

w e e k 12 : *the one with the invitation*

Scripture to Read: Luke 14:1-14

1 One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. 2 And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" 4 But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. 5 And he said to them, "Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?" 6 And they could not reply to these things. 7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit in 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 all who sit at table with you. 11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." 12 He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

Summary of Luke 14:1-14

At a meal hosted by a prominent Pharisee, Jesus tells a hospitality story that turns the tables on his critics. His story is a stinging rebuke of inhospitality and self-promotion: you can be far away from God in the very exercise of your religion.

Scripture for Memorization and Meditation

"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." [Luke 14:11]

Questions for Personal Study and/or Group Discussion

- Why is the scene in v.1-6 so tense? What is Jesus doing (or about to do) that elicits such a negative response?
- How have the Pharisees turned the rest and welcome of God's Sabbath into drudgery and a time for criticism and inhospitality? How do we do the same today?
- V.7-11 don't sound like most of the parables Jesus told. Yet Luke tells us it's a parable. Why? In other words, what is the real meaning of the advice about pushing oneself forward?
 - Whom does God invite to his salvation feast? How do you get an invitation?
 - Read on through Luke 14:24. How does this parable inform and motivate our work of evangelism? How might follow this example and deliver God's invitations to eternal life?
 - Most hosts look down on and exclude the poor or unworthy. Why is God different? How does his attitude bring glory to his name?
 - As you study Luke 14, where do you see yourself fitting into the picture? How is God calling you to respond?
 - How might this passage in Luke have spoken directly to the concerns of the early church? Read Acts 10-11 and Acts 15.
 - What "repayment" are we often seeking when we do things for other people? What is Jesus telling us about that quest in v.12-14?

Notes and thoughts...

What is dropsy? Dropsy is not one of Peter Rabbit's siblings; rather, it is an old term for the swelling of soft tissues (especially around the joints) due to the accumulation of excess water. A more specific diagnosis might be something like edema due to congestive heart failure.

A thought worth thinking: "In the simple, everyday act of sitting down with others at meals, Jesus aroused enormous hostility. There

were rigid rituals rules in the world Jesus lived in that were inviolable. Jesus violated them. There were strong prohibitions against eating with unsavory people—outsiders such as tax collectors, prostitutes, and people who didn't keep up the appearances of religious propriety ('sinners'). Jesus ate with them. As things developed, eating with 'sinners' became one of the most characteristic and attention-getting aspects of Jesus' regular activity. The Pharisees in particular were fierce in their observance of these rules and fierce in their criticism of Jesus." [Eugene H. Peterson, *Tell It Slant: A Conversation on the Language of Jesus in His Stories and Prayers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008), 77-78]

From guests to hosts: "Once again, therefore, the challenge comes to us today. Christians, reading this anywhere in the world, must work out in their own churches and families what it would mean to celebrate God's kingdom so that the people at the bottom of the pile, at the end of the line, would find it to be good news. It isn't enough to say that we ourselves are the people dragged in from the country lanes, to our surprise, to enjoy God's party. That may be true; but party guests are then expects to become party hosts in their turn. [Tom Wright, *Luke for Everyone* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 179-79]

Tips for Parents with Young Children

The church meeting at your supper table. The following steps are "field-tested" ideas to help direct theological discussions between parents and their children while also building the children's theological vocabularies so that they are increasingly familiar with biblical concepts. Remember: a brief, God-focused time together is better than a long, task-oriented time in which everyone is miserable.

The discussion questions and tips are offered to help you and your children grow in relationship with each another and with Christ. They are meant to be supportive and not constraining. Therefore, do not feel bound by any questions or pressured to

follow the steps too rigidly. Follow the Spirit's leading and don't be a religious parent who is rigidly inflexible and who makes this time together drudgery rather than delight.

If you miss a night, or if conversation gets off track, or if your family occasionally just wants to talk about something else, don't stress—it's inevitable. For your children, the point is to learn what they are thinking about God, to help them know and love Jesus as God and Savior, and to teach them how to articulate and explain their Christian faith. For parents, the point is to instruct children and each other, thereby creating a family culture in which every member freely and naturally talks about God and prays to him together. In short, the goal is that your family would open the Bible and grow in love for Jesus, one another, your church, and the world.

Finally, remember that family Bible study requires a sense of humor, so make sure to have some fun, enjoy some laughs, and build some memories.

Monday: Read Luke 14:1-6. The Pharisees had lots of rules about what you couldn't do on the Sabbath day. But these rules were never what God intended. Since the man with dropsy was not in danger of death, they believed his healing should wait until after the Sabbath. Explain to your children that for Christians, Sunday is the day of rest and worship. Think together as a family how you can make the most of God's special day. What things can you *do* to show the mercy and love of Christ to other people on Sunday?

Tuesday: Read Luke 14:7-11. Acting out the story of the man who tries to get the best seat may help your children understand what Jesus is saying. Talk about the ways that your children try to put themselves first (this shouldn't be too difficult!). Ask them what Jesus would want them to do in those situations. Remind them later on when those situations arise.

Wednesday: We will meet tonight at FPC for a **Year's End Prayer Meeting** at 6:15 pm. Nursery will be provided. Bring the whole family to hear how God has worked among us this year, and for a time to recommit ourselves to the Lord in the year 2010. Our regular **Wednesday Night Connection** schedule resumes January 6.

Thursday: Ring out 2009 by devising a way for your family to remember how good God has been to you in the year 2009. Talk about what next steps your family can take in growing in **WORSHIP, TEACHING, NURTURE, and REACHING** in 2010.

Friday: Read Luke 14:12-14. Is Jesus, with his commands and promises more valuable to us than tradition and convenience and earthly comfort? Is he our treasure or is the world? That question is decided hour by hour every day, by whether we are willing to inconvenience ourselves for those who can't repay, or whether we avoid them and so preserve our comfort and routine. How can your family give to those who cannot repay?

Saturday: Quiz your children on Catechism questions or Bible memory verses they are learning. Pray that Phillip would have boldness in preaching the Word of God tomorrow. Also, pray for the Sunday School teachers and for the musicians and choir members who serve us each Sunday. We will be celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Evening Worship. This would be a good time to go over the catechism questions about the Lord's Supper.

Sunday: Before you leave for church, explain to your children that their ministry at church is to welcome new children, help their Sunday School teacher, serve others, and worship God in the service. After church, discuss with your children what they learned and what you learned.