
18. Who received this message of Jesus?
19. Who did he say was blessed?
20. What had he noticed when Jesus healed the man with dropsy?
21. What 3 specific things impressed him about Jesus?
22. What do you think happened to this man at the feast?