

Fix Your Eyes on Jesus' Care for the Poor: "Invite the Poor"

Focus Passage: Luke 14:7–14

Other Passages Referenced: Matthew 19: 6; Luke 6:26–27; 14:1–6

Interpretive Helps

- It is helpful to view Luke 14:1–14 in the context of the entire chapter. After the parable of the *Wedding Feast* (vv. 7–11) and the initial verses of the parable of the *Great Banquet* (vv.12–14), Jesus frames both parables in terms of the cost of following Him as a disciple. Jesus then warns that salt that has lost its saltiness is no longer useful, not even to be thrown on the manure pile which was a means of forming potash (potassium chloride).
- “Dropsy” is literally *hydrōpikos*, probably edema in which various parts of the body become filled with fluid.¹

Sermon Recap

The sermon began by discussing some unintended consequences of winning the lottery. One would think that winning hundreds of millions of dollars would overwhelm any possibility of poverty for the winners. However, an economist noted, “Studies found that instead of getting people out of financial trouble, winning the lottery got people into more trouble, since bankruptcy rates soared for lottery winners three to five years after winning” (Jay Zakorsky, U.S. News & World Report, 2016). These riches to poverty stories are counterintuitive but repeatedly documented.

The sermon intuited three types of poverty from Luke 14:1–14: (1) *Spiritual poverty* in which religious leaders tested Jesus against their own standards rather than testing their lives against His standards (vv. 1–6), (2) *Emotional Poverty* in which people depend on receiving affirmation and honor from others in order to feel worthy (vv. 7–11), and (3) *Eternal poverty* in which people exchange eternal reward for temporary rewards (vv. 12–14). Have one or more of these three types of poverty taken root in your life?

The gospel of Jesus overwhelms all kinds of poverty in ways that hundreds of millions of dollars cannot. Like the man with dropsy, we were bloated with sin, but God entered our figurative pit through Jesus and immediately pulled us out when we repented and trusted Him in faith. Unlike the religious leaders who sought the seats of honor at the table, Jesus left the ultimate head table and sacrificed Himself on the cross so that all who believe in Him may be exalted with Him. Unlike those hosts who invite guests who will repay them by inviting them in return, Jesus did not come to be served but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many. Jesus invited those who were His enemies, impoverished by sin, crippled by deception, and blind to what satisfies. If we realize the spiritual riches we have in Christ, we will joyfully let go of our earthly resources to obey Jesus' command and example of inviting those who have nothing to offer us in return, because the gospel overwhelms poverty. Have a different dinner before Ash Wednesday—those who can't reciprocate.

Group Gathering

Group Check-in — Care, Celebration, Encouragement (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Informal conversation to allow individuals to catch up with one another.

¹ Robert H. Stein, [Luke](#), vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 386.

2. Ask if anyone would share how they've been hearing and obeying God's direction.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

READ Luke 14:1–14

1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. Luke repeatedly writes about Jesus healing people on the Sabbath, to the displeasure of the Pharisees and religious leaders. See Luke 6:6–11, 13:1017, and 14:1–6. How does Luke show the progression of the religious leaders' responses to Jesus healing on the sabbath?
4. How many times do you find the word "invite(d)" in Luke 14:7–14?
5. In 14:7–11, Jesus was addressing guests invited to a meal, and in 14:12–14, Jesus addressed the host who invited others to a meal. What were His instructions to each?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)

1. Luke 14:1 says guests at the dinner hosted by a ruler of the Pharisees "were watching Him carefully." What do you think they were hoping to observe? Are you aware of anyone watching you carefully in terms of your professed faith and how you follow Jesus? (children, co-workers, friends, etc.) Write down names that come to mind.
 - What are they watching for? ... What do you think they are seeing?
2. How would you explain the difference between "humility" and "humiliation"?
3. What do you think about this statement: "Humiliation often results from a lack of humility"?
4. In this pandemic season of distancing, trying to finagle seats of honor at banquets is not a major temptation. Are there other ways where we jockey for position to receive honor or be noticed? How does Jesus' teaching in Luke 14:1–14 apply to those situations?
5. In question 1 above, we noted names of individuals who may be watching us carefully to see how we live out the costs of discipleship, how we maintain our "saltiness." However, at a macro level, the unbelieving segment of our culture is carefully watching the Church as a whole and what is known as *evangelicalism* in particular. They are watching to see if the gospel of Jesus makes a positive or a negative difference in society. In conversations about hot-button topics of our day, how can we (1) maintain our convictions that we are convinced are biblical and true, and (2) demonstrate humility and show honor to those with whom we may vehemently disagree? Here are examples of topics where pursuing these goals of discipleship are challenging but important:
 - Sanctity of human life
 - Matters related to the LGBTQ+ community
 - Affordable health care for all Americans
 - Validity of the American electoral process
 - Systemic racism

When you speak to others about these topics, how are the gospel's demands for humility and speaking the truth in love demonstrated?

6. Who might you invite to a dinner or activity who is not likely to reciprocate with an invitation to you?

The Big Question: What do you sense God's Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:

Click [here](#) for some good opportunities to serve with our local and global mission partners.

Three Types of Poverty—Lk. 14:1-14

I. Spiritual Poverty—vv.1-6

- **Takes root when we attempt to conform Jesus to our expectations rather than allow Jesus to form our expectations**

Three Types of Poverty—Lk. 14:1-14

I. Spiritual Poverty—vv.1-6

II. Emotional Poverty—vv.7-11

- **Takes root when the opinions of others define us**

**“I want you to be happy,
but I want to be the reason.”**

**—*Suzanne Stabile and Ian Morgan Cron*
*The Road Back to You***

Three Types of Poverty—Lk. 14:1-14

I. Spiritual Poverty—vv.1-6

II. Emotional Poverty—vv.7-11

III. Eternal Poverty—vv.12-14

- **Takes root when we prioritize
our present comfort**

**What type of poverty
has taken root in your life?—Lk. 14:1-14**

I. Spiritual Poverty

—consider silence—1 Sam. 3:9

II. Emotional Poverty

—consider humility—Jn. 3:30

III. Eternal Poverty

—consider sacrificial giving—2 Sam. 24:24

Luke 14 Challenge:

**Have a different dinner before
Ash Wednesday, 2/17/21**