

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Outline

- A. Luke told about some things that happened when Jesus went into the house of a ruler of the Pharisees to eat (1-24).
1. The miracle He performed (1-6).
 - a) The circumstances.
 - (1) It was in the house of the Pharisee.
 - (2) It was on the sabbath.
 - (3) They were watching Jesus.
 - (4) A man with dropsy was there.
 - b) The miracle.
 - (1) Jesus asked, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath or not?"
 - (2) They refused to answer.
 - (3) Jesus healed the sick man and let him go.
 - c) The victory: After He had healed the man, He followed up His victory by thoroughly discrediting those who had hoped to embarrass Him.
 - (1) He said, "Which of you who has an ass or ox fall into a well, will not pull him out on the sabbath?"
 - (2) They couldn't answer these questions.
 2. The lesson on humility (7-14).
 - a) The lesson for guests (7-11).
 - (1) They had been choosing the chief seats at the table.
 - (2) He illustrated His lesson by referring to the wedding feast, suggesting that guests should take the lowest place until invited to a place of greater honor.
 - (3) His point: "Every one that exalts himself shall be humbled and every one that humbles himself shall be exalted."
 - b) The lesson for the host (12-14).
 - (1) Don't invite those who can repay you; invite the poor, the maimed and the lame.
 - (2) In doing so you will be rewarded in the resurrection of the just.

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3. The parable of the Great Supper (15-24).
 - a) The occasion: One of the guests had spoken of eating in the kingdom of God—heaven.
 - b) The points of the parable.
 - (1) Invited guests offered weak excuses for not attending.
 - (2) The angry master of the house sent a second invitation to the poor.
 - (3) Because there was still room, He sent a third invitation that His house might be filled.
 - (4) None of those invited the first time were to taste his supper.
- B. Luke told about Jesus' challenging message to the crowd (25-35).
 1. The cost of discipleship (25-32).
 - a) Jesus told them what was involved.
 - (1) Hating members of one's own family.
 - (2) Taking up the cross and following Him.
 - b) Jesus illustrated the lesson.
 - (1) Counting the cost to build a tower.
 - (2) Considering the number of troops necessary to meet the enemy.
 2. The necessity of complete surrender (33-35).
 - a) He said, "The one who does not renounce all cannot be by disciple."
 - b) He illustrated His meaning with the parable of Salt.
 - (1) Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness what then?
 - (2) The answer: Good for nothing but to be thrown out.
 - c) The solemnity of His words: "He who has ears, let him hear."

Jesus Healed a Man With Dropsy

Scripture

14:1-6 And it came to pass, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him. 2 And behold, there was before him a certain man that had the dropsy. 3 And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath,

or not? 4 But they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go. 5 And he said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a sabbath day? 6 And they could not answer again unto these things.

Comments

when he went into the house.—He had gone into the house of a ruler of the Pharisees on the sabbath to have a meal. The Pharisee could have been a ruler of the synagogue or he could have held some other position of authority among the Jews.

there was before him a certain man.—This sick man was in the immediate presence of Jesus. Had he been invited or was he—as in the case of the woman of the city (8:37-38)—one of the poor who had come in uninvited? The fact that Jesus sent him away after the miracle may suggest that he had come in of his own accord. On the other hand, it is possible that he had been invited for the very purpose of baiting a trap for Jesus. The Pharisees were looking for an excuse to destroy Him. Had they heard how He had discredited the Pharisees and lawyers on other occasions (6:7-11)? Were they aware that Jesus had put His adversaries to shame when He healed the woman with a spirit of infirmity?

Luke says they were watching Him closely. See also Mark 3:2. Other had tried and failed; perhaps they were hoping that they would succeed in embarrassing Him before their own group.

And Jesus answering.—A question was implied by the presence of the sick man. In the minds of those watching, the question was this: "What will He do?" Jesus spoke in answer to the implied question.

Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath, or not?—The lawyers, no doubt, who were present had debated the question on many occasions. They should have known the answer. But they were unwilling to risk an answer at this time, so they entered a state of silence and left the issue up to Jesus.

And he took him and healed him.—This is evidently what they were hoping He would do. But before they could launch their attack, He fired a question at them that they could not or would not answer. *Which of you shall have an ox or ass fall.*—When you have an ox or an ass fall into a well, what do you do, even if it is on the sabbath? The answer was clear; they would pull it out. A human being

was in distress; Jesus had extended a helping hand, even though it was on the sabbath.

Some texts add the word "son" to the list, but there is some question as to the correctness of the text in this matter. The comparison is stronger when it is between the man with dropsy and animals.

And they could not answer.—He had easily answered the question implied by the presence of the sick man, but they could not refute His logic when He drew the comparison between man and animal. They had to admit that He was right or keep still.

A Lesson on Humility

Scripture

14:7-14 And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, 8 When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him, 9 and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; and when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. 11 For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not *wherewith* to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

Comments

And he spake a parable.—There was an implied question in the presence of the sick man. Jesus called attention to a situation which all were able to observe and pointed out a lesson which it also implied. It was the right of the host to seat the guests in places of honor, but these rude people so lacking in humility were occupying

the places of honor without waiting to be assigned to them by the host.

sit not down in the chief seats.—That is, do not recline on the couch reserved for the honored guest until invited to do so. To avoid the embarrassment of being asked to move to a place of lower distinction, Jesus advised that they occupy the lower place first and wait until they were invited to occupy a place of greater honor. When the host says, "Friend, move up to a place of higher honor, you will be approved in the presence of all who are reclining at the feast with you."

It is evident that Jesus had not been invited to the place of honor that was rightly His, since He is the Son of God. A good question: To what place do we invite the Lord when we have banquets? *For everyone that exalteth himself.*—See Mark 10:42-45 for a similar lesson which Jesus taught the disciples. Peter says, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Pet. 5:6). Humility is a virtue that should have been observed in the banquet which Jesus was attending. It is essential for those who hope to attend the heavenly banquet about which Jesus had been teaching. See Micah 6:8.

to him also that had bidden him.—The lesson on humility applied not only to guests but also to the host. It is evident that the motive of the one who invited Jesus was not what it should have been. He may have been seeking to take advantage of Jesus' own popularity. One poor man had been permitted to come into the house, but the guests for the most part were his rich neighbors and friends.

When thou makest a dinner or supper.—Or as we would say, a luncheon or dinner, for Jesus referred to a noon meal and an evening meal. The "feast" was a banquet.

lest haply they also bid thee again.—This was not to say that the rich man could not have his neighbors and friends as guests in his home; but this could be done from the wrong motive, for some expected to be invited into the homes of their guests.

The gospel invitation, as the parable of the Great Supper shows, is to the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind—that is, sinners who need the cleansing power of the Lord.

and thou shalt be blessed.—In the Book of Acts, Luke quotes these words of Paul, "Ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). There is a blessing in helping

the needy, All of us need to help others, for in doing so we help ourselves in a way that nothing else can.

recompensed in the resurrection of the just.—There will be a time when you will be paid back for what you have done for the poor. That will be in the resurrection of the just.

The resurrection, of course, is not limited to the just, but they are the ones who will be blessed in the resurrection. Paul spoke of the resurrection of the just and the unjust (Acts 24:15). Jesus said, "The hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (John 5:28-29). There is one resurrection at which time both the just and unjust will be raised.

The Great Supper

Scripture

14:15-24 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. 16 But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: 17 and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. 18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused. 19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. 20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. 21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. 22 And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. 23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Comments

Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.—Heaven is thus represented as a great feast. The idea seems to have been

suggested by the remarks Jesus had made about inviting the poor to lunch or dinner. How fortunate it will be for those who shall have the privilege of being present at that heavenly banquet. Jesus used the occasion for two things: (1) to point out the general disregard for God and His Son whom He sent to tell those who had been invited to come to the feast, and (2) to indicate that although these had slighted the invitation, others would be invited and the places at the heavenly banquet would be filled.

A certain man made a great supper.—Jesus vividly set forth God's concern for the Jewish people and their disregard for all His efforts to get them to respond to His directions for their lives as His chosen people. They had known since God constituted them a nation at Sinai that they were invited to the heavenly banquet.

he sent forth his servant.—This seems to be a reference to the ministry of Jesus, a last effort to get the nation of Israel to respond to God.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse.—"They that were his own received him not" (John 1:11) is John's way of saying that the Jews in general—not just the Pharisees—had rejected the appeal of Jesus. On another occasion Jesus told the parable of The Wedding of the King's Son (Matt. 22:1-14). It teaches the same general lesson about the rejected invitation.

The Jews were God's chosen people, but, by the time Jesus came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they had assumed an attitude of utter indifference to God that exactly fits the description of the excuse-makers of this parable. Their excuses were insulting to the one who had invited them and wholly without justification. They were not the kind to buy a piece of land or a team of oxen without knowing something about them. The excuses were ridiculous. The one who said he couldn't come because he had just married a wife was disregarding the Law of Moses (Deut. 24:5). During the first year of marriage a man was excused from military duty so that he might have time for just such occasions as described in the parables.

While the Jews in general rejected Christ, the publicans and sinners did turn to Him for forgiveness and help. This is the second invitation which was extended by Jesus.

and yet there is room.—There is room in the heavenly banquet for others than the outcasts of the ancient Jewish society. So a third invitation was sent to those that might be found by the roads that let away from the crowded cities. This may suggest that the poor

had found shelter along the hedges that grew by the roadside. These were compelled to come in. Jesus is still emphasizing the fact that the invitation is extended to the humble.

The great commission is suggested by the third invitation. See Mark. 16:15-16; Matt. 28:18-20. This third invitation is not limited to Gentiles, for the gospel invitation includes Jews as well as Gentiles. "Whosoever will, may come."

Jesus told the Jews who failed to produce the fruit of the kingdom that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to another nation that would produce the fruits of it (Matt. 21:43). That nation is composed of believers in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles (Rom. 1:16-17; Gal. 3:28). The book of Romans proves that there is no distinction between Jews who are sinners and Gentiles who sin, for all sinners are objects of God's mercy and are in need of His grace. All are to come on the basis of faith expressed in obedience, since that is all that any sinner can offer (Rom. 3:21-25; 1:5; 6:1-4; 12:1-2).

and constrain them to come in.—By what means was the servant to constrain them to come in? Certainly not physical force. In all probability, the simple appeal of good food was enough to compel the hungry to come. But many are not hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Many are like the Rich Fool who was satisfied with material things and thought nothing of food for the soul.

Since the third invitation represents the gospel invitation, we may ask what force compels one to respond to it? The gospel is the power of God to save the believer. The force of the facts of the gospel—the evidence of the resurrection of Christ who died to save the lost—is sufficient to compel the earnest enquirer to believe that Jesus is the Christ (John 20:30-31). The gospel of God's love is a motivating force sufficient to lead one to repentance (Rom. 2:4). But even this force cannot reach those callous hearts that are past feeling because of long indulgence in sinful practices (Eph. 4:17-20). The gospel message about the power of the blood of Christ to wash away sin is a compelling force to the weary sinner (Heb. 9: 14-15; I Pet. 1: 19). The sinner that recognizes his need for a clean conscience will be compelled to come to the Lord for cleansing (Heb. 10:22; I Pet. 3:21).

Sinners were drawn to Christ for they saw in Him the embodiment of the message He proclaimed. Nothing less will be effective

in the efforts of His followers who seek to compel others to come to Him.

that my house may be filled.—This is the answer to the question about few being saved.

none of those men that were bidden. —Jesus again and again pointed out the fate of those who were rejecting Him. They will not taste of His supper; they will be on the outside watching those who come from the four corners of the earth to sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

Counting the Cost

Scripture

14:25-35 Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them, 26 If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? 29 Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, 30 saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace. 33 So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. 34 Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned? 35 It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill; men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Comments

and hateth not his own father, and mother.—On another occasion Jesus stated this same lesson in a positive form: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37). Therefore we are forced to understand the expression "hate" in the light of this positive statement. It simply means that when it comes

to a matter of devotion to Christ or parents, Christ must be first in the absolute sense; parents, by contrast, are to be hated, for they cannot be put before Him.

But Jesus upheld the Old Testament law that required children to honor their parents (Ex. 29:2; Deut. 5:6; Eph. 6:2-4). He severely condemned the hypocrisy of the Pharisees who made the Word of God an empty thing by their tradition that said if a man gave to God what he might spend to care for his parents he was not required to care for them (Matt. 15:3-6). Evidently, they were merely saying that they were giving to God, but in reality neither giving to God nor caring for their parents. Actually, caring for aged parents in obedience to God's command would have been giving to God.

Except for those cases in which parents bitterly opposed Christ, there would be no conflict in loving Him and parents also. See 12:49-53.

and his own life.—This shows that Jesus did not intend for a man to hate his parents in the ordinary sense of the term. But nothing—not even the dearest members of one's own family or life itself—can be exalted above Christ, if one is to be His disciple.

bear his own cross.—Jesus demands absolute priority in the thinking and love of His disciples. Selfish ambition has no place in the life of His followers. He had explained this to the disciples before (9:23). Now the multitudes are to learn the same lesson. Jesus was not willing to accept any disciple who was not willing to meet the demands of discipleship. See 9:57-62. If He had been interested in merely becoming the popular leader of an irresponsible crowd—a charge made at the time of His trial (23:2)—He would have made no such demands.

For which of you desiring to build a tower.—The high standard of discipleship made it necessary for those who would be His followers to count the cost before entering the service of the Lord. In our eagerness to see people become Christians, do we sometimes fail to observe Jesus' warning about counting the cost? Jesus' reference to building a tower and to the number of troops necessary to meet the enemy illustrates the lesson. Count the cost before beginning such projects, if you are to avoid the embarrassment of possible failure. Not just those who enlist, but those who fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith are to receive the crown of righteousness (II Tim. 4:7-8; Rev. 2:10).

that renounseth not all that he hath.—Paul is an excellent example

of one who renounced all for the sake of Christ (Phil. 3:8-11). But no less is required of all other followers of Christ. Jesus had already illustrated this in the parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:44-45). All these remarks explain the meaning of true self-denial. See also Paul's challenge to Timothy as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 2:3-4).

he cannot be my disciple.—This is absolute! There is no place for half-hearted discipleship in the service of the Lord. See Jesus' warning to the lukewarm Laodicean church (Rev. 3:14-22).

Salt therefore is good.—This is still another illustration of the necessity of weighing the issues involved and remaining faithful to the end. Salt in this context is a symbol of dedication to Christ. Without dedication, a disciple is ineffective in his efforts to influence others for Christ; he is certainly to be rejected in the end.

Jesus used this same expression in another context (Mark 9:49-50). He had been discussing the destruction of the wicked in hell and added, "For everyone shall be salted with fire." He was referring to His teaching about hell which would act as a deterrent to wickedness. He said, "Have salt in yourselves"—that is, have this knowledge about the fate of the wicked in your minds that it might keep you from such destruction.

On still another occasion, Jesus spoke of His disciples as the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13). In all probability, this means that the disciples by Christlike character and conduct and by teaching the truth of His Word are to preserve others from destruction.

but if the salt have lost its savor.—If the salt loses its salty taste, what then? It is fit for nothing but to be cast out. A disciple who loses the necessary dedication and consecration to Christ as suggested by cross-bearing and self-denial will be rejected; such a person cannot be His disciple.

He that hath ears to hear.—Thus Jesus emphasizes the lesson He has just taught. His hearers should heed His challenge and His warning.

Summary

Opposition to Jesus became more intense as He came closer to the day when He would lay down His life for His people. His great popularity with the common people was a real challenge to the leaders who were determined to destroy Him, one way or another.

Another Pharisee invited Him to his house to eat. But a man with

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dropsy was there and they were watching Jesus to see what He would do, for it was the sabbath. He accepted the challenge; He healed the man; He embarrassed those who hoped to embarrass Him, for they were not able to answer the logic of His questions about their own acts on the sabbath.

Jesus was also watching the guests on that occasion. He saw them choosing the chief seats without waiting to be asked by the host to take the place of honor. He taught the powerful lesson, "Everyone that exalts himself be humbled and every one that humbles himself shall be exalted." And He was aware that the host had invited his rich friends who would in turn invite him to their homes. Jesus said to him, "Invite the poor, and you will be rewarded in the resurrection of the just."

One of the guests began to speak about the fortunate state of those who would be at the heavenly banquet. Jesus responded with the story of the Great Supper. God had invited His chosen people to come to the feast, but they made lame excuses for their insulting disregard for Him. Then Jesus indicated that the gospel invitation would be given to the sinners of all classes and that the heavenly banquet table would be filled, but those who had been invited would not get to taste the supper.

It is a serious matter to be a disciple of Jesus. He demands first place in the hearts of all who would be His followers. Not even father or mother may be put before Him. Before undertaking discipleship, count the cost. Complete dedication to Him is the price. Salt that loses its saltiness is good for nothing. A disciple who loses his devotion to Christ is worthless. Jesus closed His remarks with the solemn warning, "He who has ears, let him hear."

Questions

1. Why did the Pharisees invite Jesus to eat with them?
2. How account for the presence of the sick man on that occasion?
3. Why does Luke say that they were watching Him closely?
4. What day of the week was it?
5. What question did Jesus put to the lawyers? Why?
6. Why didn't they answer Him?
7. How did Jesus defend His action of healing the man on the sabbath?

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8. What contrast did His remarks make between what He had done and what they were accustomed to do?
9. What were the guests doing that led to Jesus' lesson on humility?
10. What did He suggest that they do?
11. What happens to the one who exalts himself?
12. What did Peter say about humility?
13. What did Jesus say to His host about the guests he had invited?
14. Where should he have been looking for his reward?
15. What do the Scriptures teach about the resurrection of the just and unjust?
16. What was the occasion for the parable of the Great Supper?
17. What did Jesus show about the attitude in general toward God's invitation to the Great Supper?
18. What excuses had the Jews made for not responding?
19. To what class was the second invitation given?
20. How was this fulfilled during the ministry of Jesus?
21. Why was a third invitation given?
22. What does the third invitation represent?
23. To whom is the third invitation sent?
24. How can people be compelled to respond to the invitation?
25. How did Jesus illustrate the necessity of counting the cost of discipleship?
26. What did Jesus demand of those who were to be His disciples?
27. What is the significance of His remarks about salt in this context?
28. How are we to understand His remarks about one's parents?
29. What was the Old Testament law about caring for parents?
30. What had the Pharisees done that had nullified this law?
31. How does Jesus illustrate the meaning of cross-bearing and self-denial in this context?
32. Why did Jesus make such demands on His disciples?
33. Is the demand any less now?
34. What did Jesus mean when He said that everyone shall be salted with fire?
35. In what sense are His disciples the salt of the earth?
36. What did He mean by the reference to salt that has lost its taste?

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37. What is to be done with the disciple that is like salt that loses its saltiness?
38. Why did He say, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"?