

The Character of Jesus 53
Healing at a Sabbath Dinner with a Pharisee
Luke 14:1 – 24

- Characteristic: True humility
 - (1 – 6) Another Sabbath healing
 - Likely this was a trap set by the host.
 - The custom among lawyers was, if asked, they would answer a question of legality. Silence precluded subsequent objection.
 - The same question had been raised in Matthew 12:10 and Luke 13:14. The rabbis agreed that rescuing an animal on the Sabbath was permitted.
 - The parables that follow should be understood as referring to the healing question.
 - (7 – 11) Self-seeking behavior forgets about the needs of others.
 - The best seats were at the middle of each side of the U-shaped banquet table.
 - The parable is set in earthly terms. The literal meaning is simply good advice concerning how to avoid embarrassment and maximize social standing, which would be shallow thinking.
 - The spiritual application (connected to healing the man with dropsy on the Sabbath) is that Jesus did not seek notoriety but gained it by this healing. Seeking notoriety often results in being humbled. Taking advantage of opportunities to do good results in elevation.
 - (12 – 14) True generosity expects no recompense.
 - This Sabbath meal appears to have been populated by the elite.
 - The literal meaning would ban family gatherings and eating with those who have the means to host a similar meal.
 - The spiritual application (connected to healing the man with dropsy on the Sabbath) is that unselfish acts are remembered by God, whereas self-serving acts have their earthly repayment.
 - (15 – 24) God's hospitality will not go unclaimed.
 - The custom of the time was to issue invitations in advance, then send a servant to collect those who accepted at the appointed time.
 - Obviously, those who had accepted the invitation had no regard for their promised attendance, or for the host.
 - The poor (including those with disabilities) were within the city, so part of the same social group, probably related in some way. But, being poor, they had not been invited to the feast originally.
 - Those outside the city would be outcasts. Compelling them would be by persuasion, not force.
 - The literal meaning shows the host to be spiteful. His generosity arose only due to his anger with the invited guests.
 - The spiritual application (again remembering the man who was healed) is that those who find convenient excuses to ignore God's invitation to the Kingdom will be replaced by those the invitees would consider lowlife. The immediate application would be the lack of response among the leaders of Judaism to the messages of John the Baptist and Jesus.

- Application: True humility
 - In what ways has the church (or individual church folks) sought the chief seats?
 - In what ways might the humble church be exalted?
 - Does the church tend to invite those who can reciprocate?
 - How can the church invite the disadvantaged without becoming a social program?
 - Today, who are the invitees with convenient excuses?
 - How do we compel the outcasts to come in?
 - What happens to the church which follows these applications?