

Luke 14: HG Bishop Youssef

His Grace Bishop Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الالة فاين تاطع • LUKE 14: 1 - 24 ~ Bible Study

Introduction

00:00

- In Chapters 12 and 13, we saw that the Lord was using references to food and meals in His teachings and parables. This trend started after the banquet of Pharisees that He was invited to attend in the Pharisee's house (Chapter 12)
- In Chapter 14, the Lord will continue this trend after another meal in the home of a leading Pharisee ("one of the rulers")
- He concludes the trend with the Parable of the Great Feast in Chapter 14
- References to food and meals in the teaching of Christ remind us with the Heavenly Food - the bread and wine that become the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist; the food we are called to humbly eat at the altar; the Lord's banquet.

Outline

02:30

- 1-6: A Man Healed on the Sabbath
- 7-14: Take the Lowly Place
- 15-24: The Parable of the Great Supper
- 25-33: Leaving All to Follow Christ
- 34-35: Tasteless Salt is Worthless

A Man Healed on the Sabbath

03:18

¹ 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. ² And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. ³ And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

⁴ But they kept silent. And He took *him* and healed him, and let him go. ⁵ 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?" ⁶ And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

- The Lord and the Pharisees
 - Despite all the disputes with the Pharisees, the Lord didn't give up on them
 - He continued to associate with them - not to be like them, or to join them, but that He may win them
- Sabbath Meals
 - This is a normal thing... but what's not normal is that "they watched Him closely"
- Dropsy
 - Dropsy is a sickness when fluids gather throughout the body and cause swelling
 - Why would a man with Dropsy be invited to the Pharisee's house? Because this whole meal was arranged in order to test the Lord and see what He would do on the Sabbath
 - They were trying to provoke Him that they may accuse Him
 - This miracle is remarkable because Dropsy affects the man's appearance... so when he is healed, it is immediately visible and obvious to everyone present
- An Opportunity to Teach the Pharisees
 - The Lord could have rejected their invitation, knowing their intention
 - "Jesus, answering..." - there was no question, but His answer is to their intentions
 - Two Questions
 - Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?
 - 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?
 - They could not answer
 - If it's allowed to save animals on the Sabbath, how much more right is it to heal people created in the image of God
 - If they say to let the donkey or ox die, they are heartless and wicked
 - If they say to save the donkey or ox, then they prove they are hypocrites

Take the Lowly Place

12:30

⁷ So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: ⁸ "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; ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

¹² 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. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite *the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind*. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

- Seating Arrangement
 - Formal banquets like this adopted Greek Symposium traditions where they would sit around a table and each person's seating was based on their status (closer to the head of the table, higher status)
 - The Lord noticed that people were assuming for themselves the best places and spoke to them a parable
- Parable
 - This teaching doesn't sound like a parable, but sounds like regular advice... Why did St Luke call it a parable?
 - Parables have a spiritual message through a real-life situation known to all
 - A wedding feast was the most important social occasions in Jewish life (and until now)
- Etiquette Teaching
 - Not the main point
 - The Lord reminds the Pharisees of the shame that comes with self-exaltation
- Spiritual Message
 - When we allow others (especially God) to raise us, then we don't have the danger of being put down in shame
 - Take the lowest part so that you don't desire the honor that belongs to you
 - If you take the lowest place and are elevated, you will have honor
 - It's not just table etiquette, but it is a way of life
 - "In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." (Philippians 2:3)
 - **For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.**
 - Some might take the place of lowliness in order that other people would notice how humble they are... this is dangerous. I am acting humble to be praised by others... this is an outwardly humbleness with pride and arrogance inside.
 - A monk came to St Antony the Great and insisted on sitting at the feet of St Antony. St Antony asked him several times to sit next to him, but he refused. He begged St Antony to give him a word of advice. This monk was known to not sit in his cell but to wander from one place to another. St Antony gave him advice: "It's better for the monk to be in his cell and not to move from one place to another because a monk is like a fish - when you take it outside the water, it dies. A monk outside his cell dies spiritually." The monk became very angry and defensive and St Antony asked him "where is your humility? You sat at my feet, refused to sit next to me, and when I gave you advice, you got angry? This humility was fake." The monk hid behind his fake humility a prideful soul.
- Advice to the Host
 - The Lord noticed that all the guests are from the upper class, and the banquet was luxurious and costly
 - How to store up for yourself a treasure in heaven
 - If you associate or deal with people on the basis of what they could do for you, this is a self-centered living. The Lord demonstrated an others-centered living.
 - Self-centered: seeking an earthly reward

- Others-centered: no earthly reward

Parable of the Great Supper

26:33

¹⁵ Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!"

- These words are not spoken mockingly. This individual was speaking sincerely and genuinely and greatly admired the Lord Jesus Christ
- Although he said this genuinely, it also reflects his prideful spirit - we know this based on the below parable the Lord uses to respond. He is saying "Blessed is he who shall eat bread" is also saying "I am looking forward to eating that bread because I am a righteous Pharisee"

¹⁶ Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, ¹⁷ and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' ¹⁸ But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' ¹⁹ And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' ²⁰ Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' ²¹ So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.' ²² And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' ²³ Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. ²⁴ For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "

- The host of the banquet is God
- His home is the Heavenly Kingdom
- The banquet is the Banquet of the Righteous at the end of time
- The servants are God's prophets and apostles and servants
- The first invitation is to Israel (the Jews)
 - They were busy... too busy for God
 - First excuse: Love of money
 - Second excuse: Worries of the World
 - Third excuse: Personal Relationships
 - This group is represented by the Pharisees, Scribes, Sadducees. The ones who rejected the message of St John the Baptist
 - We pretend that the affairs of the world are so pressing that we cannot find time to attend to our souls
- The second invitation is to the outcasts of Israel (publicans, sinners, tax-collectors, harlots, etc.)
- The third invitation is to the Gentiles

Leaving All to Follow Christ

02:08

²⁵ Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. ²⁷ And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

- Great multitudes
 - These people are following Him to Jerusalem
 - This group of people includes disciples and friends, as well as enemies, and some following out of curiosity
 - Any leader would be happy if he found people following him... and he would think "how can I keep them?" Some leaders might even compromise some principles in order to keep the followers... but when the Lord saw the great multitudes, He turned and told them the requirements of discipleship
- Requirements of Discipleship
 - Come to Me
 - Not only to hear His preaching, but to come and follow the Lord as a true believer with a sincere desire to be a disciple of Him; to be DISCIPLINED by His teaching and His example
 - Hate
 - This word troubles someone... how could the Lord (who is Love) use the word hate?
 - He doesn't mean hatred (opposite of love) but is using an exaggeration to stress the total commitment required of His followers
 - St Demiana is a real-life example from the Church History of this Commandment when she told her father "I would have rather heard that you died for the name of Christ than that you denied Christ and saved your earthly life." Because of this message, her father, Mark, went and confessed his faith and was martyred.
 - No earthly affection should ever come into competition with our love for God
 - This word also relates back to when the Lord said that He did not come to bring peace but a sword, and will turn parents against children and children against parents, etc.
 - Bear Your Cross
 - Some assume that if you are a Christian, your life will be void of hardships... this is not true.
 - We will be hated, persecuted, walk the difficult path - but when compared with eternal glory, it is nothing. That's why Christians carried their cross joyfully... their eyes were fixed on the glory to come.
 - Carry "Your Cross" - there is a cross suited to each individual

- This is before the Crucifixion; they knew the Cross as a torture device for death and humiliation. If someone took up his cross, he never came back; it was a one-way journey

²⁸ For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish it— ²⁹ lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish'? ³¹ Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. ³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

- Calculate the Cost before making the decision of following the Lord
 - Two Examples:
 - Building a Tower
 - Going to Battle
 - These require:
 - Good planning
 - Good decision making
- Building a Tower
 - Built high up to see an enemy when he is coming
 - Built strong so that it could not be taken
 - The building of a tower is the building up of the Christian Life in the Heart and the Life
 - Reminds us of the "wise man who built his house on the rock" - our life needs to be built on a solid Foundation
 - It is a serious thing to be a disciple
 - HH Pope Shenouda used to say "the only difference between us and the saints is seriousness... they took the spiritual life seriously"
- Warfare
 - Christian life is warfare
 - Spiritual warfare - fighting against principalities and powers... evil spirits. (Ephesians 6:12)
- The Disciple Must Calculate the Cost
 - Anything in his old life that is a hindrance to traveling the narrow path or entering the narrow door
 - He must separate himself from those things or people who will not help him advance in faith and spiritual maturity
 - Release attachment of material possessions
 - Many who were following Jesus in these last weeks of His ministry were not truly sincere. The Lord gives them an uncompromising picture of what ought to be the life of His real followers

Tasteless Salt is Worthless

³⁴ “Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? ³⁵ It is neither fit for the land nor for the dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

- In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord told us "You are the salt of the earth"
 - If we are Christians by name, but we don't meet the requirements of discipleship, then we become like salt that has lost its flavor
 - Salt is only useful... if it has flavor! We cannot fulfill the purpose for which we were intended
- The salt is not even good for the dunghill which is used as fertilizer
- He who has ears to hear, let him hear
 - Take My Teaching seriously

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