

SEEKING THE CHIEF SEATS

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Text:

“And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:7-11).

Purpose: To teach us humility.

Introduction:

1) Christ had gone into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread, “And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him” (Luke 14:1).

2) Heals man of the dropsy, “And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? And they could not answer him again to these things” (Luke 14:2-6).

3) He "marked" how people chose out the chief rooms (seats - American Standard Version).

4) Teaches a lesson on humility.

I. THE PARABLE:

1) Jesus instructs his disciples to seat themselves in humble positions rather than in chief seats, “When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room;” (Luke 14:8a).

2) You could be put to shame, “... lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room” (Luke 14:8b-9).

3) Others will honor you, if you should be honored, “But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee” (Luke 14:10).

I. PROMINENT POSITIONS MAY OFTEN BE SOUGHT

- 1) In the business world! (Big "I", Little"ME").
- 2) Can even be so in the church.
- 3) We may seek the praise/honor of men.

(1) "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10).

2) "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43).

- 4) Preachers can be guilty of this.

(1) "And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (Mark 10:35-37).

(2) Jesus taught against such an attitude.

(3) "But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all" (Mark 10:38-44).

II. WE SHOULD SEEK TO SERVE, RATHER THAN TO BE SERVED

- 1) Jesus' example:

(1) "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

(2) Jesus washed the disciples' feet.

(3) If we are seeking to be served, we will be easily offended or discouraged.

- 2) If we do works to be seen of men - that is all the reward we will receive.

(1) "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 6:1); also see following verses.

(2) Certainly it is good to show appreciation - to exhort.

(3) But our motives cannot be to get the applause of men.

(4) We let our light shine **to** glorify our Father.

(5) "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).

IV. WHOSOEVER EXALTETH HIMSELF SHALL BE ABASED. V.11

1) Nebuchadnezzar, "At the end of twelve months he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon. The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws. And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:" (Daniel 4:29-34).

2) Ananias & Sapphira, "But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband" (Acts 5:1-10).

3) Herod exalted himself & was eaten of worms, "And Herod was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because their country was nourished by the king's country. And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost" (Acts 12:20-23).

V. "WHOSOEVER HUMBLETH HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED."

1) Christ chose humble men for apostles - church grew.

2) Humility is seen in John the Baptist.

(1) "And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the

latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose” (Mark 1:7).
(2) “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

3) Christ humbled himself, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:5-11).

CONCLUSION:

1) Jesus taught the great lesson- that he that is the greatest person is a servant of all, “But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Luke 22:26).

2) Let us walk humbly with God - “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” (Micah 6:8).