

Humility Comes Before Honor

Luke 14.7-14; 18.9-14

Jesus taught that both our motives and actions impact rewards we will receive in the resurrection. These waters are tricky to navigate: Are we wrong to pursue rewards? Is being humble a way for us to gain honor? Some avoid the subject of rewards: Jesus didn't, as we see today.

The Parable of the Invited Guests

Setting: Fraternizing with the Pharisees, who love the place of honor...

- When invited to feast, don't take place of honor.
- Take the lowest seat, and let the host move you up.
- When you give a feast, invite the poor; get your reward in heaven.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

Setting: Self-righteous people who looked down on others

- Pharisee and tax-collector go to temple to pray
- Pharisee sees his own virtue; tax-collector sees his sin
- Recognition of sin leads to a right relationship with God

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

*Humbling yourself results in honor from others, and from God.
Exalting yourself leads to being humbled before men and God.
Live now for the exaltation that comes in the resurrection.*

HUMILITY
comes before
HONOR

1. The setting for both the parable of the invited guests (Lk 14.7-14), and the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18.9-14), is with Pharisees. We might say that He's on 'enemy territory, but He doesn't back down! In Lk 14.1-7, before telling the parable of the invited guests, Jesus asks the Pharisees about healing on the Sabbath. Why were the Pharisees unwilling (vv4 and 6) to answer His question?
2. In the parable itself (Lk 14.7-11), Jesus gives practical advice to the Pharisees – He even appeals to their desire to be honored! His message is simple: *Don't exalt yourself; let others do that.* He then expands His message in vv12-14: *Don't do things to get a reward now, but to gain a reward after this life is over.* Is Jesus telling the Pharisees how to 'get to heaven when they die'? Why not? What message is Jesus trying to communicate to them? What did they focus on, and what did Jesus *want* them to focus on? Can we use this approach in talking with unbelievers today? What message does this parable hold for Christians today?
3. In Luke 18.9-14, Jesus speaks directly to some people who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous” (9). Is this common today? How so? In the parable (vv10-13), what does the Pharisee focus on? What is his 'standard of righteousness'? Unbelievers often do this, but do Christians do this, too? What 'heart condition' is implicit in the prayer of the tax collector? How does he see his own condition, and to whom does he appeal for forgiveness?
4. The saying Jesus repeats in Luke 14.11 and 18 (*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted*) reflects a common teaching of Jewish rabbis. Jesus lifts this 'common sense' wisdom from the level of 'good advice' and gives it eternal significance. How do our present attitudes and actions affect our eternal standing? A Christian leader once wrote, “The person I am becoming today, is preparing me for the person I shall be for all of eternity.” Reflect on that statement.