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Whosoever Exalteth Himself?

November 13, 2023



Sermons of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones - MLJ Trust

Luke 14:7-14 — The kingdom of God is not like the kingdoms of this world. This great truth is at the heart of Jesus Christ’s ministry. This is why He speaks the seemingly contradictory truth that those who exalt themselves will be brought low, but those that humble themselves will be exalted in the last day. In this sermon on Luke 14:7-14 titled “Whosoever Exalteth Himself?” Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells us that people, in their sinful pride, naturally seek their own exaltation. They love themselves and deny that they are in need of a Savior. Without God, people are wholly ignorant of their state as a sinner in need of God’s grace. This sinful pride is one of the greatest obstacles to ever being saved because they see no need for any to help; in fact, that person does not see themselves as a sinner at all. But the gospel is the message that all are sinners and that God alone can save. Only God can show people who they are and of the salvation that is needed. The gospel tells that no one should seek self-exaltation, but instead seek the exaltation of God and by doing this, they will find true peace in Jesus Christ.

Transcript

The words to which I should like to call your attention this evening are to be found in the gospel according to St. Luke. In chapter 14 verses 7-14. Verse is 7-14 in the 14th chapter of the gospel according to St. Luke.

And he put forth a parable to those which were hidden when he marked how they chose out the chief rules. Saying unto them, when thou art bidden of any men to go to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room. Less to more honorable men than thou be bidden of him.

And he that badly and him come and say unto thee, give this man place. And thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. That when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room.

That when he that badly cometh, he may say, unto thee, friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meet with thee. For whosoever

exalted himself shall be a best.

And he that humbled himself shall be exalted. Then said he also to him that bad him, when thou makeest a dinner on a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen nor thy rich neighbors. Let thy also bid thee again, and the recompense be made thee.

But when thou makeest a feast, call the poor, the mane, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed. For they cannot recompense thee. For thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Now in that parable, which is in a sense double parable, although I think as we shall see that our Lord is really making exactly the same point in the two sections of this one parable, in this parable and in what follows in this chapter. Our Lord deals with what surely must be to anybody who's ever read the New Testament intelligently, a problem that stems out on the very surface of the records. And the problem is this.

Why was it that our blessed Lord and Savior, when he was in this world and on this earth, received the treatment that he did? John at the very beginning of his gospel says he came into his own and his own received him not. And that is, of course, what we read in the pages of the four gospels. Our Lord constantly met our position.

People were always arguing with him, trying to catch him into a trippy minute talk and in his teaching. His very miracles antagonized them. And most of his short brief ministry of some three years was spent in argumentation with the scribes and the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the religious leaders of the people.

They were always opposing him. And in the end, as we know, from the spotter together, not to reject him, but to kill him. Now, this I say surely ought to strike us all as a very astonishing problem when you consider who he won, when you consider the marvel and the glory and the wonder of his person.

You would have thought that immediately everybody would have recognized him and would have fallen at his feet and would have worshiped him and would have welcomed him and would have given themselves to him. The very glory of his person. You would have thought would have been enough in and of itself.

And then when you consider his teaching, because as a Roman soldier who was once sent to arrest him, said when he went back without him, never men spake like this men. Here was a teacher who didn't merely show his own learning, his own cleverness, as the Pharisees and scribes did. They were learned men and they were always quoting their authorities and comparing and contrasting this and talking somewhere up in the air.

And the common people couldn't understand him nor follow him. Follow them. But here is a teacher.

A womb we are told that he spake with authority and not as the Pharisees and scribes. That he spoke with simplicity. We are told about him that the common people heard him gladly.

Now I say it's amazing that with such a teacher. And when you consider what he taught, he said that he'd come to seek and to save that which was lost, that he hadn't come to destroy, but he had come to save. Many hadn't come to condemn.

And his teaching is uncomfortable in every respect. You would have thought I say that men and women would affirm that his feet and have worshipped him. But they didn't.

They rejected it. They cried altogether saying away with him crucify him. And then when you consider his deeds, we are told that he went about doing good, and he did.

He was one who relieved the sick. He healed the blind and the lame and the halt. He was always doing acts of mercy and of compassion.

The world has never seen anybody who simply spent himself and gave himself. In doing good, in doing acts of mercy and compassion and of kindness, here he is. The record is well known.

And yet as I say, the effect of it all was that they took up storms and threw them at him. And they hated him with a bitter hatred. And they were not satisfied until finally they got rid of him and were responsible for his crucifixion.

Now, to me, this is a question that should engage all our attentions. It's a great problem of history, if you like. But the son of God, when he came into this world, was treated as he was.

Now, that I say is the problem that is dealt with in this chapter. Why was this? Why did they treat him like that? What was wrong with him? What was the matter with him? Now, my friends, I needn't take any of your time tonight in reminding you and pointing out to you that my only reason for raising this question with you and considering this problem with you is because the same thing is true today. We are confronted by exactly the same position.

I never tired of reminding you of the mere statistics. Only 10% of the people of this country even claim to be Christian. 90% are not even interested.

What concerned at all? Only 10%. And only half of that number attend any place of worship with any regularity Sunday by Sunday. Now, here you see is exactly the same position.

And I suggest to you that this should be the most urgent problem in the mind of every thinking person at this moment, with the world as it is. Our world as you look at it

internationally, politically, morally, especially, with everything apparently breaking down, with all the efforts and the endeavors of men coming to nothing, why is it that they will not consider this message? What's the matter? Why is it that the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel are being dismissed? Rejected, even as he was in the days of his flesh. Now, I'm simply here to try to show you that the reasons tonight are the same exactly as they've always been, that there is no difference at all.

And that if we want to understand the modern rejection of our Lord and of his gospel and of his teaching, the best thing we can do is to go back into consider what he himself said about it. And fortunately for us, he does so. Many, many times he dealt with this very question and showed perfectly plainly what it was that stood between people and belief in him, faith in him, and receiving the salvation that he had come from Heaven and Earth, in order to provide for men and women.

Now, then in this one chapter, as I say, he takes up this very point. He had been concerned in the previous chapter about his rejection. He'd been talking about his death.

He'd been talking how it was essential for him to go to Jerusalem. He'd been warned by some people who said, get the out and the part hence, for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, go ye and tell that fox.

Behold, I cast out devils and I do cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless, I must walk today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. And then he looks upon the city and he says, Oh, Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which kills the prophets and stoners them that are sent unto thee.

How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hymn that gather her brood under her wings? And he would not. Behold, your house is left unto you, guess of it. And clearly, I say unto you, he shall not see me until the time come when he shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

You see, he's going to the end of his ministry. The rejection, the crucifixion are coming there at end and he deals with this whole problem and he delivers in a particular way. He then went after saying that into a house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath day.

And everybody was watching him and especially these Pharisees because there was a man there suffering from dropsy, legs full, short of breath suffering from dropsy. Oh, Lord, kneel the minds of these lawyers and Pharisees. So he put a Christian to them saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? And they held their peace.

And he took them in and healed him and let him go. And then said them saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit and will not straight away pull him out on the

Sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things. See, they didn't believe in healing on the Sabbath day.

It wasn't right to heal a sick man on the Sabbath day that was work, but as he knew their own law told them that if an ox or an ass fell into a pit, they would pull him out even though it was a Sabbath. And thus, you see, he reveals the blindness of their hearts. They hated him for healing them in.

Here were people who were so pointllias about the letter that they forgot the spirit. Well, here he is in this house, that this feast. And then we were told that he made a certain observation.

He put forth a parable to those which were bitten when he marked how they chose out the chief rule, which means the chief places. You see, years a man had made a feast, a banquet, and he'd got his tables arranged in the usual manner on such occasions. There was undoubtedly some sort of a high table, and there were other tables that approximated to that.

And these were the best seats, and they were the best positions. And here our law just observed how these people who were bitten to the wedding were choosing out the chief places, the best seats, putting themselves there and sitting down. He observed this, and he spoke a parable, making use of this very fact in order to bring out his profound teaching, concerning himself and concerning his mission in this world, and especially concerning this fact, why men and women refuse him and reject him.

He then went on to speak another parable afterwards. A man sitting there, said, at me, heard these things, and said, blessed is he, the chief bred in the kingdom of God. And then he spoke another parable, a certain man made a great supper, etc.

And then, knowing spoken that parable, he begins to speak very plainly to them, and seeing that there went great multitudes with him, he turned and said unto them, if any men come unto me and hate not, his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, he and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And then he speaks a series of short parables. Now, my case this evening is my argument is that in all these parables and teaching in this chapter, our Lord is rarely dealing with but one question.

And this one question is, what is it that prevents men from believing in him and receiving his great salvation? What is it? And here he expands this and unfolds his teaching and picks out in particular three great principles. Now, the first of them is the one I want to deal with tonight. Why is it that men reject Christ? The answer that he gives us here in the first instance is because they completely fail to understand the truth concerning themselves.

They completely fail to understand the truth concerning themselves. Now, look how he brings this up. You see, there he is in this banqueting hall.

He's been invited there and he makes an observation. He sees these people all anxious to get to those best seats and they sit down there. And that is the custom he'd observed it many times.

And looking on that that, our Lord just sees a picture of life and a picture of men and a picture of the whole tragedy of men. He says, now, there it is. This is the thing that causes men and women to reject my teaching and to reject me.

There is nothing that is more marvelous as one reads the Gospels as to notice the way in which our Lord was observant of everything. And he used everything in order to bring out his teaching. He could use the picture of some sheep.

He could use a picture of an orchard. He could use a picture of a farmer so he'd into the ground. Everything he saw seemed to him to be a parable of life and a parable of men.

And here he looks at these people in this banquet and observes their behavior. And what he sees is this, the whole story of humanity. He says, the human race is behaving with respect to me tonight, exactly as these people are behaving in this particular feast.

Now, he gives his teaching, therefore, in terms of this very picture. What our Lord says, of course, is very good and very right even on the ordinary human level. If you want a lesson in etiquette, you've got it here.

If you want to know how to behave yourself, if you're invited to a wedding feast, read this parable. But after all, that isn't the thing our Lord is concerned about. That isn't the thing he was interested in.

This is a parable of something higher, something more important. So he takes hold of it and he lifts it up to the spiritual level. He says, what these people are doing on the natural level, they're doing on the spiritual level, and therefore they don't believe in me and they reject my teaching and they're going to final position.

Now, that is how the teaching is presented to us at this particular point. Let me unfurled it tonight as let me divide it up into certain principles as I see our Lord giving forth this momentous teaching. What is wrong with men, I say? Why is it that men doesn't understand and submit himself to Christ and accept his salvation? What's the matter with you? What is it that accounts for this? Well, I would divide up the answer as giving in this parable, this first parable.

Let me divide it up tonight into two main sections, general in particular. There are certain general things which our Lord teaches us here about mankind as it is by nature. Man is lost, the world is in trouble, and yet it won't listen to the Son of God and his

teaching.

Why not? Well, the first answer is this. Men basis his position entirely on his own opinions and his own ideas without having any authority whatsoever behind it. Here are the number of people he invited to a feast, and they decide themselves that they're going to take up their positions in the best seats.

Why do they know that? Who stole them to sit there? Nobody. There were no cards with their names on in those exalted seats at that high table. They decided that there were their seats.

Obviously there was no question about this. Those are my seats. Said these people, they're our seats, and they go, and they sit down in those positions.

On what grounds? They've got no grounds, I say, except their own opinion. That is their idea as to how the seating should be arranged at this particular banquet. Nobody's given the authority, nobody's given them any instruction.

They simply take the decision into their own hands. They say, obviously that's where I ought to be sitting, and so they take their seats there. Now you know that's the very thing that the Bible tells us about mankind from beginning to end.

Why is it that men and women tonight are not interested in God, and are not interested in the Lord Jesus Christ, and are not interested in the gospel? What's their reason? What are their grounds for doing so? Why are people rejecting religion and the whole of Christianity? What's it based on? You know the answer? It's based on nothing but their opinion. Their idea? I mean, they even say that. This is the argument of, I say, this is what I say, this is what I think.

And they act on what they think, and don't know what they say. What is their authority? What are their sanctions for their position? How can they back up their position? They can't do so. You see, we all by nature, we start by rejecting God.

Well, how often have I said that in this pulpit? We all know the period of adolescence. We were perhaps many of us who were here tonight. We were forced to go to chapel into Sunday school when we were children and young people, and we looked forward to the day when we could take this thing for ourselves.

And we were going to be men, and you proved that you were a man by stopping this, giving up religion, saying there was nothing in it, that it was all a lot of stuff and nonsense, mere tradition and blindness, and some kind of sub-stuff, and we decided on that ground. And we read the Bible? Did we know the case of the Bible? Did we really know what salvation really is? Of course we didn't. What did we read? We read all the great books, and I said, of course we hadn't.

We simply said it. We did. We took this opinion, we took this point of view, and we were our own authorities, and we acted upon it.

Now, that's what these people did in this banquet, and that is what mankind is still doing. This is one of the great tragedies of life at the present time, that men and women are simply saying 20th century. Of course, we don't believe in it any longer.

Does anybody believe? It's mere declamation, it's mere statement. There is no authority whatsoever mankind bases its position on nothing but its own opinions and its own ideas. And they notice the assurance with which they do it.

They actually take up the seats, and they sit down in them. They act on their ideas. And do they do say with a strange assurance? Never occurs to them for a moment that they're wrong.

Never occurs to them for a second that anything can possibly go wrong. They're absolutely complacent. They're seated at the best seats in the banquet chamber.

And they're very pleased with themselves, and they're very happy, and they're looking forward to the proceedings. This is wonderful. They're taking it for granted, they're assuming it.

And isn't there to men and women living at the present time? Life is a tremendous business, and it's never been more tremendous than it is today. And there is nothing that is more obvious about the human race at this moment than this extraordinary complacency. People thought that the wars were going to shake men and women out of their complacency.

I remember people saying at the beginning of the last war, now this is surely going to bring people to their senses. In that interwar period, they thought they'd finished with war, and we could understand them, abandoning God and giving themselves to rioters living. But now it's come again, and it's going to shake them.

But it hasn't shaken them. Men and women take their seats in the best places in the banqueting chamber, perfectly happy, contented, complacent, to all appearances. Never imagining anything can go wrong.

The feeling that all is right, never had it so good. Here we are in our affluence society. All is well.

We take our seats. There they are. But then you see the third thing that strikes us and stands out in such a remarkable manner in this whole picture is this.

The awful insecurity of this position. They are not aware of it, of course not. They are seated, I say, at the high table, they are seated in the best seats, and they can't imagine

that anything is going wrong.

But listen. When thou had bitten to have an end to a wedding sit not down in the highest room, less to more honorable men, than thou be bitten of him. And he that badly and him come and say unto thee.

And their whole position is changed. He says to thee, give this men place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest rule. Oh, the Bible is full of this sort of picture.

Oh, the world in its complacency goes on, and it laps at God, and it thinks all this is ridiculous, and so on and so forth, and isn't aware of its terrible insecurity. But when they climb peace and safety, then come a sudden destruction, says our Lord later on in this same gospel. Now, there it seems to me.

The three general principles that our Lord teaches very plainly in this parable that he spoke in their banqueting chamber. And here I see men and women tonight in this country and in other countries, on a Sunday evening, sitting down looking at the television, enjoying the fun and the laughter, sitting at the seaside playing games, never thinking about God, never thinking about the soul, never thinking about eternity, sitting down there as well. Wonderful.

Everything's all right. And they're not aware of this awful insecurity. They're not aware of the whole nature of life in which they're placed.

They're not aware as it were that they're sitting on the edge of a volcano that can go up at any moment. That's the thing that comes out in general in our Lord's teaching in this parable, but let me hasten to consider the particular principles. Why is it possible that men can behave in this extraordinary manner? What accounts for this complacency seated at the high table in the banquet, waiting for the meal? It's going to be wonderful.

Everything's all right. And here we are seated where we ought to be. Why does men can behave like this? And our Lord answers the question.

The first answer is that it still demands ignorance of himself. Men finally rejects Christ and the gospel because he is ignorant of himself. He doesn't know the truth about himself.

What's his trouble? He overestimates himself. Whosoever exalted himself shall be a beast. And he that humbled himself shall be exalted.

Why did those people assume that those were their seats? Why did they take their seats there in the best positions? Well, the answer is they thought that well, obviously there was no need to argue about this. They were the people for those positions. This is their own good conceit of themselves.

Never occurs to them that they should be seated anywhere else. Of course not. This is what I am.

This is their own estimate of themselves. According to the teaching of this book, the Bible man's ultimate trouble is his pride. You remember the first temptation, don't you? Now the devil came to Eve and he said, yea, hath God said that you shall not eat of this fruit? Don't you realize why he said that? He said that in order to keep you down.

He knows perfectly well that the day in which you eat of that fruit, you'll have your eyes opened and you'll be as gods and you were meant to be gods. Why are you letting God keep you down like this? Eat the fruit, assert yourselves, be what you are. And they listened.

The original sin, the first sin was due to pride, and this has been man's most essential trouble ever since then. And this is the ultimate reason why men and women reject the Lord Jesus Christ and his gospel. That's why modern man is not religious.

It's this terrible pride in himself, pride which he has in himself. What's he proud of? Well, he's proud of his knowledge, of course. He's proud of his understanding.

He's proud of his achievements. He is, after all, the 20th century man. And what a century look what we've done.

We harness the elements, we split the atom, we've delved into the mysteries that our forefathers knew nothing at all about. We've advanced, we are understanding life itself, we claim, we do, and so on. And in the light of this, man is proud of his achievement.

He's superior to all of God before him. He puts himself on a higher category. Now I'm not exaggerating.

The modern man is doing exactly what these people did in the feast. Modern man puts himself up on the top gallery. He says our forefathers a hundred years ago.

They knew a fair amount, but they didn't know what we know. It was all right to be religious a hundred years ago, but not now. Look what we've done, look what we have.

And then people before that, they were down there and others in the basement. And down and down you have men puts himself, modern man puts himself. He's a man of come of age, isn't he? He's a man of no's.

He's an intellect, he's a brain, he's a reader, he knows. That's why he isn't religious. You see where he puts himself? He's proud of himself.

And he puts himself into this exalted position in terms of his knowledge and his understanding. And he's equally proud of his goodness. He says, you know, I'm not a hundred percent saint, but you know he's very good after all.

He says people used to be very cruel and to one another we've become very kind and we're concerned about people in need and so on. Look at the ex-a-polymert we've passed. How could people treat one another as they used to? But look what we've done.

Look at the provision we've made. How kind we are, how good we are, how wonderful we are. We're always helping one another.

We don't need a gospel because we're going away with the need of it. We're also good and kind and helping one another. That's another feather he puts into his capacity takes his seat in the best position.

The best that the world has ever known. And of course he's extremely confident in his power to order his own life and to order the life of the whole world. And this is finally why men dismiss his religion, dismiss his Christ, dismiss his God.

He regards it as an insult. He said people in the past of course, they were ignorant and they were dark, they were blinded and they were weak and they didn't understand and they didn't know but we know. This idea he says that men should bow before any guard and worship him and ask him for help.

Men doesn't need help. Why don't you assert yourself? Why don't you stand up to life says the modern man, I don't need God. He doesn't need any help.

And then the Bible talks about sin. And if there is one thing that the modern man hates, it's this whole biblical teaching about sin. He says you know that tells you that you can't trust yourself.

He tells you that you're rotten, that you're ugly, that you're vile, that you're foul. It's an aspersion on human nature. Man is a noble creature.

He's not what the Bible says and we don't like this doctrine of sin. Have I reminded you before of the men holding this typical modern view of men? I'm sorry to say that he said it in a pulpit. And he thought he was being very clever as he said it.

He took up that hymn. He's as lover of my soul. Let me to thy bosom fly.

And he pulled out particularly the verse which says this, just and holy is thy name. I am all unrighteousness, vile and full of sin I am. Thou art full of truth and grace.

He said it's a lie. He said that where is the lie, it's nonsense. He said can you imagine a man applying for a job or applying for a post? And going to his prospective employer and saying, wow, I'm full of sin I am? And depreciating himself and saying that he's no good.

Of course you can't, he said. Why should men say that to God therefore? You see they hate the biblical teaching of sin. They say that men should not be put down into the lowest place.

Men is such a fine fellow, he's such a good creature. He should be seated at the highest place. Men is good.

There's no such thing as evil. There's no such thing as sin. That's merely the absence of certain qualities or that man isn't a time to develop them.

But he's got it in him. Man's not bad man. Is essentially good.

So they hate the biblical doctrine of sin and feel that they're free from it. And what they hate about everything else is the biblical doctrine of salvation. And that is why they rejected the Lord Jesus Christ and his teaching and especially his teaching about his death upon the cross.

And that is why they hated it when it was preached to them by people like the Apostle Paul and others. They went around preaching Jesus Christ and him crucified. And they hated him white.

Well, it was a stumbling block to the Jews and it was foolishness to the Greeks. Why? Well, you see, it's a doctrine which says this. That man is in such a state and condition that he cannot save himself.

Indeed that he is so black and so vile that the very son of God had to come from him and be born as a man. And not only that he had to die a cruel death upon the cross, but for men could be rescued and redeemed, pardoned and restored. And the modern man revolts against it.

He said this is an insult. That's not me. I belong there.

Top table. And you're putting me down. You're saying I'm a vile sinner.

He hates it and rejects this Christ. And especially the blood of his cross. It is all you see because of his good conceit of himself.

It is because he's exalting himself. It is because he thinks he deserves the best seat in the banqueting chamber and puts himself there. But you see our Lord's whole teaching is to disabuse men of this.

He that exalted himself, he says, shall be a beast. But he that abases himself or humbles himself shall be exalted. What's it mean? Well, it means this.

That men's good conceit of himself is his greatest fallacy. That the truth about him is that he is appallingly ignorant. That all the advances of science don't add at all to men's knowledge of that which is most essential.

What is men? What is life? How can I live as I ought to? What is death? What lies beyond it? And modern science doesn't help me. These are the things I want to know. How can I

live as a man? How can I conquer evil and sin within me? How can I be at peace with myself and others? Men doesn't know.

He's ignorant. He thinks he knows. But when you examine the situation, he reveals that he doesn't know.

If men all resolve that he claims to be, why is his world as it is? Is man a success? Look at the world. Read your newspapers. See the problems rising one after another.

The ignorance, the failure, what of men's power to save himself? He doesn't want to save you. I'm my own savior. He says, trust yourself, express yourself.

But can he? The truth about men says our Lord is that he is helpless. That he's not only weak, but he's utterly helpless. And all the centuries of civilization and the acts of Parliament and of learning and of knowledge and of culture leave men in his utter helplessness as he has been ever since the fall.

And on top he is selfish, scrambling for the best seat. Pushing others back, pushing himself forward isn't this life. Read the biographies.

Read the autobiographies. Look at these men belonging to the same political parties. You think that the greatest friends, you wait until they die and you read the biographies.

You'll find they were ready to cock one another's throats. Every man pushing himself forward, looking over his shoulder. This man's a colleague, yes, but he may have a dagger.

And so they're all watching him. Everyone pushing for the best seat. Isn't that life? Then he easily lies the head that wears a crown.

You see, it's all due to ignorance. Man is a fraud. Even his best actions are not disinterested.

He says, what am I going to get out of this? This will come back to me. The Bible says that man is an awful fraud, and I say the literature of mankind reveals exactly the same thing. The Apostle Paul sums it up in writing to Titus as we were once ourselves, hateful and hating one another.

Man puts himself in the best seat because he doesn't know himself. It's his ignorance that puts him there. If only he knew the truth about himself, but he doesn't.

He sits there because of his radically wrong and false estimate of himself. But let me hurry to the second thing, which is even more serious or alarmingly serious. It isn't his own ignorance of himself.

It is his ignorance of fraud. You see, here's the picture. When thou art bitten of a many

men to a wedding sit not down in the highest room, why not? Well, lest the more honorable men than thou be bitten of him, the men was making the feast.

And he that badly and him come and say unto thee, give this man place. And thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. You see, this is the picture, isn't it? You are two of you who have been invited to this same feast.

And you and your anxiety and your eagerness happen to arrive there before the other men. And of course, you assume that that's your place, the best place in the whole banquet. Of course.

Any man who doesn't realize that that's your place. Well, he's just an ignoramus, or he's very jealous of you or something. That is obviously your place.

You're the best men, so you take your seat there. And you sit down and you're waiting for the proceedings. But suddenly the men who is giving the feast arrive.

And it is his feast. And it is the privilege of the men who's making and giving the feast to decide where people sit. The guests don't decide where they sit.

You'd have nothing but constant warfare if they're with the position. Everybody would want the best place. So it is the privilege of the host to decide where people sit.

And there you are, you see, seated in the best place, but suddenly the host comes in. And he says, that's not your place. That is this man's place.

Go from there, that's your place. The maker of the feast, the giver of the feast arrives. And whatever you may have thought about yourself and what was your right, it's suddenly completely underlined.

And you've got the room. You begin, he says, with shame to take the lowest. And everybody's looking on and seeing it happening to you.

What was the matter with this man who sat in the best seat? Well, you see, he not only overestimated himself, he forgot that it wasn't his feast. He forgot the host. He forgot whose feast it was.

And the great message of the Bible is just to say this. It is God's feast. My dear friend, this is God's world.

It isn't yours. It isn't mine. It's God's world.

He made it. He is the creator. He is the sustainer of everything.

He made you. He gave you life. Your life is in his ends.

We all belong to him and not to ourselves. The whole universe is God's. And he reigns

over all and he rules over all.

It's his feast. And we're all in his end. And it is he who decides what happens to us.

Oh, I say again, this is the tragedy of the human race. Our Lord kept on repeating this. Listen to why we put it on another occasion.

You'll find it in the 17th chapter of this same Gospel according to Cintuk. As it was in the days of now before the flood, even so shall it be in the days of the Son of Men, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and they will not until the flood came. And carried them all away.

Can't you see it? The banquet. Eating and drinking, marrying, giving in marriage, complacent everything all right. A fool of the name of naught had been preaching for 120 years.

And he was prophesying that a great calamity was going to happen, that God was going to judge the world. Who is this eccentric? This fool who still believes in God and in judgment. Why everything is all right.

Look at it. Look at the food. Look at the drink.

Look at the sideboards. We are in a banqueting chamber. Eating, drinking, giving in marriage.

What's the matter? What's wrong? What you say we should be doing. On with an end. You see this same complacency.

This same fatal assumption. This same foolish belief that the world was theirs and that they could do what they liked in it. Hunting.

That flood came and took them all away. Even he says as they were in the days of Suddenman Gamala. There again he says they were doing the same thing.

Planting, sewing, buying and selling. A typical picture of the modern world. Modern men.

With his affluence, with his industry. Everything going well. The complacency and the assurance and the assumption that it's all.

And that man is everything. That man is the center of the universe. And that science is in control.

And that there's nothing else. Then suddenly. The maker and the giver of the feast appears.

That's the whole trouble according to our lord with the human race. It is the master of the feast who decides our positions. Not we ourselves.

My dear friend, it doesn't matter what you think of yourself. It doesn't matter what I think of myself. It doesn't matter what we think of one another.

There's only one thing that matters. What does God think of me? You and I will soon be dead and our bodies will be rotting in a grave. But the whole universe thinks of me.

It doesn't matter at all. Nothing matters but his opinion. It is his feast.

We are in his world. He decides. He is the judge of all the earth.

He made it. He controls it. It all belongs to him.

It is in his hands. And let me remind you as this parable teaches us that his standard of judgment isn't yours and mine. These people thought that they were entitled to the best room in the banquet.

The master of the feast doesn't agree and he makes the move. His judgment isn't their judgment. It's here on the surface.

The man said that's obviously my place. The master of the feast comes and says go. And you've got to go.

Listen to our lord putting it on another occasion. He looked into the eyes of the Pharisees and he said you are they that justify yourselves before men. But God seeth the heart.

For that which is highly esteemed amongst men is a bombing nation in the sight of God. Now I'm not saying that. It's the son of God who says that.

You see these Pharisees, they made broad their phylacteries and they were teachers of the people and the people revered them. They thought they were marvellous. Our lord says you know they're looking at the outside.

God seeth the heart. And that which is highly esteemed amongst men is a bombing nation in the sight of God. There are men who recently died and they could speak blasphemously just before they died.

They said I've conquered this realm. I've conquered that realm. Where do I start again? Where am I to start next as an amateur? That's how they speak about going out of life to meet God and standing before the eternal.

The arrogance, the self-confidence, of course they have great obituary notices. Half an hour on the television. The world says greatness.

But it's a bombing nation in the sight of God. His judgment is not our judgment. The apostle Paul says be not deceived.

God is not mocked. For whatsoever a man seeth that shall he also reap. All things are

naked and open into the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

You and I can put up a great show. We're all shims. We're all frauds.

But we're all very clever. If only people knew us as we are. If they knew every thought you've had today, every imagination.

Every subtle thing that's coming to your heart or into your mind. What if people knew it? What if they could analyze your very best deeds and see your motives and your purposes and your objectives? What if men could tear off the mask of all the polite and the nice people and see what's really behind it? Oh, what a difference. But God sees that.

All things are naked and open into the eyes of him with whom we have to do. It's his feast. He decides it is his judgment and his judgment is the exact opposite of others.

But listen to this. He has power to enforce his judgment because it is his feast. And you have no right in the feast to say I object to that.

This is my position. I'm better than that man. It is his feast.

It isn't yours. And that's his judgment. And he's got power to enforce it.

Give this man place. And you've got to go. And my dear friend, this is what I cannot understand.

Of men and women who blaspheme the name of God and reject this Christ and his wonderful salvation. That they dare speak as they do. When God tells you to go out to this world, you'll have to go.

Though you're a 20th century man. And though you've got a National Health Service and though you've got these miracle drugs. When God tells you to go, you will just have to go.

And there will be no arguing at the bar of final judgment. It is God's judgment. And God's sentence when it's promulgated will have to be carried out.

Give this man place. And no objection, no resistance is possible. No appeal is possible.

You just have to go. He not only has the judgment, he has the power of judgment. And he can enforce it.

And he will enforce it. The teaching of the whole book from beginning to end. It is especially the teaching of his own son.

And look, my dear friends, at the result of the judgment, the result of the pronouncement. And they'll begin with shame. To take the lowest rule.

Bind him with hand and foot and cast him far. What a terrible thing it is for a man to wake up in eternity and find that he's been a fool. That he's been all wrong.

That he rejected the gospel that could save him. He rejected the life that would lead to glory simply because of his wrong estimate of himself. And because of his complacency, because of his self-assurance, because he forgot that it was God's world and that it's God who decides the shame of it all.

Away from me. I never knew you. Gee, that work iniquity.

Oh, my dear friends, our Lord teaches us in this parable that God's judgment is absolute and that unless we have obeyed him and listened to his son and received his salvation, we shall go to everlasting shame and everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Oh, these foolish people. They were wrong in the reestimates of themselves and they'd forgotten all about God and that it's his banquet and that it is his judgment that counts and that he's got power to enforce it.

But lastly, for me to close. Finally, mankind is ignorant of what God rarely wants and of God's way. And you see, it's the exact opposite of all we naturally think.

He so so ever exalted himself shall be a base. He that humbled himself shall be exalted. Listen, Cesar, Lord, when you're bitten to a feast, go and sit in the last room that when he that bed the cometh he may say unto you, friend, go up higher.

Then there shall have worship armor. And in the presence of them that sit at meet with the end, he says the same to the men who makes the feast. When thou makeest the dinner of a suffer, don't only call your friends and brethren or your kinsmen or your rich neighbors lest they also bid thee again and make a recompense unto thee.

He doesn't say you should never invite your friends and relatives. He says, don't only invite them, but instead of that he says invite also the poor, the main, the lame, the lame, and the blind. Why? Well, he says, that's the way to be blessed.

They can't return it to you. They can't invite you back. They can't make any recompense to thee like the other people can.

Do it like that, and then there shall be recompense that the resurrection of the just. What does it mean? It means this. Nothing is so important for us in this life and in this world as to listen to the teaching of the Son of God.

Humble yourselves, he says, what's he mean? Is this false modesty? No, no. What he means is what he said in the sermon, and bless it of the poor in spirit. This is the kingdom of God.

The poor in spirit. What is this? Not false modesty, I say. Not pretending to humble

yourself and thinking all the time, oh, I can afford to stand back there.

I am obviously the greatest man in the place, and the host is bound to come to me and take me up to the top. No, no, that's not his teaching. It's our Lord's teaching about the two men who went up into the temple to pray, the one a publican and then the one a Pharisee.

The Pharisee, you remember, went right to the front and he said, God, I think that I am not as other men are, and especially as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give a tenth of my goods to the poor. I thank you that I am what I am.

I don't need anything from you. I don't need grace. I don't need forgiveness.

I don't need compassion. I need nothing. I am all right.

I thank you that I am the wonderful man I am. Here you see, the poor publican was there just inside the door. So utterly ashamed of himself that he was there with his head down, smiting his breast, and all he could say, God.

Be merciful to me, your sinner. It's my only hope. I can't forgive myself.

Can you? I'm so rotten. I'm so vile. I see what I am.

Now that's what our Lord is speaking about. That's what he means when he tells us that we must humble ourselves. It means that you should face God and face him.

Face his teaching. Face yourself honestly. And then you'll find the rottenness and the wildness, the weakness, the hopelessness.

And you'll say quite honestly, just as I am without one plea. But that thy blood were shed to me, and that thou biddest me come to the loam of God I come. I've got nothing.

Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply to thy cross I cling, naked come to thee for dress, helplessness to thee for grace. Foul I to the fountain fly, wash me saviour.

All right, die. The Son of God, there's no blessing to give you until you've come to that. If you've got any pride of knowledge left in you, if you've got any pride in your morality and goodness left in you, if you've got any pride in the fact that you belong to the 20th century left in you, you're outside and you'll be put out.

The only man who's blessed is the man who realises his need. A broken and a contrite heart. Thou shalt not despise.

You read the lives of the best men that the world has ever seen. They are always the men who have condemned themselves. They are the men who say they are the chief of sinners with the apostle Paul.

They've looked into the law of God. They've looked into the face of God. They've seen Christ on the shrivel to nothing, and they are nothing and nobody.

They're done. That's the man who's blessed, not the man who puts himself in the best seat. What else does he look for? Well, you see, he commands the men who doesn't covet great things for himself in this world.

He said to these same Pharisees, how can you believe that receive honor of one another and seek not the honor that cometh from God only? If you are living this worldly life of honoring one another and praising one another, you're outside. It mustn't be interested in that. You invite these poor and maimed and lame and blind who can't receive you back and who can't honor you.

And you mustn't do good, he says, in order to be seen of others, in order to get their praise. You mustn't be like the Pharisee standing on the street corners making broad their phylacteries, offering their long prayers that they may be seen and heard of men and praise of men. Verily I say unto you, he says, if that's what you're after, you'll get it.

You'll get your reward. If you're out for worldly fame and honor, you'll get it. You'll get an obituary in the times.

You'll be a great man, perhaps, and the world will praise you. If you're out for that, you'll get your reward and that's all you will get. A temporary seat in a place you don't belong to, but only a temporary one.

What is the secret? Oh, the secret is this. That a man should have his eye on the resurrection of the just. When thou make us the feast, for the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed.

For they cannot recompense thee, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just. That's the man. The man whose eye is on God, and not on men.

The man who is like Moses, who refused when he became of age to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. What was his secret? Oh, he had his eye, we adhered on the recompense of the reward. He went on, he lived, and seeing him who is invisible.

He didn't look at Egypt and its armies, and the generalship of the army which could have been his, and the crown, perhaps, and the great pomp and authority. He put it all aside and became a common shepherd, and suffered and endured the contradiction of those children of Israel, and all the bother and the shame of it all. Why did he do it? Oh, he had his eye on the recompense of the reward, not to have the best place in the banquet of this world, but just to be inside the door of heaven.

Now, my friends, what's your estimate of yourself? What's your view of life in this world? What are you out for? On what is your eye fixed? Is it this world and its estimates? It's all going to come to nothing. The master of the feast will come. He's the son of God.

He is the bride, and there's going to be a great feast. He'll come. Is your eye fixed on death? And are you waiting for this blessed word? Friend, friend, come up high.

Come to be with me. Come and sit at my right hand. Come and share in the everlasting feasting of my kingdom of glory and of honor and of dominion and of my town.

Are you waiting for that? You prove that you are waiting for that by facing yourselves honestly in the sight of this word. In the sight of the son of God, heaven and earth shall pass away, he says, but my words shall not pass away. Are you with this foolish world tonight, setting in complacency in the high places? I say again, face yourself in the light of this teaching.

Face yourself. Recognize your sin. Go to him as you are.

Plead for just mercy and compassion. Take your place with the public and say, God, be merciful to me yourself. And then he will tell you I have been.

I sent my only begotten son into the world to die for you. He died that you might be forgiven. He died to make you good.

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