

47. Jesus Warned of the Danger of Pride

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn about the love that Jesus had for Jerusalem and the people of that city. Jesus knew that He would soon die in that city for our sins as well as for the sins of the people in that city. However, Jesus wanted to also warn the Jews of His day that those who continued to reject Him would experience judgment. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus warned about the dangers of pride.

One Sabbath day, Jesus knew that the Pharisees were trying to trap Him. Luke 14:1-6 says, “Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?’ But they kept silent. And He took *him* and healed him, and let him go. Then He answered them, saying, ‘Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?’ And they could not answer Him regarding these things.” Here, we see that one of the leaders of the Pharisees had invited Jesus to his house for dinner on the Sabbath day. This invitation was actually to look for an opportunity to condemn Jesus.

There was also a man in the house of the Pharisee that day that had dropsy. The word translated “dropsy” spoke about a physical condition that caused a person to keep fluids in the body so that various parts of their body would become much larger than normal. Today, they know that this disease is caused by liver or kidney problems that keep the fluid in the body. The Pharisees and lawyers were all watching Jesus very closely to see what He would do since it was the Sabbath day. Here, we see that the Pharisee had invited Jesus to his house so that they could try and trap Jesus by what He said or did.

Jesus knew their hearts and so Jesus asked the lawyers and Pharisees a question. He asked, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” Since the lawyers and Pharisees were trying to trap Jesus, they remained silent and did not answer His question. Jesus then healed the man and let him go. However, since Jesus knew their hearts, Jesus went on to ask the lawyers and Pharisees a second question. This time Jesus asked them, “Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?” An animal that falls into a pit is in a serious situation, especially if there is water in the pit. The animal could easily die before the next day. As a result, the Jews allowed people to show mercy to animals on the Sabbath day. Here was a man that was suffering from a serious disease. Jesus had shown mercy to him and healed him. The lawyers and Pharisees suddenly realized that they could not accuse Jesus for showing mercy on the Sabbath, without condemning themselves for showing mercy to an animal on the Sabbath. They knew that they did not dare give an answer to Jesus or they would condemn themselves.

However, Jesus wanted to help these lawyers and Pharisees realize the condition of their hearts. Jesus had been watching where the people were seating themselves and so He spoke a parable to them to show the condition of their hearts. Luke 14:7-9 says, “So He told a parable to those who

were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: ‘When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, “Give place to this man,” and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place.’” We see that Jesus used a different situation for the parable but the teaching was clear.

Jesus had watched as the guests chose where to sit for this dinner. He noticed that they only thought about their own desires as they chose the best places to sit. Instead of talking about that dinner, Jesus talked about being invited to a wedding feast. Jesus had watched where the people sat for this dinner. They had shown the pride in their hearts by choosing the best places at this dinner. Jesus used that as an illustration and told them not to sit down in the best place at a wedding feast because someone more honorable than they were may have been invited to the wedding feast. Then, the person who had invited them to the wedding would have to come and tell them to move so that the honored guest could sit where they were sitting.

Jesus said that the person who had invited the guests to the wedding would ask the person to move and by that time the only place that would be left would be the lowest place. Jesus said that such a person would experience great shame as he moved from the most honored place at the wedding to the least honored place at the wedding. The word translated “shame” means *disgrace, dishonor or a sense of shame*. The word is used in 2 Corinthians 4:1-2 where we read, “Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.” The hidden things of shame speak about the secret sins that a person hides in his heart. Jesus was pointing out that the wedding guest would have his pride, which he had so carefully tried to hide from others, exposed for all to see.

Pride is one of those sins that people think that they can hide from others. Jesus was actually teaching the application of a principle that had been taught by Solomon nearly a thousand years earlier. Proverbs 25:6-7 says, “Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of the great; for *it is* better that he say to you, ‘Come up here,’ than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, whom your eyes have seen.” Solomon was speaking about those who would try to promote themselves in the presence of a king. However, Jesus showed in this passage that pride will produce the same attitude in any situation. It will also bring shame to any person who is put in a lower position when others are present.

Jesus went on to point out that just the opposite will happen when a person has true humility. Luke 14:10-14 says, “‘But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, “Friend, go up higher.” Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’ Then He also said to him who invited Him, ‘When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite *the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind*. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you

shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.” Jesus said that true humility will be shown when a person takes the lowest place, instead of a higher position.

If a person takes the lowest place, the one who invited that person can always ask that person to move to a higher place. Jesus said that those who act with humility will be treated as a friend. The word translated “friend” speaks of one who is respected and treated as a companion. Jesus showed that attitude toward all. Matthew 11:19 says, “The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ But wisdom is justified by her children.” Jesus chose to be a friend of tax collectors and sinners. As a result, Luke 15:1 says, “Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him.” The tax collectors and sinners felt accepted by Jesus and so they wanted to learn from Him. The person who exalts himself will be humbled. In contrast, Jesus said that the person who humbles himself will be exalted. The word translated “exalted” means *to be honored*.

Jesus then spoke to the Pharisee who had invited Him to dinner. Jesus explained to the Pharisee that if he only invited his friends, relatives and rich neighbors to a dinner, such invitations did not show compassion to the needy, because those people would all invite him to their dinners at a later time and he would be repaid. In the law, the Jews were specifically told to show compassion to the poor and needy. Deuteronomy 14:28-29 says, “At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.” Here, we see that the Jews were to set aside a tithe every third year so that they would have to give to the poor.

Jesus went on to tell this Pharisee how to apply the Old Testament principle when he had a feast. It was fine to invite relatives and friends but he should also invite those who could not return the favor by inviting him to a dinner at a later time. Jesus said that as he made up his list of guests he should also, “invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.” These were people who would not be able to invite him back to their homes for a feast at a later time.

Jesus said that inviting the poor and needy who could not return the favor would bring blessing. Because of their poverty, they could not repay the man by inviting him to a feast at a later time. Instead, Jesus said that he would be repaid at the resurrection of the just. This made it clear that the only ones who truly care for the poor and needy have had their hearts transformed by the Lord because of their repentance from sin. We also want to help our physical and spiritual children realize that the Lord will give us a desire to minister to others if we have truly placed our faith in Jesus. Such actions are the result of the love of Jesus controlling our lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to show the love of Jesus to the poor and needy.