



Where Should I Sit?

Pastor John Klawiter

August 28, 2022

Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

Luke 14:1,7-14

Grace and peace to you my siblings in faith,

On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely.

Notice that the Pharisees are watching him closely.

Pharisees, eating a meal, on the Sabbath... what could POSSIBLY go wrong here!

Remember, just in the last chapter, a leader of the synagogue was furious that Jesus healed a woman on the Sabbath.

Jesus is being watched closely for a reason.

Everything he does is helping build their case that he doesn't belong. He is a threat. That he needs to go. It's these stories that they'll share when it's time to arrest him.

Interestingly enough, what is the reaction from Jesus?

⁷When Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable.

Jesus is watching THEM too!

Sit by the kids table.

If any other kids want to join me for a moment, you're welcome.

Kids, I want you to help me out to explain this story today.

It might not be completely clear what's going on because some of the things that Jesus is pointing out aren't treated the same by us today.

First of all, Jesus notices how the guests are choosing the places of honor.



Q :Do you think the people in this story are taking the best seats or leaving them for someone else?

Probably the best seats, right?

Q: What are the best seats, do you think?

Have any of you been to a wedding recently? When they have the meal, where does the married couple sit?

They sit at a table with the people in the wedding.

Q What if you decided to sit right next to the bride?

Would that be the right thing to do?

Unless you are the flower girl or the ring bearer, I bet your mom and dad would be really embarrassed if you walked right up and expected to sit at the table of honor.

Second, a parable. Whenever you see the word “parable”, this doesn’t really happen.

Jesus is telling this story to make an example of how the people are behaving, but often, the people listening to the story can tell where Jesus is making a point about them. In this story, they are all sitting in the best seats.

He notices that the people are putting themselves first. They are exalting themselves. That’s a really big word.

Exalt.

hold (someone or something) in very high regard; think or speak very highly of.

"the party will continue to exalt its hero"

This is a good thing—but should we exalt ourselves?

Q: What does that sound like when we exalt ourselves?

I’m the best. You’re the worst. I will win, you will lose because I’m smarter, faster, better.

It’s bragging, not good.



What does Jesus expect instead?

Be humble

having or showing a modest or low estimate of one's own importance.

This means not being a know-it-all.

Q: What would it mean to be humble in your classes at school? Especially with your teachers.

Listen. Pay attention. Be respectful.

It could also mean that we are noticing some of the kids that don't always get exalted, or lifted up. God wants us to be encouragers and friends to those students, too.

Q: Have you ever felt left out? Or not included?

How does that feel?

Sad

Q: How does it feel when you are invited to play a game or get included?

Better

Q: Do you think you can be a good friend and invite others to be included?

This story is about a party, but it's about something bigger. Jesus is teaching about God's kingdom—of God's love for the world.

Jesus is mad that these leaders of the church are exalting themselves, treating themselves as better than the rest.

Jesus will tell more stories to them that God is inviting everyone—not just the mighty and powerful, but the poor, the sick, the lonely... all are invited to the celebration!

When we are feeling a bit overconfident and cocky, maybe that's a reminder to humble ourselves a bit.



At the same time, if we are feeling sad, or low, that God always sees the worth in us. We are reminded in our baptism, like Autumn this morning, that we are always a beloved child of God, always exalted, lifted up, by Jesus!

Thanks kids... I have one more example that I'm gonna share from back in the center, then, it's almost time for our celebration! Are you all going to run to the front of the line???

My last example of exalting and humility is a reminder to all of us about how we come across online. It would be like if the Pope was on Jimmy Kimmel's Mean Tweets.

Pope slides

“it's like man-splaining, but Bible splaining... and if you make me say any more, I'll be guilty of both!”

Abby, in her response to the post, in my opinion is like the Pharisees—exalting herself to believe it's ok for the poor to not need our attention because Jesus said, “they'll always be there.”

The pope is calling us out. All of us. When one person is neglected, it hurts all of us.

What do we do next?

Work together. Be humble. Share what we have. Listen. Don't feel selfish or jealous when someone else does well or receives grace.

When we all help our neighbors—when we humble ourselves to exalt others, we are all lifted up and honorable before God. Amen.