

Sabbath Wholeness Luke 14:1-11

1. In our culture, what are some of the ways that we build our status, our social standing? In what ways are these pursuits damaging to us? To our society?

Read Luke 14:1-11

2. (vs. 1) A Sabbath meal at a prominent citizen's home was meant to be a setting where hospitality was expressed toward the poor, the needy, and the stranger. Instead we are brought into the patronage system. The way in which you built and enhanced your social standing was to make a wealthy person your patron. They would give you gifts, loans, open doors for you, and in turn they would amass a network of people who owed them favors. Dinners like these were the ways you built and enhanced your status. Why then weren't there any poor or needy or strangers present? (see Luke 14:12-14)

3. (vs. 2) The word 'behold' introduces a surprise. Why is it a surprise that a man with dropsy is there? Why do you think he is there?

4. (vs. 3) Jesus is being set up. If he heals on the Sabbath according to the Pharisees he would be a law-breaker and would discredit himself. Jesus heals the man anyway. What is Jesus telling us about himself, and why he came by performing miracles on the Sabbath?

5. (vs.4) What does Jesus' question reveal to us about the Pharisees? What is he hoping they will see about themselves?

6. The ironic reality about dropsy is that even though you are retaining a huge amount of fluid you are constantly thirsty. Dropsy was often used to illustrate social illnesses as well. The Greek Philosopher Diogenes called money lovers dropsies – “though dropsies filled with fluid crave drink, money lovers though loaded with money crave more of it – both to their demise”. In what ways is this a good diagnosis for the status dropsy of the Pharisees? In what ways is this a good diagnosis for the status dropsy of our culture? (refer back to question one)

7. (vs. 7-10) In the patronage system your level of status dictated where you sat at the table, the higher your status, the closer to the host you could sit. Jesus here is probably articulating the principles that guided how they chose their seats in an honour and shame culture. He however is using something they know to point toward a core spiritual truth (vs. 11). The setting however is key to our understanding. He places the principle in the context of a wedding feast. A wedding feast was one of the most common ways he would speak of God’s future. What would he be saying to the guests about how one comes to be welcomed into God’s future with this principle?

8. (11) Those who humble themselves will be exalted. The word exalted is a word of praise, a word that means “lifted up”. How is this statement a summary of the gospel? (the good news of what God has done for us in Jesus)

9. Commentator Joel Green says that Jesus tells this parable to bring healing to the status dropsy of the Pharisees. How does Jesus expect this principle will impact their status dropsy? (see Luke 14:12-14 as a starting point)

10. How does Jesus expect this principle will bring healing to our status dropsy? Refer back to your discussion around question one.