

PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST

Luke 14:7-14

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” [v. 11]



Pieter Bruegel the Elder - Peasant Wedding

Having just healed a sick man, Jesus has silenced the Pharisees just before a Sabbath meal. The Jews had three meals on the Sabbath instead of the usual two, this one occurring after worship. Our Lord notices guests pressing into the dining room to claim the best seats. He explains that those seeking unmerited honor will quickly find shame for themselves instead.

In the Parable of the Wedding Feast, Jesus is not teaching false humility or proper table etiquette. Our Savior is teaching the value of true humility within our spirit, as he did frequently. At another time Jesus said, *“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”* [Mat. 20:25-28]

A similar rule appears in Wisdom literature: *“Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great, for it is better to be told, “Come up here,” than to be put lower in the presence of a noble.”* [Prov. 25:6-7] This accords well with I Peter 5:6, *“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.”* We must always be humble before the Lord and men.

Jesus also had a word for the host. After worship people could be invited to share in the Sabbath meal. Guests usually included friends and relatives, and (as our Lord describes them) their rich neighbors. The opening verse of this chapter identifies the host as a prominent Pharisee, an unusually pious man. And of course, next Sabbath he expected reciprocal invitations from the notable men seated around his table today.

True piety befitting the Kingdom of Heaven would have rendered something different. Invite the crippled, the poor and the lowly, Jesus said, those who cannot repay your hospitality. As Kingdom disciples, we must love our neighbors, and consider others better than ourselves. *“Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.”* [Rom. 12:16].



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Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.

Prov 18:12

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Rom 12:16

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Phil 2:3

For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. Luke 18:14

From the 1995 film, "Rob Roy"

Son: Father, will the MacGregors ever be kings again?

Father: All men with honor are kings. But not all kings have honor.

Son: What is honor?

Father: Honor is . . . what no man can give you and none can take away.
Honor is a man's gift to himself.

Son: Do women have it?

Father: Women are the heart of honor, and we cherish and protect it in them. You must never mistreat a woman, or malign a man, nor stand by and see another do so.

Son: How do you know if you have it?

Father: Never worry on the getting of it. It grows in you, and speaks to you.
All you need do is listen.

"Honor is the gift a man gives himself." You told our boys that. Would you have stolen from yourself that which makes you Robert Roy MacGregor?