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### The Way Up Is Down

This research paper contains four commentaries by Fred B. Craddock, Darrell L. Bock, Gary M. Burge and Andrew E. H, and John Nolland. Along follows the book, "The Parables" By Brad H. Young. In the parables that Jesus told in Luke 14:7-11, the message is, "Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted." Jesus had been invited to a dinner by leaders of the Pharisees which an elite group of Pharisees had been invited. Jesus warns His fellow guests about seeking places of honor. However, there are four essential elements, except the invitation, taking the lowest seat, self-examination, and humbly serving others.

Luke 14:7-11, "When He noticed how the guest picked the places of honor at the table, He told them this parable: When someone invites you to the wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. However, when you are invited, take the lowest place so that when your host comes, He will tell you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." During Jesus' times, the places of honor indicated your importance and social status. Jesus saw pride in action. However, some viewed

themselves as more important than others. Needless to say, "Jesus had no pleasure in the pride." Jesus said, "It is better to take the lowest place so when the host comes, He will tell you, "Friend, move up to a better place."

Fred B. Craddock explains in his commentary that while Jesus was at the home of the Pharisees, He observed the guests and host's social behavior. He says, "The everyday activity of home and marketplace, farm and fishing boat provided Jesus not only revelations of the true character of His listeners but also opportunities to reveal how life is in the reign of God. The observations of Jesus support that statement. Therefore, if the incarnation teaches us anything, the frequent and familiar are not to be overlooked in defining life in the presence of God, as the human ego is quite clever and, upon hearing that taking a low seat may not only avoid embarrassment but lead to elevation to the head table, may convert the instruction about humility into a new strategy for self-examination. Craddock's statement, "Taking the low seat because one is humble is one thing; taking the low seat as a way to move up is another" (177). Luke 14:7-14 is the third dinner invitation that Jesus accepts from fallacy, we see this in Luke chapter 11:37-43, and yet, it becomes pretty clear that these were conspirators who were posing as friends even though Jesus shared several meals with the Pharisees as we see this in Luke 7:36. The Pharisees thought that they were watching Jesus. Still, we read in verse 7; He is also watching them.

Darelle L. Bock says, "At an ancient meal, the table was usually shaped like a U, and the host sat at the base" (392). The seats of honor were located next to him. Often the most honored guest arrived at the latest. He states that the book of Luke highlights the importance of genuine humility. Humility means not reflecting certain snobbery, not exalting oneself, and not thinking only of one's gain. He also explains, "The imagery recalls Proverbs 25:6-7, where the author

writes that the host should call someone up than to assert ones to try to get his attention" (393). In Jesus discussing fundamental questions on how to be honored, the background is the issues of God's relationship with us and the nature of our standing before him. Darelle states, "Before God and in light of who He is, no one stands holy, but if the Lord exalts anyone for services well rendered or attitudes well held, that is an honor. The connection to God's response in verse 11 only highlights that the appeal also applies to divine relationships" (393). Darrell also says "that the principle of the passage is clearly stated in (vs.11). God will exalt those who humble themselves. The Kingdom is His gift. Though He owes His blessing and divine acceptance to no one, He makes the way to divine favor open to all. How we treat others impacts how God treats us" (393).

In the commentary, Gary M. Burge and Andrew E. Hill analogies explain that In Luke 14:7-14 Jesus, while observing the people clamoring for the status at the banquet, Jesus remarks on humility to the guest (8-11) and the host (12-14). He states, "People who claim the reputable places at banquets end up publicly humiliated when asked to take a lower seat. So if you want to be ahead, pretend to be insignificant and take the lowest seat. The host will notice your humility and advance you to a higher seat, indicating your intrinsic superiority. However, verse 11 shows that Jesus does not have such a cunning program in mind, for such clever and false self-humiliation is still diseased with the root problem of trying to advance oneself above others. The authors state that Jesus is not saying never to invite friends for dinner. They say that the problem Jesus was addressing is the expectation of recompense, the calculating spirit that does well so that more benefits will accrue to oneself. They also say, "Rewards come to those who live for the sake of others (1090). Gary/Andrew states that the whole response of Jesus telling the parable of the great banquet is to puncture the man's sentimentality and to bring him back to

reality. The complete rejection is believed to be insulting because they had already accepted the initial invitation, as we can see in Luke 14:16-17. At this point, Jesus perhaps is referring to the religious leaders here: we need to remember that He is eating in a Pharisee's house (14:1). The master responds in verse 21 by inviting those of the lower class (referring to tax collectors and sinners, lower class Jews) from the town" (1090).

John Nolland, on the other hand, expresses the irony in Luke's setting in parallel as undesirable outcomes, the shame of vs. 8-9, and the "repayment" here of a return invitation to a banquet-this is not a standard way of looking at things! John explains in Luke 14:7-11, "Standard patterns of reciprocity and concern for those of our standing are overturned here. The directions for hosts correspond to the directions to guests in vs. 7-11, and in turn, these directions to hosts are to be found to have their counterpart in the behavior of the divine host, hidden in the parable of vs. 15-24. The natural guest list comprises people whose company one enjoys, along with relatives, and those from whom one stands to gain in some way. We are told here to rewrite that guest list for fear that it might give us precisely what it has been drawn up to provide: a reciprocal benefit from our generosity. John states, "This cannot lead to God's blessing on the day of accountability." He also says, "Such a guest list needs to be replaced by a listing consisting of the people who would never be our natural guests and cannot return the favor. Then our hospitality will express true generosity of soul and be like God's own generosity, extended to the most unlikely of people" (751).

Sharon H. Ringe tells of the teachings in Luke 14:7-14 which are unique to Luke (except for 14:11, other versions of which are found in Matt 18:4; 23:12, and Luke 18:14). She says that "It is like the story in Luke 14:1-6, how they point out all points to an unexpected turn or interpretation in a very proper occasion, though these teachings focus on social customs, whereas

the earlier story has to do with a point of law. The teachings can be divided into two groups Based on their content and their address to guests (14:7) and the host (14:12). She also says that Jesus' teaching of the guests (14:7-11) sounds like a page taken from the first-century book of etiquette. In a highly stratified society, where a place at a table carried great social weight, misjudging one's status relative to the other guests was severe. To overestimate one's position and take a better seat than "deserved" would lead to great embarrassment when the host asked one to give that place up for another. She says that the teaching is included, however, she hints that the hearers might not think through that possibility, and might be inclined toward social climbing and jealousy. She also says that the larger context of Luke 14:11 seems to be an artificial attempt to bring the precious teachings into line with the reversal of common sense and "normal" values mandated in 14:12-14 and the following parable" (195).

Brad Young gives the parable in the light of Christian interpretation a remarkable insight. He says that Jesus belonged to a Jewish ethic and liked using parables to achieve His purpose. He explains that Jesus' parables represent a form of Judaism from His time because He was a Jew. Brad explains, "The urgency for the hour of invitation is revealed when ones who are called do not recognize the significance of the time" (171). Brad says, "The Gospel of Thomas, on the other hand, preserves the motif of a man who prepared a dinner, which is close to the Lukan account. While Thomas's dinner is not the great banquet of Luke, the outline of the story is similar. He also says that Matthew and Luke emphasize the moment when all is prepared and the time has arrived. The call of the banquet is ready is the parable's original, challenging focal point. He also states that if the evangelists are quoting two different parables, the main theme, and message are parallel, much in the same way that a teacher may use two illustrations to drive home the same point" (173). Brad says that Luke's version of the parable in the meal context

happens during the last journey to Jerusalem, possibly in Galilee village. Jesus was eating with His followers and those who came to hear His teachings when someone declared, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!" Young states that the instructions on humility were cast out in a dinner setting where the inviters scrambled to obtain seats of honor. He says, "For the historical Jesus, there was only the synagogue. However, it is not a parable about Christianity and Judaism but an urgent message for all people to accept God's gracious invitation and to remain faithful to His call" (173).

In conclusion, Jesus, invited to the banquet, was being watched by the Pharisees, yet they did not realize that He was also observing them. The Pharisees thought they had to play the role of honor but Jesus was basically telling them, take a lower sit in an honorable place uninvited, in other words, have a realistic view of yourself so that your host can move you to a higher place. Jesus was not just speaking to the leadership but overall universal. They perhaps felt they were deserving due to their religious status. However, Jesus called them so they did not need to get all puffed up. Jesus wants His people to accept His invitation, but remain humble, and to care for others as He cares for all. Also, Jesus, As Brad state, "The is urgent for all people to accept God's gracious invitation and to remain faithful to His call" (173).

Work cite

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