

Proverbs 25:6-7
Psalm 112
Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16
Luke 14:1, 7-14

Sermon August 28th, 2022

Humility Equals Hospitality

In our gospel this morning, Jesus observes the people at the gatherings he attends. What he finds is that we have a tendency to exalt ourselves before others. Or in other words, we like to be better than everyone else. So, we try and sit in the best seat at the party. We only invite people who can enhance our status. Or, who at least share a similar status to us.

Unfortunately, what Jesus sees when we exalt ourselves towards others is that we find it much more difficult to practice hospitality towards others.

For example, when we enter into dialogue with someone from a different faith tradition or a different Christian denomination or even a different political affiliation, with the attitude that we have all the right answers and they have all the wrong answers to life's meaningful questions then we become less welcoming. We do whatever we can to convince them of our way of thinking. And if they disagree, we push harder (**Image**).

Unfortunately, we end up pushing people away or alienating them from our community. The opposite of practicing hospitality.

Or, when we focus too much of our attention on our wealth and possessions. When we keep saying over and over again that "I worked hard for what I have." Maybe as a justification for the amount of wealth and status we have over others. We can then distance ourselves from people who have less. We can think "they are lazy. And so, why would we want to associate with them or help them." We end up marginalizing them (**Image**). The opposite of practicing hospitality.

In response to what Jesus is witnessing, he shares a couple of parables with us, to argue that when we humble ourselves before others, we are more able to practice hospitality towards others.

When we dialogue with people from a place of humility. When we come to the table with the understanding that we all have something to bring to the dialogue table, and we all have something to learn from each other. Then we come willing to listen. To grow in relationship together. We are more able to welcome people for who they are and what they believe (**Image**). Working to find common ground with one another. We are more able to show the hospitality we are invited to live out as disciples of Jesus.

When we see our wealth as a gift from God. When we give thanks for the opportunities God gave us to get where we are today. When we focus on all the people who helped us along the way. Then we are more able to feel compassion for those who have less. We are more willing to share of our gifts so others can experience these gifts as well (**Image**). We are more able to show the hospitality we are invited to live out as disciples of Jesus.

Exalting oneself before others equals exclusion. Humbling oneself before others equals hospitality. We see this being played out in our relationships with those who are different from us.

We see this being played out in Jesus' relationships with those who are different from Jesus.

There are many examples in the gospels where Jesus humbles himself before others. Jesus humbles himself when he enters the homes of tax collectors. Jesus humbles himself when he is hanging out with sinners. Jesus humbles himself when he is in the presence of Gentiles or Samaritans. Jesus humbles himself when he walks with the poor. Jesus humbles himself on the cross in the face of his enemies. Jesus humbles himself because Jesus has come to bring us the kingdom of God. Jesus has come to live out this kingdom in his ministry.

And the most important attribute of this kingdom that Jesus reiterates over and over again is that this kingdom welcomes the poor, the sinner, the tax collectors, the gentiles, Samaritans, women, children, us. This kingdom is one where hospitality is practiced every day by its King.

Jesus invites us into this life of humility, because our humility allows us to practice hospitality to the people we meet. People who live in poverty. People who have been marginalized, because of their race, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, denomination, age (**Image**). People who long to feel welcomed into our society. Into our community. Living out the kingdom of God in our world.

Jesus invites us into this life of humility. Jesus shows us humility. Jesus shares these parables not only to invite us into being more hospitable to others. Jesus shares these parables, because Jesus wants to give us a foretaste of the feast to come. Jesus wants to show us that we are welcome into the kingdom. We are loved for who we are.

Even though Jesus could come at us with anger and judgment. Jesus could exclude us based on our unworthiness. Jesus doesn't do this. Jesus chooses grace. Jesus chooses humility. Jesus chooses hospitality. And invites us to do the same to others.

Let us pray, gracious God, thank you for humbling yourself to us. Thank you for welcoming us into your kingdom with all our bumps and bruises. Help us practice humility and hospitality to those we meet. **Amen.**

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