

THE TABLE
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all who sit at the table with you. For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

Luke 14:1-14

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. Just then, in front of him, there was a man who had dropsy. And Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees, “Is it lawful to cure people on the sabbath, or not?” But they were silent. So Jesus took him and healed him, and sent him away. Then he said to them, “If one of you has a child or an ox that has fallen into a well, will you not immediately pull it out on a sabbath day?” And they could not reply to this.

When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context

In the ancient world, the dinner table was a place of great significance, especially in the elaborate honor/shame culture of the time. Your dinner companions signaled something about your status in society. And your “hosting” created a social debt that others were obliged to repay when you needed or desired. Jesus challenges this cultural system and provided a glimpse of God’s kingdom culture--where concern for human need and dignity replaces the pursuit of social standing. This same concern also shapes Jesus’ challenge to the religious practices of the time (like healing on the Sabbath).

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Big Ideas:

1. Jesus is more concerned with table **presence** than table **manners**.
2. Humility isn't thinking less of yourself, or even thinking of yourself less. **Humility isn't *you* thinking, it's letting God's love remake your thinking.**

Quote:

"When Jesus himself wanted to explain to his disciples what his forthcoming death was all about, he didn't give them a theory, he gave them a meal." - NT Wright

Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. Do you like to throw dinner parties? Why or why not?
3. What's your table like and what makes it meaningful?
4. How might you throw a dinner party that considers this teaching of Jesus? Who might Jesus invite to your house for a meal?
5. How do we pursue "places of honor" today? In what ways do we jockey for position, and why?
6. What is "false humility" or "humble bragging"? Have you experienced (or performed) such things? What does real humility mean?
7. How might Sunday worship and the Communion Table echo this teaching of Jesus?

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