

# Sermon: Would You Like an Upgrade?

Text: Luke 14:1-14

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**Introduction:** If you are one of whom Luke calls the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind (v. 13), there is really no other way to go, but up. Yet, this was Jesus' target audience which he makes clear in his very first sermon.

**Luke 4:17-19 (NIV)** <sup>17</sup>The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: <sup>18</sup>“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

If you were one of those people, who wouldn't want an upgrade? Still, Jesus asks those he would heal, “do you want to be well?” “Would you like to be whole?” Would you like an upgrade? Well, yes please!

A part of the problem with some people is they do not recognize they are sick, blind or poor spiritually. Jesus would run into this malady with religious people, especially leaders like the Pharisees. There are a lot of people today who think they are just fine even compared to followers of Christ. There are also church people who cannot objectively evaluate their relationship and condition with God.

How do we get an upgrade in our present condition? How do we get from the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of God? Jesus teaches us what we *must* learn.

## I. We Must Learn Compassion. (vv. 1-6)

**Luke 14:1-6 (NIV)** <sup>1</sup>One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. <sup>2</sup>There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. <sup>3</sup>Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?” <sup>4</sup>But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away. <sup>5</sup>Then he asked them, “If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?” <sup>6</sup>And they had nothing to say.

What do you mean: **‘And they had nothing to say’**? Maybe it was what I was always told: “If you can't say something nice about someone, you shouldn't say anything at all.”

**This is silence that is deafening because these were people who normally loved to hear themselves talk. But rather than receive the truth of Jesus' words, like seed on hard ground that the birds carry off, the devil had control of their hearts and their mouths.**

**We Must Learn Compassion.**

**A. When an Opportunity Presents Itself**

**How many of us have passed up opportunities to do good deeds to help or talk even to our neighbors? I am certain Jesus did not help everyone who asked him, no more than we can give our time or money to every worthy cause.**

**But, here Jesus has a window of time in which to act. It is the Sabbath. This is not the first time our Lord will heal someone on the Sabbath. It is also not the first or last time Jesus will be invited to dinner. Much of what happens in Luke is in the context of eating with someone. These are teaching moments. Both the Lord's Supper (communion) and his revealing of himself after his resurrection on the road to Emmaus end up in a meal.**

**This man who suffered from "dropsy" or what some call edema would be healed. His heart, kidneys or liver were not functioning properly and his body was filling up with fluid. This must have been something like what we call congestive heart failure. But this man's life would be spared for now.**

**Also like so many diseases, this was probably viewed back then as a sign of God's judgment on the man. So when Jesus healed this man certainly the question had to be raised: who has the power to reverse God's judgment on man? The answer was for some: Jesus the Son of God, for others he was a son of the devil.**

**Jesus again makes the point that there is no bad or inappropriate day to do God's work that of restoring his creation to wholeness.**

**B. In Spite of Opposition**

**Whether this ailing man had been placed there in front of Jesus on purpose to trap him we are not certain, but it would appear that was the agenda. The Greek word (παρατηρεω) translated in v. 1 "was being carefully watched" literally means: "to stand by the side and watch" - Rienecker, p. 183**

Riesenfeld says the word can carry the idea of “to watch lurkingly” (TDNT, 8:147) And the noun sometimes means “watching,” “lying in wait,” inquisitive spying.”(TDNT, 8:148). There is a sinister nature to the Pharisee’s watching.

Jesus models for us the kind of character that will do the right thing in spite of opposition. It is not always popular to stand with God or for God.

## **II. We Must Learn Humility. (vv. 7-11)**

“Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less.”

**Luke 14:7-11 (NIV)** <sup>7</sup>When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: <sup>8</sup>“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. <sup>9</sup>If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. <sup>10</sup>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 your fellow guests. <sup>11</sup>For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

**Illus.** Courtney Rattel’s wedding reception. We literally ended up with a table closest to the head table.

### **A. By Having a Proper Self-Image**

We all have blind spots, and it is difficult to see our own faults. But when it comes to others, we usually have no trouble pointing out their deficiencies. We can clearly see the speck in their eye.

“A man was driving to work one morning when he noticed that the car in front of him was weaving back and forth. As he pulled up even with it, he could see that the driver’s face was almost touching the windshield as she was attempting to apply mascara. This of course, made the man furious. He thought how wrong it was for her to try and operate a motor vehicle while being so distracted with her make up. He became even angrier when her car suddenly veered in his direction. It scared him so badly he dropped his cell-phone right into the cup of coffee he was drinking.” [Larry Sarver. “Guess Who Is Coming To Dinner.” **Luke 14:1-14** [www.sermoncentral.com](http://www.sermoncentral.com).]

The Pharisees thought they already had an important place in God's world. From that vantage point it was awfully difficult to hear criticism. There is a blindness to personal sin.

Can you imagine how difficult it was going to be for them to believe Gentiles would also be given seats of honor at the table?

We Must Learn Humility.

B. By Not Exalting Ourselves

**Proverbs 25:6-7 (NIV)** <sup>6</sup> Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and do not claim a place among great men; <sup>7</sup> it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here," than for him to humiliate you before a nobleman. What you have seen with your eyes

It was hard for the Pharisees not to exalt themselves above others because they already had the respect of the people. They were in charge of the rules and how they were applied. And we all know that some people do not believe rules or restrictions apply to them.

The Pharisees needed to repent of their pride and self-centeredness. They thought more of their family members, and even their domesticated animals, than the sick man Jesus healed. Jesus said this kind of attitude could be seen in the parable he tells here.

Like even some party gatherings today there were formal seating arrangements. Like church - where the best seats are up front.

"At an ancient meal, the table was usually in the shape of a U, and the host sat at the base. The seats of honor were located next to him. Often the most honored guests arrived the latest." - Bock, Luke, p. 392

It is obvious that the wedding feast that is depicted here is a look at the final marriage feast of the Lamb, the messianic banquet. This is a snapshot of judgment and the end time.

It will be God who finally humbles and exalts. It will be God's true knowledge of us that will be the measure of how we ultimately do. And how we treat others now will be how God treats us then.

**III. We Must Learn Generosity. (vv. 12-14)**

**Luke 14:12-14 (NIV)** <sup>12</sup>Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. <sup>13</sup>But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, <sup>14</sup>and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

**We Must Learn Generosity.**

**A. By Ignoring the Idea of Reciprocity**

People haven't really changed in the last two thousand years. Most people look out for themselves first. There is, even today, a kind of social currency involved when inviting someone to your party. People feel obligated to issue an invitation then to the host for their next party. It's like going to weddings. If someone comes to your child's wedding, you are expected, maybe even obligated, to go to their children's weddings as well.

What Jesus disapproves of is doing something out of ulterior motives. You have sensed this: someone is nice to you that normally ignores you or isn't nice to you. What do you say if you're being frank? OK, what do you want? We live in a culture that practices this kind of behavior. It's a what's-in-it-for-me attitude.

God wants us to be generous because He is generous. God wants us to give because of our love for Him and His creation. We are to be generous to those who are thought of as undeserving. We need to act like God has acted toward us.

“The best hospitality is that which is given, not exchanged.” - Bock, *Luke*, p. 393

It is not what we do, but why we do it over which God is concerned. The story of the widow who gave so much less than her fellow-giver was said to have given more because of her heart.

**B. By Looking at People through God's Eyes**

Pharisees believed in a religious system based on works and tried to earn God's favor - even put God in their debt. They believed in striving for perfection, absolute holiness, and purity. No wonder everyone else looked so bad. But theirs was the wrong comparison. Trying to be like God, everyone fails.

On the other hand, Christianity is based on grace and the perfect nature of God. We do not have to be perfect to be accepted, thank God! We are to take our behavioral cues and models, though, from Jesus.

**Philippians 2:3-5 (NIV)** <sup>3</sup>Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup>Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

The best litmus test of a Christ-like community is to evaluate how many resources are expended on people outside the walls. Are we externally-focused? Do we truly care about others like God does?

**Conclusion:** Our ministry to others ought to reflect God's attitude toward us. God does not see rich or poor, master or slave, male or female. There are no such distinctions when it comes to who will sit at table with Jesus. It is not even a question of what we do for God, but why. Are our motives for doing anything, pure? Do we act like a Christian for our advantage or God's glory? Would you like an upgrade?, then you must learn compassion, humility, and generosity. Be like Jesus, let God's Spirit lead; and you will get that upgrade that you so dearly desire.