

Luke 14:7-11

"The Exaltation of Humility"

October 19, 2025

1. Intro

- a. Last week, we saw that Jesus had been invited to have dinner at a Pharisee's house on the Sabbath
 - i. This wasn't just any Pharisee...
 1. Luke tells us that this was a RULER of the Pharisees... a chief among the Pharisees
 - a. This likely meant that he was a member of the Sanhedrin, or the great council of religious leaders in Judea
 - i. Which meant that this was an IMPORTANT man with IMPORTANT friends
 2. And he had invited Jesus to dine at his house on the Sabbath
 - a. Now, if you're not familiar with the Jewish Sabbath, the Sabbath actually starts on Friday evening at sunset, and goes until sunset on Saturday
 - i. So, most likely, this was the Friday night dinner of the Sabbath, which traditionally was the more elaborate and significant meal of the Sabbath
 1. Once the sun began to go down on Friday evening, you were not permitted to do any work, which included food prep and cooking
 - a. So they would spend much of their Friday afternoon preparing for the big meal that evening...
 - b. And for the smaller meals on Saturday, which would be easier to keep overnight
 3. People would certainly invite friends and family over for the Sabbath meals on Saturday, but the BEST meal to go to would be the Friday night meal
 - a. And so it was this meal that Jesus was invited to
 - i. You can only imagine the types of people that would have been in the home of a ruler of the Pharisees on a Friday night!
 1. Which, as we saw last week, made it a LITTLE suspicious that the man with dropsy – a man who would have been seen as ceremonially unclean...
 - a. Would've been there in THIS house, for THIS meal
 4. All the evidence points to the fact that this man had likely been brought in as bait to trap Jesus into breaking the Sabbath traditions of the Jewish people
 - a. And of course, that is exactly what Jesus did
 - i. He healed the man from his disease
 - ii. He sent him on his way
 - iii. And then he called the lawyers and Pharisees out for their hypocrisy
 1. They were perfectly willing to work to get one of their oxen out of a well on the Sabbath
 2. But they refused to offer any kind of healing to an actual person in need
 - ii. Now, you might think that at that point the evening would have been ruined...
 1. Either the Pharisee is going to kick Jesus out of his house for offending all of his other dinner guests,

- a. Or, Jesus is going to realize he's not welcome there, and he will move on to the house of some tax collector where he is much more appreciated
 - i. Surprisingly, neither one of those things happen,
 - 1. And Jesus sticks around for the rest of the dinner
 - ii. And as he does so, he watches all of the important guests of this Pharisee, and he sees how they all seem to be trying to get the most important seats at the dining room table
 - 2. You almost have to wonder if the ruler of the Pharisees let out a small groan when Jesus then began to talk, as Luke writes...
- 2. Luke 14:7-11
 - a. *7Now [Jesus] 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, 9and 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. 10But 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. 11For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*
 - i. Well, there isn't a whole lot of context that we need to unpack here, is there?
 - 1. We're pretty familiar with the illustration that Jesus uses in this parable
 - a. If you go to a wedding these days, after the wedding there will typically be a reception
 - i. And at the reception, typically, there will be a table set up as a focal point in the room
 - 1. And this will be where the bride and groom sit
 - a. But if the table is big enough, then the best man and the maid of honor will be seated at the right and left of the bride and groom
 - b. If the table is EVEN BIGGER, well then you'll have all the bridesmaids on the side of the bride, and all the groomsmen on the side of the groom
 - ii. And from there, proximity continues to mean importance, doesn't it?
 - 1. The next closest tables would be those of the mom and dad of the bride, and the mom and dad of the groom
 - iii. The officiating pastor and his family might be at the next closest table
 - 2. But there is a pretty clear pattern there, isn't there
 - a. The closer you are to the ones who invited you, the more they desire to honor you
 - i. And therein lies the key to this parable...
 - 1. When you go to a wedding feast, it is NOT your own opinion about yourself that matters – it is the opinion of the one who invited you that is of utmost importance
 - ii. I might be the governor of the state of Oklahoma,
 - 1. But if I walk into a wedding where I have just been invited maybe as a friend of a friend...
 - a. And I immediately go and grab the chair closest to the groom because that's what I think I deserve...
 - i. Well, I'm setting myself up for a pretty big embarrassment, aren't I?

- ii. And so Jesus says, "Friend, it doesn't matter how important YOU think you are... choose the place of HUMILITY, and you will NEVER be wrong!"
 - 1. And then Jesus lays down a universal principle for the Christian life...
 - a. *"Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted"*
- b. Now, what's interesting is that Jesus uses this very same phrase three times throughout the Gospels
 - i. And in each instance, there is a different aspect of humility that he is emphasizing
 - 1. So, for the rest of our time this morning, we are going to look in depth at each of these three aspects of true, CHRISTIAN humility
 - a. The first is that true, CHRISTIAN humility comes from a realization of our own sinfulness
 - b. The second is that true, CHRISTIAN humility helps us to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul
 - c. And the third is that true, CHRISTIAN humility helps us to love our neighbors as ourselves
- 3. So first... true, CHRISTIAN humility comes from a realization of our own sinfulness
 - a. Go ahead and turn in your Bibles over to Luke chapter 18, and we'll look at verses 9-14
 - i. Luke writes in verse 9...
 - 1. *"[Jesus] also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."*
 - b. So again, the principle Jesus is teaching us here is the same as in Luke 14...
 - i. "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted"
 - 1. Only, in this instance, Jesus is linking our humility to our awareness of our own sinfulness
 - a. The Pharisee had an incredibly high view of himself, didn't he?
 - i. He tries to cloak his self-righteousness in godly language, as he says, "God, I thank YOU that I am not like other men..."
 - 1. But it's clear from Jesus' conclusion that, for this Pharisee, HE was ultimately the grounds of his own righteousness
 - a. HE was the one fasting twice a week
 - b. HE was the one giving tithes of all he got
 - c. HE was the one who was not like all those other sinners OUT THERE
 - i. The Pharisee was trusting only in himself,
 - ii. For the Pharisee was BLIND to his own sin
 - 2. But the tax collector tells a different story, doesn't he
 - a. He was also in the Temple – most likely in the courtyard of the Temple...
 - i. But he was standing far off, like one who didn't believe he should be there
 - 1. His eyes stayed fixed upon the ground
 - 2. He beat his breast in an expression of grief and anguish

- ii. And he pleaded before God,
 - 1. "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"
- 3. And Jesus says that it was this man... broken, contrite, HUMBLE...
 - a. Who went back to his house JUSTIFIED
 - i. That is an incredible statement, isn't it?!
 - 1. In the New Testament, when the word "justified" is used in the positive sense, which it clearly is here...
 - a. It means "one who is APPROVED by God"
 - b. Now, this doesn't change Paul's argument that we are justified BY FAITH ALONE
 - i. But what it DOES show us is that the faith that saves us is a LIVING faith
 - 1. It is a faith marked by trust and belief in Jesus as the Son of God
 - 2. It is a faith marked by repentance and surrender toward Jesus as Lord
 - 3. And it is a faith marked by HUMILITY, as our eyes are opened to see how truly sinful we are before a holy and perfect God
 - c. As Strong's Topical Lexicon says regarding this passage,
 - i. "God grants a verdict of righteousness solely on HUMBLE, penitent faith"
 - 4. This truth is affirmed for us in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount, which many pastors and commentators agree are all marks of a TRUE disciple of Jesus
 - a. And what are the first three Beatitudes?
 - i. Blessed are the poor in spirit... those who see the poverty of their condition due to their depravity
 - ii. Blessed are those who mourn... those who see their depravity and it causes them a deep grief over what they have done
 - iii. And blessed are the meek...
 - 1. Blessed are those who see their sin... those who grieve over their sin
 - a. And as a result, they are the meek of the earth
 - i. They are the ones with a humble, penitent faith
 - 2. And Jesus says, TO THEM belong the Kingdom
 - a. TO THEM belong the comfort my Father promises
 - b. TO THEM belongs the earth!
 - b. For all those who are humbled because of their sin, will indeed be exalted by God
 - 5. Turn over in your Bibles to James, chapter 4, and we'll look at verses 1-10
 - ii. In verses 1-5, James lays out for us the awful damage that is done by those who are not penitent over their sins
 - 1. He says, starting in verse 1...
 - a. *1What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? 2You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. 3You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. 4You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5Or do you*

suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"?

- i. It is our sinful passions that causes so much strife among us
- ii. It is our wrong desires that cause so much fighting and quarreling
- iii. We are an adulterous and sinful people, because what we truly love is NOT God, but the world

2. But look at James' answer in verse 6 to all of this sin and evil and turmoil...
 - a. *⁶But [God] gives more grace.*
 - i. That's fantastic news, isn't it?
 1. More grace is what we ALL need!
3. But who does God give this grace to?
 - a. *Therefore it says, "God opposes THE PROUD but gives grace TO THE HUMBLE."*
4. And then James gives us very clear commands...
 - a. *⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*
 - i. Ah... we're back to familiar language, aren't we?
 1. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you
5. Brothers and sisters, true, CHRISTIAN humility begins when we draw near to God
 - a. And in our drawing near to God, we mourn and weep over our own sinfulness
 - b. And as we mourn and weep over our sinfulness – as we are HUMBLED in our sinfulness,
 - i. The Lord cleanses our hands, He purifies our hearts,
 1. And in an utterly shocking turn of events, HE exalts US!
6. This is the first aspect of true, CHRISTIAN humility, is that it comes from a realization of our own sinfulness

4. The second aspect is this... true, CHRISTIAN humility helps us to love our God with all our heart, mind, and soul
 - a. And it does so by reminding us that we need no recognition from man... all WE need to live for is the DELIGHT of our Father
 - i. So turn now in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 23, and we'll look at verses 1-12
 1. Matthew writes...
 - a. *¹Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, ²"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, ³so do and observe whatever they tell you, but not the works they do. For they preach, but do not practice. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, ⁶and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues ⁷and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. ⁸But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. ⁹And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. ¹⁰Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ. ¹¹The greatest among you shall be your servant.*

¹²*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*

- ii. There is our familiar line once again,
 - 1. "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."
 - a. The Pharisees were EXPERTS at exalting themselves, weren't they?
 - i. As Jesus says here in verse 5, they do ALL their deeds to be seen by others
 - 1. In those days, the people had these small boxes called phylacteries, which would contain portions of the Torah, or the Old Testament
 - a. They would wear these phylacteries strapped to their wrists, and sometimes strapped to their foreheads
 - i. And Jesus says that they intentionally make these Scripture boxes EXTRA LARGE, so that everyone can see them
 - ii. A modern-day equivalent might be those little Scripture memory cards that you can get from Mardels
 - 1. Sometimes these come in little packets, about the size of regular business cards
 - a. That makes them easy to carry around, and you can be somewhat discreet about them as well
 - 2. But just imagine if I had this big 8 ½ by 11 folder, and on the front, in really big letters, it said "PASTOR MICHAEL'S BIBLE VERSES THAT HE IS MEMORIZING THIS WEEK"
 - a. There's no reason to do something so extravagant...
 - i. UNLESS, I want everyone to see how religious and spiritual I am
 - b. Well that was just one of many ways that the Pharisees lived their lives for all to see how religious THEY were
 - i. The Pharisees would make sure EVERYONE heard their prayers out in the streets
 - ii. The Pharisees would make sure EVERYONE knew how diligent they were in their tithing and fasting
 - iii. The Pharisees LOVED the seats of honor at a feast...
 - 1. The very seat that Jesus said to sit far away from
 - 2. And so Jesus would say, listen to what these men teach, because they do teach the law of God
 - a. But don't do what they DO, for they are ALL about exalting themselves
 - iii. And what this shows us, time and time again throughout the Gospels,
 - 1. Is that they did not truly love the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul
 - a. Instead, they loved the praises of MEN
 - i. And the best way to get the praises of men, is to exalt YOURSELF
 - iv. But this is not your calling, brothers and sisters
 - 1. When all is said and done, it is not what man says about you that matters... it is what GOD says about you
 - a. HE is the One you should desire to please, in EVERYTHING we do!
 - i. This is what Jesus taught back in Matthew 6:3-4, when he said,

1. *3“When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your giving may be in secret. And your FATHER WHO SEES IN SECRET will reward you.”*
 - ii. And in verse 6, when he said,
 1. *6But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*
 - iii. And in verses 17-18, when he said,
 1. *17But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*
- v. My friends, ultimately the only audience that matters, in this life and the next, is the audience of your Father
 1. And if you are going to truly embrace that reality, then you MUST choose the path of humility
 - a. You CHOOSE to walk out the commands of God, quietly and without recognition
 - b. You CHOOSE to hold fast to all of His precepts, regardless of how men might mock you
 - c. You CHOOSE to truly follow after Christ in ALL of your actions...
 - i. Even if you follow after him ALONE
 1. For your Father in heaven sees your humble, faithful obedience
 - a. And He will reward you for all that you do solely for Him
- vi. True, CHRISTIAN humility helps us to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, and all of our soul, and all of our mind...
 1. For it reminds us that HE is the only audience that TRULY matters
 - a. Whoever exalts himself in order to receive the praise of men will be humbled
 - b. But whoever humbles himself to obey the Word of the Lord when no one else will ever know,
 - i. SHOWS that he TRULY loves God, and God will indeed lift them up!
 2. The first aspect of true, Christian humility is that it comes from a realization of our own sinfulness
 - a. The second aspect of true, Christian humility is that it helps us to love our God with ALL of our heart

- 5. And the third aspect is this... true, CHRISTIAN humility helps us to love our neighbor as ourselves
- a. And it does so by removing as much possibility of offense between myself and my neighbor that I can
 - i. Before we switch passages, look again at what Jesus says here in Matthew 23:11,
 1. *“The greatest among you shall be your servant.”*
 - a. Now, with that verse in mind, turn back to Luke, chapter 14, verses 7-11
 - ii. Think carefully about what Jesus is teaching in this parable
 1. He doesn't say, “When you get to the feast, just kind of wander around until the people who invited you show up...
 - a. THAT way, you won't be humiliated if you accidentally take a place of too much honor,

- b. But you ALSO won't get stuck sitting at the worst seat
 - i. Just hang around and wait for the host, and everything will be fine"
- 2. That's not what he says to do at all, is it?
 - a. Verse 10...
 - i. "But when you are invited, go and sit in THE LOWEST place"
- 3. Friends, THAT is what true, CHRISTIAN humility looks like
 - a. True, CHRISTIAN humility is intentional and proactive
 - b. True, CHRISTIAN humility ALWAYS looks for the lowest place... in every circumstance
 - i. At a feast, intentionally and proactively look for the place with the least honor, and then joyfully claim that for yourself
 - ii. At your job, intentionally and proactively look for the lowest tasks around the office, or around the jobsite, and joyfully take on those tasks for yourself
 - iii. As the holidays grow nearer, and you head out to the outlet mall, intentionally and proactively look for the parking spots farthest away
 - 1. Intentionally and proactively look for the last places in the checkout lines
 - a. And joyfully claim those spots for yourself
 - iv. On the highway, as traffic is ramping up and people are flying around each other at 75mph trying to get to the merge before the construction site,
 - 1. Go ahead and intentionally and proactively move over to the spot at the back of the line of cars, and joyfully choose that spot for yourself
 - 4. Now, you might be saying to yourself...
 - a. "These are all just silly examples... no one is going to be pointed to Jesus by me taking the farthest spot in a busy parking lot... that's just a waste of time... who's going to care what I do in the midst of all of that busyness???"
 - i. Ah, but don't forget...
 - 1. Your Father in Heaven sees EVERYTHING you do, especially what you do IN SECRET
 - a. And if you choose to humble yourself BEFORE HIM, then He WILL exalt you!
 - i. That's the vertical aspect of our humility
 - 5. But what about the HORIZONTAL aspect?
 - a. Well, let's look at an example from a different perspective...
 - i. Let's say you show up to the outlet mall on a busy Saturday morning, and, just like everyone else, you are circling the parking lot, trying to get the best space
 - 1. You finally see one open up, and so you gun it over to that spot, and you whip your car into it ahead of the other people who ALSO would have like to have had that spot
 - a. As you get out of your car, proud of yourself and happy about your achievement,
 - i. The people around you register your face in their minds
 - ii. And what do you think their first thoughts of you are going to be if you cross paths in the store?

1. "There's that jerk who just HAD to have the best spot!"
 - a. And they will IMMEDIATELY take offense against you, even though you have had ZERO communication with one another
 - i. We all know that's true, don't we?
6. How many times have WE been the person who takes on that offense against someone who we believe acted unjustly or unkindly... or UN-HUMBLY?
 - a. So if we who are followers of Jesus and who are filled with the Spirit of God are so quick to take offense at these things,
 - i. HOW MUCH MORE SO do you think the people out in the world are going to take offense at all these things?
 1. Well, thankfully, Jesus has given us a way to remove much of that offense...
 - a. And it is called, HUMILITY!
 - b. Humility is the door by which we enter into TRULY loving our neighbor, isn't it?
 - i. Think about our times when we go door to door in our neighborhood right here around the church
 1. That is a sacrifice, isn't it?
 - a. I would RATHER stay inside the Fellowship Hall where the AC works, and where I don't have to walk around out in the Oklahoma heat and humidity
 - b. I would RATHER stay inside the church building and spend my evening talking to people who believe the same way I do
 - c. I would RATHER just put a bunch of church invite postcards in the mail, and not send them out to the houses around us so I don't actually have to interact with people OUT THERE
 2. But instead, we choose humility, don't we?
 - a. We humbly go to the doors of complete strangers
 - b. We humbly take the time to ask how we can pray for them
 - c. We humbly proclaim Jesus
 - i. Not our own agendas
 - ii. Not our political ideologies
 - iii. Not our theological biases
 1. We choose HUMILITY, and the doors are LITERALLY opened for us to begin to love our neighbors who may never step foot inside this church building
 - c. Without humility, we cannot love our neighbor well OUT THERE
 - i. And without humility, we cannot love our neighbor well IN HERE
 1. Just listen to the words of the Apostle Peter in 1 Peter 5:5-7
 - a. Peter had just finished exhorting the elders of the church to shepherd the flock with eagerness and willing and humble hearts
 - b. And then he says in verse 5...
 - i. *5Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, ALL OF YOU, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, 7casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*
 - c. There are our familiar words again...
 - i. Humble yourselves, and God will exalt you

1. Each of you here in the church, clothe yourself with humility toward one another
 - ii. Yes, that comes with the promise of God Himself exalting you
 1. But it also comes with a warning too, doesn't it?
 - a. If we choose NOT to clothe ourselves with humility, then we are by default, clothing ourselves with PRIDE
 - i. And Peter warns us, just as James did...
 - ii. God OPPOSES the proud
2. This is why Paul writes in Romans 12 that none of us ought to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to
 - a. It is when we choose to walk in humility that each member of the body will function as we have been gifted to function
 - b. It is when we choose to walk in humility that we will begin to see out opportunities to outdo one another in showing honor
 - c. It is when we choose to walk in humility that we will begin to pray for one another constantly...
 - i. We will contribute to one another's needs with joyful and willing hearts
 - ii. We will open up our homes to one another to show true hospitality
 1. When we choose to walk in true, CHRISTIAN humility, THEN we will be able to love our neighbors as we have been commanded to love them
 - a. Both OUT THERE
 - b. AND in here!
- ii. To this we have been called, brothers and sisters
 1. A prideful Christian is simply an impossible contradiction
 - a. For it is only the humble who will truly see the depth of their own depravity
 - b. It is only the humble who will love the Lord their God with all their heart and mind and soul and strength
 - c. It is only the humble who will truly love their neighbor as themselves
- d. And if you've been paying attention, I've been intentional to define all of these as aspects of true, CHRISTIAN humility
 - i. For it is Jesus who gave us the model of what true humility looks like
 - ii. And it is Jesus who enables us to show that true, Christian humility to others
- e. So hear these words of the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:1-11 as we close...
 - i. *1... If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but IN HUMILITY count others more significant than yourselves. 4Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8And being found in human form, HE HUMBLED HIMSELF by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
 1. Jesus himself came into this world, and he chose the lowest place that he could find

- a. He who created the universe and holds all things together in absolute beauty and perfection, chose the lowest place, and took on the form of a servant
 - i. And as he willingly and joyfully humbled himself,
 - 1. God the Father exalted him to be King over ALL!
- 2. Have this same mind among you, brothers and sisters in Christ
 - a. Let your entire life be consecrated to God, as you walk before Him in true, CHRISTIAN humility
 - i. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted!