

Associate with the Lowly, Part 2

Luke 14: 12-14

Go back to Luke 14. This is the same thing is happening here. Jesus is warning his host. And by extension, he's warning the other guests, and by further extension, he's warning us as well. He's warning us to check our motivations for what we do, why we do our religious acts, apparently performed in devotion to God, or generous acts apparently done just to bless others.

We need to watch out. Are we really trying to comfort or are rich ourselves? A true spirit of generosity, which is what Jesus encourages here. The true spirit of hospitality is to enter into the whole thing with no expectations at all. I like how Darrell Bock said it. He said, "Hospitality is generosity when no motive exists besides giving."

That's it, true generosity is giving with that any expectation in the invitation. The only desire is to bless other people. Generosity is about showing hospitality with, with pure motives, without looking for any form of repayment, leaving that to the Lord.

Most of the hospitality we show with friends and loved ones, family members, church members. Again, it is not wrong to invite those closer relations over for lunch or dinner. In fact, we strongly encourage it as a church. We want you to practice that today. But I hope you'll also add to your practice of inviting people that you don't know so well.

Maybe inviting people that make you feel uncomfortable. Maybe inviting, whoever it is, it can fall into one of those categories. Those who don't have any means of repayment to you. The question is about whether our hospitality is truly generous, or whether it comes with strings attached. Expecting something in return, looking for repayment, keeping accounts, keeping score. If that's the case, then whatever you're giving, whether it's

service, acts, gifts, or hospitality, then it's not motivated by pure generosity, if strings are attached.

In the case of this Pharisee and his guests, much of their hospitality was a sham. It was a masquerade, it hid ulterior motives, such as like we said in this text, inviting Jesus to dine. Making a show of honor, in the offer of hospitality, but intending all the while to entrap him. That is pure hypocrisy, isn't it? That is the blinding sin of a soul damning, religious, pride. They're in much danger of never escaping. Here, just notice Jesus kindness to this Pharisee, to not let him go, to not remand him to the dustbin of history and an eternal lake of fire.

He confronted him. And he did it indirectly, but he confronted him. He helped him to see his error. So, now that he's got his host's attention, he's got the attention of some of the guests as well, Jesus proceeds to give some positive advice about inviting guests. And to help personalize this for ourselves, just in our outline question.

We want to ask a second question here. Is our hospitality broad enough? This is just a corollary to the other question we asked. Is our hospitality too narrow? Now we're asking the question, number two, is our hospitality broad enough?

So rather than only inviting your friends, brothers, relatives, rich neighbors, Jesus says, verse 13-14, "When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

That list, Jesus is describing people who are disadvantaged, the poor, they are financially disadvantaged, the crippled, lame, blind, they're physically disadvantaged, and no one has expectations about those kinds of people. Jesus' host, the guy who's invited him over, he didn't even know people like that, much less shared table fellowship with them. The guy who showed up

with dropsy and swollen, a swollen limbs and body and needing healing, that guy was just a plant. He wasn't there by invitation except to entrap Jesus. It's part of the ploy.

So obviously all these people, the poor, crippled, lame, blind, they're without any social standing, they have nothing to commend themselves, they can't do anything for him. So those kinds of people are virtually invisible to the Pharisees and people of his ilk. Whenever the Pharisees had to notice people like that, they found a convenient way to dismiss them as sinners, as unclean, as impure. They believe that the disadvantage condition and state of being of people like that, whether it's pov, poverty or physical malady, was evidence of a hidden personal sin.

Something that God could see, and that's why he gave them the curse of this issue. It's hidden from other people. So, there's suffering, as evidence of divine disfavor. It just hardened an already merciless heart, didn't it?

That kind of view. It could have come from a misinterpretation of the law which prohibited physically deformed men from serving as priests. You read that in Leviticus 21:16 that excluded from priestly service, is a "man blind or lame, anyone with a mutilated face, limb too long," other maladies that are listed there in that context.

But none of that excludes them from the dinner table. Poverty, physical malady, disability, those are never disqualifications from table fellowship, from hospitality, or generosity. In fact, clear counterexamples to that in Scripture, in the Old Testament. God, first of all, looks after the poor, he commands his people, those who have more, to show generosity to those who have less.

Leviticus 19, 9 and 10, also, Leviticus 23:22, both, both of them say that, Leviticus 19, "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings

after your harvest. And you shall not strip your vineyard bare, and neither shall you gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner." In our terms, for the illegal alien. Leave them for them. "I am the Lord your God."

Part of the Mosaic law, is the mercy and the goodness of the God who gave the law. The one who loves and cares for all kinds of people, including the poor and maybe, even especially the poor. Another example of God looking after those who are poor and disabled, comes in a case of what's written about David. The matter of physical deformity, disability. Remember the name of Mephibosheth? It's a fun one to pronounce for the kids and Bible reading, isn't it? But he's the crippled son of Jonathan. He's lame, in his feet due to a childhood accident. He was dropped.

He was about five years old and David showed Mephibosheth favor, seating him at his own table, to eat the king's food, even though he was not of the king's family, but of Jonathan's family. He treated him well, like one of his own sons, because of his covenant that he made

with Jonathan. Loved Mephibosheth. He didn't treat him as a, an outcast. He brought him to the king's table.

So instead of following God's pattern of care for the poor, instead of following David's example of compassion, for those who are disabled, the Pharisees held a merciless point of view. That the poor and the disabled, they only had themselves to blame.

Corollary to that in our day, is the charismatic movement, that blames anything that you are suffering through, that you are not delivered from, your poverty, you're disabled, blind, lame, whatever, they blame it on your lack of faith. They say if you only give me more money, that demonstrates your faith, and then I will dispense the healing grace of God to you.

It's the same kind of pharisaic impulse we see back then, just in a different garb. Pharisees believed that these people are fault for their poverty. They're at fault for being crippled, and lame, blind, disabled. Perhaps the



parents were to blame. Whoever's sin is the cause. They say God has visited them with judgment. He has exposed what no one else can see, and he's shown it by their disability, by their poverty, he's shown the guilt that they have hidden, their personal sin. He's exposed it by cursing them.

That view is so pervasive, that even the disciples held it. In John 9:1 and 2, they saw a man blind from birth as they walked by, and the disciples, you remember asked Jesus, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" You notice they gave Jesus only two options. They're parroting the Pharisees' view. Sin is somewhere. Jesus said, "It's not that this man sinned or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him." Who is providentially, sovereignly responsible for the man's blindness? God is, that the works of God might be displayed in him.

Don't ever look down on the poor, or the crippled, or the lame, or the blind, or those who are deaf, or in any other malady. Those who are maimed or deformed, do not look

down on them. That offends the heart of a holy God. That offends the heart of a compassionate, loving God.

God is sovereign over all people. That includes their income levels, that includes their privileges, or their lack of privileges, and includes their physical health and ability, or their lack thereof. He's sovereign over advantages and disadvantages, and God assigns to each of us our station in life. He gives us our lot in life. He gives grace to all. But he distributes more to some and less to others. And he distributes it in various kinds, and shapes, and forms, as he wills. That's his sovereign prerogative. It's not arbitrary, he has a good and wise reason for doing that.

This is one of the ways that God brings people together. Uniting them in a mutual concern of love and appreciation, because the rich with their wealth, that God has allowed them to have and given to them, they can look with compassion on the poor and the needy. And they, they have the means to do something about it. Showing kindness, giving generously, showing hospitality.

The poor, then they can respond with appreciation and gratitude, blessing those who show mercy to them. Thanking God, for providing for them through their gracious, generous, benefactors. So, it brings hearts together. It's not about what you have and don't have. It's not about your stuff. It's not about your money. It's not about your bank account. It's about, do you love one another? And God has made distinctions, and put disparities between us in these ways to draw us together, not to drive us apart. This is, again, this is what makes the social justice movement so wicked. Because it exacerbates difference and sees it as a reason for stealing from other people, in order that I come up to their level. It's wicked.

Going back to the text, the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, these are the people on the kingdom guest list. Verse 21 says, these are the people that Jesus came to heal and to save. Luke 4:18, he came to "preach good news to the poor [...], recovery of sight to the blind and set at liberty all those who are oppressed." So as Jesus speaks to his host, he's essentially calling this man to

join him, this wealthy man, this prosperous man, this, in terms of we use today, privileged man. God gave him those privileges. God gave him those opportunities. God elevated him.

Jesus is calling this man to join him in dispensing divine generosity. He's calling this man and giving him the opportunity to become with him, with Jesus, a conduit of divine grace. To learn the secret of the saying, that it is more blessed to give than to receive. He's inviting his host to join him in associating with the lowly, because that's what he does.

So, as Jesus advises his host about how to make a guest list, and you gotta realize in a setting like this, as this man is invited Jesus to his table, and given him a seat of honor, and sat him down at the table, and he's feeding him, and his servants are all feeding him. The man is probably looking, or maybe tends to look at Jesus with a bit of disdain.

You're a Galilean, going to talk to me about hosting banquets? Is that what you hicks do out there in the sticks? Sure, you know how to put together a guest list. Got it. What home do you have Jesus, to entertain people? He may have thought that way, but he failed to realize who he's talking to. Jesus is the king of heaven and earth. His kingdom is over all. And there is a bounty and a plenty in his domain, there is infinite, eternal, and he continues to pour it out over and over.

Oh yeah, he knows how to make a guest list. He knows how to do inviting, he knows a lot about throwing banquets and parties. So, he advises his host about how to give banquets, who to include on the guest list. He says verse 13, "Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind." And he adds a reason why. "You will be blessed." Precisely because they cannot repay you. Again, verse 14, "When you give a feast, invite the poor, crippled, lame, blind, you will be blessed because they cannot repay you," for, here's the reason, "you will be repaid in the resurrection of the just."

Inviting those people over, those people, throwing them a banquet, that's pure generosity, isn't it? Just pure generosity. Those kinds of people can't repay. They simply can't afford it. They lack the resources, no financial resources, no physical resources. Therefore, get this, you giving to them, those kinds of people, it becomes a matter of justice for God, to do what is righteous, rewarding those who use their personal wealth to bless other people. God is gonna see that everything gets its just reward. That comes in a retributive, justice sense, negative judgment. It also comes in a remunerative justice sense, reward.

Showing generous hospitality, leaves all repayment to God. Luke 6:38, "Give and it will be given unto you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use, it'll be measured right back to you." So don't be stingy in giving. If you're stingy in giving, it'll be stingy right back to you. If you're generous in giving, it will be measured back to you. No one out gives God right? No one out gives him.

So, it makes sense to ask the question at this point, which Jesus raises, makes sense to ask, do you want your reward now paid in full? The reciprocity of tiny little human beings, or even the combined repayment of friends, brothers, relatives, rich neighbors. Do you want that now? As Jesus said, "What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?" Or do you prefer to delay your gratification? And wait for God's timing? To trust him to distribute a reward to you? Are you willing to wait for repayment? Never, maybe seeing it in this life, but waiting for the resurrection of the just.

Because if you prefer to wait for God to recompense you, if you prefer to wait for God to reward your generosity, to reward your pure hospitality, then you are truly among that category that he describes there, what he calls the just. There's a resurrection of the unjust, the wicked, and the just, the righteous.

Here he speaks of the resurrection of the just. That's a category made up of people that are believers only. The just who live by faith. Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, and even

though "it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God," and even though, 1 Corinthians 1:26 says, there are "not many who are called who are wise and powerful or of noble birth" and rich, there are some.

Paul gives instructions about those rich people, the wealthy people, to Timothy. At the end of his first pastoral epistle, he says this in 1 Timothy 6:17 to 19, "As for the rich in this present age, charge them, not to be haughty." That is arrogant, proud. That's what he's saying to this Pharisee and his host. "Charge them not to be haughty, nor does set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches," which is why they give to get, because they're trying to mitigate an uncertain future.

So, "Don't set your hopes on the uncertainty of riches" at all. Set your hopes "on God, on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy." What are the wealthy to do? "They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share. Thus, storing up treasure for



themselves as good foundation for the future, so they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

What is truly life? It's not your stuff. What is truly life? It's not your money. What is truly life is that it is more blessed to give than to receive. Those who use wealth to be generous, those who give with no other motive than to bless, expecting nothing in return, Jesus not only promises repayment, or fundamentally, more importantly, he speaks of here, of resurrection, of living forever.

Ah, he speaks of justification, having a clear conscience, having sin forgiven. Is that not enough? Those who are justified are content with that. That is a pure gift. To be at peace with God, no longer under his condemnation, no longer fearing his future judgment, wrath for sins, but to be declared righteous before God. Declared righteous by God because of the atoning work of Jesus Christ. What greater reward is there?

There are those, among us, there are those who, are going to enter into the kingdom, who are wealthy, and then there are those, those who are poor. There are those who are in between. There are those who are believers who are counted in our world as the uber rich. And they're also among the just. There are brothers, sisters in Christ. There are those who are more moderately wealthy. There are those among the middle class, lower middle classes as well. Anything extra, all material possessions, and whatever we have, any money we have extra, leftover, none of that really matters. Except, as that which God has entrusted to us to provide for our families, number one, and then most joyfully to give and to bless other people and show generosity.

So, we rejoice in the stewardship that we have from God. We rejoice to use what we have leftover to bless other people, especially, especially as Jesus said, those who cannot reciprocate. Once again, Jesus is not allowing here the mentality of giving to get, as if giving to the poor and the needy, as a path to greater reward in heaven. God doesn't reward greed. That's not the attitude at all.

The attitude here, and the offer here, and the encouragement, advice, and counsel here from Jesus, is inviting us to share in the blessing. To get involved in what he's doing, to put this world behind us, and all of its principles of reciprocity, and say that's for them. It's not for me. What I have is this principle, it's more blessed to give than to receive. Jesus invites us to, to join him, to become a conduit of God's blessing to other people that it comes through us, and it blesses other people. We get the joy and satisfaction of that.

By associating with a lowly, by inviting those who are not a part of our social sphere, not a part of our class, and believe me, here in America we do have class systems, by befriending those who don't have anything to offer, in return. We get used to the kind of company that we're going to share in heaven. You get used to people like that. We sit around that, we're going to sit around the table of the great banquet in heaven and the kingdom of God, together with people just like that.

Because God has given to us the kingdom, because he's given us his very own son, his generosity to us is what frees up our hearts so that we cannot not be fearful about the future and try to mitigate against an uncertain future. Frees up our hearts to show generosity to others and freely give. Jesus said that in Luke 12:32, "It's your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," which means, he follows up with this, "sell your possessions, give to the needy. Provide yourselves with money-bags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches," nowhere, where, "no moth destroys. Where your treasure is there your heart will be also."

That's the question for Jesus's host, isn't it? Where is your heart? Is it bound by greed? Is it enslaved to money? Is it chained up by fear about an uncertain future? That everything you've worked to get might be taken away from you? Where's your heart?

Where's your treasure? Bound up in what men can give, how men can reward you, how men and dealings with men can

mitigate against an uncertain future. Is it what brothers, friends, relatives, rich neighbors, can provide you? Is that what you're setting your hope on? Or is your treasure contained, completely in the resurrection of the just? Because if it is, you'll not only extend invitations to friends and family, but you will show generosity, the needy, the poor, the crippled, lame, the blind, as Jesus teaches, as it goes on in the next section.

People like that are invited to the great banquet. They will eat and drink in the kingdom of God. Jesus invites them. He associates with the lowly and he calls us to do the same. So many of the lowly are those who are being gathered into the kingdom from North, South, East and West, sit at the table and taste of the master's banquet. So, it's best for us to get to know them now. Amen? We can use treasure, earthly treasure, to facilitate all that hospitality and get to know them now. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you so much for the generosity and graciousness that you show. The goodness you show, the wisdom you show, and the way you've constructed the world,

and the way you've sovereignly ruled the world. We thank you for how you have shown such generosity to us. Those who will participate in the resurrection of the just, well, we know that, that's because of your greatest gift, the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ. The one who came and humbled himself to the, to take on the form of the man, and humbled himself even further to the point of death, even the death of the cross. He did not count wealth, and grandeur, and splendor, and all the attributes of deity, all the glory, a thing to be grasped and held onto. Rather, he emptied himself as it were. Took the form of a servant.

Father, let us, whatever our means, whatever our station in life, let us have the same attitude, that same mind that was in Christ Jesus. Help us to walk in his pattern, the example that he set. Please grant us the Holy Spirit to, to encourage and strengthen that commitment in us and strengthen that conviction. To remind us of when we may not have the right, the best motives in what we do.

And let us rejoice in this gift of hospitality that you've given us. The opportunity that we have, with what's

left over, to use that to facilitate relationships. Yes, with friends, and brothers, and relatives, and neighbors, but also Father for those who will never be able to repay, and return. The poor, crippled, the lame, the blind, and others. Father, let us be merciful, as you are merciful, let us follow in the steps of Jesus Christ our Savior, who showed that kind of compassion to us. It's in his name that we pray, amen.