**Those Who Humble Themselves Will Be Exalted**

Luke 14:1-11

Key Verse: 14:11

**“**For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**Introduction**

Even though Jesus had some of His greatest disputes with the Pharisees, He still associated with them. He did this not to become one of them, but to love them and show them Godly love. Praise Jesus and His unfailing love. Through today’s passage, Jesus also teaches us who can eat at the feast in the kingdom of God. In short, those who are humble will be exalted in God’s sight. Only humble people can see God. They know they are sinners before God, and they truly realize that they do need God’s grace and salvation. For instance, Simon Peter obeyed Jesus and His words and saw who Jesus was and also found who he was. He fell at Jesus’ knees, confessing, “Lord, go away from me, I am a sinful man.” Thanks to Jesus persistent love toward the Pharisees like today’s passage, a Pharisee of Pharisees called Saul became Paul. He always confessed that he was the worst sinner and humbly served the Lord as an unworthy servant. God richly blessed his humble service, bearing much fruit. May the Lord help us to accept His teaching deeply in our hearts.

1. Read verses 1-6. Where did Jesus go and on what occasion? Why was Jesus being carefully watched? Who was there? (2) What did Jesus ask the Pharisees and experts in the law? (3) How did Jesus heal the suffering man? (4) How did Jesus help the Pharisees and experts in the law again? (5, Lk 13:10-17) Why were they speechless? (6)

1-1, Read verses 1-6.

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. **2** There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. **3** Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?” **4** But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.

**5** Then he asked them, “If one of you has a child[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%2014#fen-NIV-25559a)] or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?” **6** And they had nothing to say.

1-2, Where did Jesus go and on what occasion?

***One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee,***

* On a Sabbath day, Jesus went to eat at a prominent Pharisee’s house.
* At first, it seems that this Pharisee is showing his hospitality towards Jesus.
* Luke’s gospel has more meal time scenes than other gospels.

1-3, Why was Jesus being carefully watched?

***he was being carefully watched***

* However, Jesus was being carefully watched by the Pharisees and experts in the law.
* Jesus was under scrutiny and constant observation.
* The Pharisees were conflicted because of Jesus.
* But they were stuck with their legalistic view about Sabbath law.
* They wanted to know what He would do differently, and they formed their opinions about Jesus based on what they saw.
* It reminds us of what apostle Paul pointed out as follows,

2 Corinthians 3:2-3 reads,

“Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. **3** You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.”

* Such letters were common and necessary in the early church. A false prophet or apostle could travel from city to city and easily say, "Paul sent me, so you should support me."
* To help guard against problems like this, letters of recommendation were often sent with Christians as they traveled.
* Paul explained that we are letters from Jesus, that all men read; and that the letters are not written with ink, but with the Holy Spirit, and not on paper, but on our own hearts.
* We ourselves can be likened to letters of recommendation that many will read. Through us, many can come to know who Jesus is and what His love is all about.

1-4, Who was there? (2)

***There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body.***

* In front of Jesus was a man suffering from dropsy or edema. This was a disease characterized by swelling in the body.
* Dropsy is described as, “abnormal accumulation of serous fluid in the tissues of the body.” There are many causes, some including major organ issues such as liver, kidney, or heart failure.
* This man with dropsy looked out of place at this dinner party.
* Most likely he had not been on the original guest list, since Jesus later sent him away.

1-5, What did Jesus ask the Pharisees and experts in the law? (3)

***Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?***

* Jesus spoke first, with a question: “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”

1-6, How did Jesus heal the suffering man? (4)

***But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.***

* Jesus’ question was met with silence.
* Verse 4a says, “But they remained silent.”
* Why were they silent? Either “yes” or “no” was uneasy for them. If they say, “yes,” it is against the teaching on the Sabbath law but if they say, ‘no,’ it is against doing good and showing compassion.
* Their silence meant their defeat. They no longer said anything in reply. In contrast, now is the time that Jesus acts and heals the man.

***But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.***

* Then Jesus took hold of the man, and healed him and sent him away.
* Jesus healed him by the power of God. Jesus healed him with the compassion of God.
* Again compassion is the expression of God’s love for fallen men.
* One time Jesus wanted to have a quiet retreat with his disciples but the unruly crowds followed him.
* Jesus had compassion on them and taught them the word of God. Jesus cancelled his vacation plan to help his needy sheep with compassion.
* God desires mercy and compassion that reaches out to meet our needs even on the day of rest.
* May the Lord increase our compassionate love so that we may be God’s love letters for wandering souls.

Mark 6:32-37 reads,

“So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. **33** But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. **34** When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. **35** By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. **36** Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” **37** But he answered, “You give them something to eat.”

1-7, How did Jesus help the Pharisees and experts in the law again? (5, Lk 13:10-17)

***“If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?”***

* Jesus had already been criticized for healing on a Sabbath the woman who had been bent over for 18 years.
* But Jesus only exposed their hypocrisy that they untie their oxen and donkeys on the Sabbath to give them water.

Luke 13:15-16 reads,

The Lord answered him, “You hypocrites! Doesn’t each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? 16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?”

1-8, Why were they speechless? (6)

* Realizing their predicament, they said nothing.
* In their stubborn pride and indifference, they had no mercy, compassion or love in their hearts.
* Jesus was full of mercy, compassion, and love. May we all grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2. Read verses 7-9. What did Jesus notice about the guests at the banquet? (7) Why did Jesus tell them not to take the place of honor first? (8) What happened to those who took the places of honor? (9) What makes it difficult to choose the lowest place?

2-1, Read verses 7-9.

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 person your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place.

2-2, What did Jesus notice about the guests at the banquet? (7)

***When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable:***

* Luke tells us that it is a parable. Jesus didn’t tell fanciful stories with morals.
* He took real-life stories familiar to all, using them to bring forth God’s truth, especially for those who were willing to open their hearts to hear His truth.
* As we read from verse 7 through 11, this parable makes it clear that Jesus was talking about the way in which people of his day were struggling/jostling for position.
* It appears to us that they were eager to push themselves forward to show how well they were keeping the law to maintain their purity before God and people.
* From verse 1 to 6, people must have carefully watched for any sign of violation, such as Jesus’ healing of the man with dropsy.
* However, Jesus is turned things upside down by associating himself with the wrong kind of people, choosing the wrong day(Sabbath), and being at the wrong place.
* In the book of Acts, known as volume 2 of the book of Luke, we can see a lot of conflict and pressure between many converted Jewish Christians insisting on their pride with legalism and Paul relying on God’s grace only.
* Jesus spent his whole life breaking through that cloud and bringing the fresh, healing sunshine of God’s love to those in its shadow.
* The Pharisees could watch him all they liked, but His healing power and His loving remarks were too strong for them.
* The small-mindedness of the Pharisees, which pushes itself forward and leaves others behind, is confronted with the large-hearted love of God seen in Jesus.
* All Christians are called to the same healthy dependence on God’s love and the same generosity in sharing with those in need! Amen.

2-3, Why did Jesus tell them not to take the place of honor first? (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.***

* It was because Jesus wanted them to be humble. They needed to know the fact that a person more distinguished than them may have been invited.
* The person may indicate Jesus himself because nobody is higher than others before Jesus who is the Lord and the Creator.
* They were supposed to know who Jesus is by that time for Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem to finish his earthly task as the Lamb of God.

***“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.***

* At that time a wedding party was the most important social occasion in Jewish life.
* The seating arrangement at the table indicated one’s standing in the community.
* In Jesus’ day, the seating arrangement showed a definite order of prestige or honor.
* The most honored person sat in a particular seat, the next most honored person in another seat, and so on down the line.
* We don’t have the same exact customs illustrating social standing by the seating arrangements at a wedding.
* Yet there are constant occasions in modern life where one can display their own sense of self importance, pride, and high opinion of one’s self.
* Someone may think, ***“I don’t need any recognition or honor!”*** That’s not entirely true.
* Everyone wants recognition and honor. The question is: where does honor come from? Exalting oneself doesn’t prove anything.
* Boasting about oneself or secretly condemning others does not prove that one is worthy of honor.
* Honor must be bestowed by others, not by oneself.
* Ultimately, God’s honor and recognition is what really matters.

2-4, What happened to those who took the places of honor? (9)

***9 If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place.***

2-5, What makes it difficult to choose the lowest place?

* We are born as men and women of pride.
* So we naturally tend to exalt ourselves.
* Choosing the lowest place seems to be against our nature.
* Our Lord Jesus Christ knows such is our weakness.
* Here we may want to appreciate the value of Luke’s Gospel.
* The book Luke is the Gospel for sinners.
* It brings out Christ’s compassionate love in becoming a man in order to save man.
* In Luke, we see God manifest in the flesh(1:35). Luke deals with the humanity of our Lord.
* He reveals the Savior as a man with all his sympathies, feelings, and growing powers - a Savior suited to all.
* In this Gospel, we see the God of glory coming down to our level, entering into our conditions and being subject to our circumstances.
* Luke’s Gospel is the Gospel of Christ’s manhood.
* Luke presents Jesus as the ideal of perfect manliness.
* His perfect manliness could be shown in His humility and compassion the most!

3. Read verses 10-11. Why were the ones who took the lowest place honored? (10) What was the conclusion of Jesus’ teaching? (11) What can we learn from this passage?

3-1, Read verses 10-11.

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 the other guests. **11** For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

3-2, Why were the ones who took the lowest place honored? (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 the other guests.***

3-3, What was the conclusion of Jesus’ teaching? (11)

***11 For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”***

* The citizens of the kingdom of God must learn how to humble themselves.
* Jesus’ disciples had a hard time due to their insatiable desires to be exalted among themselves.
* So Jesus taught them in Mark 10:41-45,

“When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Matthew 23:11 reads,

“The greatest among you will be your servant.”

3-4, What can we learn from this passage?

James 4:6 reads,

“But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.””

* There are many examples of this in the Bible. For example, in the book of Esther, Haman was prideful and God brought him low, but God exalted the humble, faithful man of God, Mordecai.
* Absalom proudly conspired against his own father David, but God restored the humble man David to his throne.
* Pharaoh king of Egypt was proud and refused to listen to God; in contrast, God exalted his humble servant Moses.

1 Peter 5:5-6 reads,

**“**In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.” **6** Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

* Jesus did not just teach about humbling oneself. He is the greatest example of humbling oneself.

Philippians 2:5-8 reads,

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: **6** Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; **7** rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. **8** And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! **9** Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

* Those who exalt themselves cannot be members of the Kingdom of heaven, and neither are they qualified to eat at the feast in the kingdom of heaven.
* May God help us to humble ourselves and to seek God’s honor and recognition only.

**Conclusion**

It is easy for many young men to become proud and lose God’s blessings. Jesus is a good example for us to follow. Though Jesus is God, he humbled himself and became a servant of all. “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” When Abraham was humble before God, God lifted him up to become a father of many nations. When Moses was proud saying “I am your leader and follow me,” and he went to the extent to kill an Egyptian, God could not use him. To humble him, God led him into situations where obedience was necessary. When he became the humblest man on the face of the earth, God used him to lead the Israelites to cross the Red Sea and to conquer the Promised Land. Humility is the emblem of God’s people. Praise the Lord and His glorious shepherding!

**One word: Those who humble themselves will be exalted!**