

Luke 14, Lent 3 Small Group Questions

Gathering

1. What is the fanciest, most formal meal or gathering you have ever attended?
2. Have you ever been invited to a function and gone despite feeling really sick? What was it like to feel so poorly while everyone else was feasting or celebrating?

Looking at the Text

In Luke 14 we see Jesus once again having a Sabbath dinner with a prominent Pharisee. The host and all his guests were people of importance and status. But they were wary of Jesus. This meal is more adversarial than earlier ones and it seems that Jesus is being tested or entrapped. Nevertheless, Jesus challenges the assumptions of the leaders and shares two parables that will define what it means to be part of the Kingdom of God.

There are three separate but related episodes in this mealtime narrative.

Read Luke 14:1-6

1. The people at this meal were prominent and status conscious. Yet there is a man there who is suffering from "dropsy" or swelling caused by fluid retention. Some think this was a set up. What do you think and what was the trap?
2. Jesus puts the Sabbath question back on the Pharisee and the experts of the law. Why do you think they stayed quiet?
3. After healing the man Jesus asks them a question in verse 5. What was he getting at?

Read Luke 14:7-12

1. Jesus noticed that the guests wanted the seats of honor at the table. What was their motivation and how do people act like this today?
2. Jesus gives advice in the form of a parable in vs 8-10. Do you see any irony in the phrase "a person more distinguished than you may have been invited"?
3. Why is humility so important for coming to God through Jesus?

Read Luke 14:15-24

1. A man at the dinner makes a statement about the blessing of eating at the feast in the kingdom of God. This leads Jesus to share the parable of the great banquet. What do you think is the connection between the benediction ("Blessed is the one...") in verse 15 and the parable?
2. Everything in the parable is very conventional for a wealthy man planning a wedding feast until vs. 18. What is the surprise twist?
3. How do you feel about the excuses that the guests gave? How did the banquet host feel?
4. How does the banquet host fill his banquet hall, who does he invite?
5. What point do think Jesus is making to the people at the Sabbath meal?

Application

1. Thinking of the three episodes in this meal time narrative, do you see a common theme?
2. In verses 1-5 what is the attitude of the religious leaders toward Jesus? What is their attitude toward the sick man?
3. In the second section, verses 7-14, what are the guests concerned about? What does Jesus want them to think about?
4. In verse 12-14 Jesus tells them who they should invite to their banquets. Now, think of the people who were responding to Jesus as he taught and healed. How does his comment in vs 13 compare to who Jesus is inviting to follow him?
5. Why do you think it was so hard for the religious authorities to follow Jesus?
6. In the final parable the banquet host wants people to come to his banquet but they make excuses. What do you think this says about the prominent people at the Sabbath meal and their relationship with Jesus?
7. Do you find it hard to humble yourself before Jesus?
8. Jesus implies that when we humbly follow him it will change how we see people who suffer and people who are on the margins of society. Has that happened with you? How?