

Scripture Study

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle C



Opening prayer

Sirach 3:17-18,20,28-29 (Ps 68:4-7,10-11) Hebrews 12:18-19,22-24a **Luke 14:1, 7-14**

Overview of the Gospel:

- This Sunday's Gospel reading takes place at a banquet that is only mentioned in Luke's gospel. Jesus heals a man who has come into their midst, no doubt creating an uncomfortable situation (verses 2-6, not included in this reading).
- During the banquet, there is some jockeying around by the guests, comprised mainly of Pharisees (verse 1), to sit at the most prestigious spots at the table.
- Jesus reminds them of the humility taught by the Old Testament in these situations (verses 8-10; Proverbs 25:6-7) and makes the point that, in the things that matter, God is not impressed or influenced by man's self-made status (verse 11).
- He then goes further than this, insisting that, not only should we be humble among our peers, but we should also be welcoming and generous with those whom our peers (and we) would not normally consider worthy of esteem and honor (verses 12-14).

Questions:

- The Second Reading contrasts the inapproachability of God in the Old Testament (alluding to the experience of the Israelites at Mount Sinai in Exodus 19:16-20) with our present privilege of being able to approach him through his Son, Jesus Christ. Despite this privilege (which is made possible by God's love and grace through Jesus' sacrifice) why should we still have a spirit of awe and humility in his presence?
- How does the First Reading imply that there is a natural cause and effect between humility and being blessed by God?
- Describe the circumstances surrounding the Gospel Reading: the day? Host? Atmosphere?
- How does Jesus' view of honor (verses 7-11) differ from that held by others at the meal? What does this passage teach you about the difference between heavenly values versus earthly values?
- What kind of risk is connected with taking the lowest place at table? Why would true humility seek the lowest place without thought of being elevated or even noticed? What might be some of the benefits of such humility?
- If you threw a party for the "poor," "crippled," "lame," and "blind," whom would you invite? How might you do this?
- What are your attitudes toward the guests you invite to your home? How closely do your attitudes resemble what Jesus recommends here? When was the last time you invited people like those Jesus lists?

Catechism of the Catholic Church: §§ 588, 582, 2540

Closing Prayer

Worldly society has flowered from a selfish love which dared to despise even God, whereas the communion of saints is rooted in a love of God that is ready to trample on self. -St. Augustine

"If you sit in the lowest place ...you will be honored in the presence of all"

Scripture: *Luke 14: 1,7-14*

One Sabbath when he went to dine at the house of a ruler who belonged to the Pharisees, they were watching him. Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he marked how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, "When you are invited by any one to a marriage feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest a more eminent man than you be invited by him; and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your kinsmen or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. You will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

Meditation: Who wants to be last? Isn't it only natural to desire respect and esteem from others? Jesus' parable of the guests invited to the marriage feast probes our motives for seeking honor and position. Self-promotion is most



often achieved at the expense of others! Jesus' parable reinforces the teaching of Proverbs: *Do not put yourself forward in the king's presence or stand in the place of the great; for it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of the prince* (Proverbs 25:6-7).

What is true humility and why should we make it a characteristic mark of our life and action? True humility is not feeling bad about yourself, or having a low opinion of yourself, or thinking of yourself as inferior to others. True humility frees us from preoccupation with ourselves, whereas a low self-opinion tends to focus our attention on ourselves. Humility is truth in self-understanding and truth in action. Viewing ourselves truthfully, with sober judgment, means seeing ourselves the way God sees us (Psalm 139:1-4). A humble person makes a realistic assessment of himself or herself without illusion or pretense to be something he or she is not. The humble regard themselves neither

smaller nor larger than they truly are. True humility frees us to be our true selves and to avoid despair and pride. A humble person does not have to wear a mask or put on a facade in order to look good to others, especially to those who are not really familiar with that person. The humble are not swayed by accidentals, such as fame, reputation, success, or failure.

Humility is the queen or foundation of all the other virtues because it enables us to view and judge ourselves correctly, the way God sees us. Humility leads to true self-knowledge, honesty, realism, strength, and dedication to give ourselves to something greater than ourselves. Humility frees us to love and serve others selflessly, for their sake, rather than our own. Paul the Apostles, gives us the greatest example and model of humility in the person of Jesus Christ, who *emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, ...who humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross* (Philippians 2:7-8). The Lord Jesus gives grace to those who seek him humbly. Do you want to be a servant as Jesus served?

"Lord Jesus, you became a servant for my sake to set me free from the tyranny of sin, selfishness, and conceit. Help me to be humble as you are humble and to love freely and graciously all whom you call me to serve."

Meditation: © 2010 Don Schwager
www.rc.net/wcc/readings/