

LIVING ON THE EDGE "ON THE EDGE OF EMBRACE" LUKE 14:12-14

In a familiar portion of the Sermon on the Mount, one of the most beloved passages in the entire Bible, Jesus taught his disciples to love their enemies. He told them: "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:43-48).

He expressed a similar sentiment on a later occasion to a prominent Pharisee, who had invited a select group of close family and friends along with a number of handpicked well-heeled acquaintances to enjoy his ostentatious Sabbath hospitality. After taking note of the invited guests and their behavior at the table, Jesus gave both the diners and their host a lesson in humility vis-a-vie table etiquette. First he addressed the guests, and then he addressed the host.

To the diners he said: "When you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (Lk 14:10-11). One pastor writes: "In Jesus' day, as today, there were 'status symbols' that helped

people enhance and protect their high standing in society. If you were invited to the 'right homes' and if you were seated in the 'right places,' then people would know how important you really were . . . When Jesus advised the guests to take the lowest places, He was not giving them a 'gimmick' that guaranteed promotion. The false humility that takes the lowest place is just as hateful to God as the pride that takes the highest place" (Warren W. Wiersbe, "Luke," in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:229). Some things never change.

To the host he said: "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous" (vv. 12-14). "Jesus knew that the host had invited his guests for two reasons: (1) to pay them back because they had invited him to past feasts, or (2) to put them under his debt so that they would invite him to future feasts" (229). Some things never change.

Jesus' point in all this is more or less obvious: neither feigning popularity nor feigning hospitality reflects the heart of God.

This Week's Core Competency

Stewardship – I believe everything I am or own belongs to God.

The disciple's use of possessions is one of Luke's major concerns in his Gospel. One commentator summarizes it as follows: "No other books [Luke-Acts] in the NT are as concerned about the Christian's relationship to material possessions. Within Luke's writings are several passages that appear to teach

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The best hospitality is that which is given, not exchanged.

– Darrell L Bock.

the need for Christians to renounce all personal possessions. For example we read, 'Sell your possessions' (12:33), or, 'Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple' (14:33). Luke quoted Jesus' words to the rich ruler found in Mark but intensified the demands by adding 'everything': 'You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me' (18:22). Elsewhere we find in Luke an emphasis on generosity and the giving of alms. The danger of possessions is emphasized (12:13-21; 16:10-13, 19-31) because a primary reason for the choking of God's word is riches (8:14). Disciples should use possessions to obtain treasure in heaven (12:33-34; 16:9; 18:22). 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35); and the generosity of Tabitha (Acts 9:36), Cornelius (Acts 10:2, 4, 31), the centurion (Luke 7:5), the good Samaritan (10:34-35), and the women who followed Jesus (8:3) are held up to the reader as exemplary . . .

"It may be that 12:33 provides the needed clue for resolving this tension between the radical demand to sell and the more moderate teaching concerning the need for generosity. As is often found in the Gospels, various teachings of Jesus are presented hyperbolically and without qualification. The context of 12:33a clearly indicates that the total renunciation of all personal possessions is not the intent of this saying since disciples are expected to have the means to practice a continual generosity (12:33b). At times believers may be called on to sell all their possessions, as in the case of the rich ruler (18:22), but his is not a universal demand. Luke strongly emphasized the danger that possessions involve (8:14; 12:13-21; 16:10-13, 19-31). He, more than any other Evangelist, saw how riches can keep one from God's kingdom. He perceived clearly that the possession of wealth tends to lead to arrogance and self-sufficiency and so warned, 'Woe to you that are rich, for you have already received your comfort' (6:24). Here Luke stood in close agreement with such OT teachings as Jer 5:26-29; Amos 8:4-6; Mic 2:1-5. But to the humble poor who share what they have with those who are even more needy, he shared the beatitude, 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God' (6:20). One cannot serve God and mammon (16:13). One must use mammon in order to serve God, not God in order to serve a lust for mammon" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 53-54).

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Luke 14:12-14

12 Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, 14 and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Cf., complementary passages

Psalm 112:6, 9

6 Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.
9 They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn will be lifted high in honor.

Proverbs 19:17

7 Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD,
and he will repay him for his deed. (ESV)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Box "then" indicating *temporal connection* in v. 12.
- * Box "or" indicating *alternatives*.
- * Underline "friends," "brothers or sisters," "relatives," and "rich neighbors" in v. 12.
- * Circle "will be repaid" in v. 12.

- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 13.
- * Double underline "poor," "crippled," "lame," and "blind" in v. 13.
- * Bracket "will be blessed" and "will be repaid" in v. 14.
- * Circle "resurrection of the righteous" in v. 14.

day **2**

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Luke 14:7-14 contains two sayings of Jesus regarding banquet behavior having significance for humility and stewardship. Describe the occasion on which they were delivered.

2. Distinguish the first saying from the second.

3. Are Jesus' disciples *never* to invite family and friends to dinner? Explain.

4. Put what Jesus wants his disciples to avoid doing in your own words.

5. In both of the contrasting situations Jesus describes, the host is "repaid." So wherein lies the *contrast*?

6. The poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind didn't get invited to many banquets. Why not?

7. To be obedient to Jesus, *must* his disciples open their homes to feed disenfranchised strangers? Explain.

8. How might Jesus' obedient disciples be "repaid" at the resurrection of the righteous?

9. **Discussion:** Talk about the fact that Jesus is no Emily Post, since his teaching regarding banquet etiquette has to do with more than just table manners.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Would you rather be rewarded for your hospitality by its recipients—your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, your rich neighbors—or by God? It's a forced choice, since you can't be rewarded by both. According to Jesus, if the recipients of your hospitality repay you in kind, you will have the sum total of your reward in this life. However, if God repays you, while you will not have your reward in this life, you will have your reward for eternity following the resurrection of the righteous.

Jesus' ministry afforded him a rich social life. Preaching the kingdom of God, healing the infirm, and performing miracles kept him in the limelight. His words and works made him popular with the masses and the prized target of his opponents. Common people swarmed him in public; religious leaders conspired against him in private. He enjoyed table fellowship with Pharisees (Lk 7:36; 11:37; 14:1), as well as tax collectors and sinners (Mk 2:15-16; Lk 5:27-32; 15:2)—which annoyed his Jewish opponents no end. They not only criticized his practice but also disparagingly called him, "a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners" (Lk 7:34). He often had to withdraw to a solitary place to escape the public eye—even then crowds would follow him (Mt 12:15; 14:13).

Luke tells us of one occasion on which Jesus went to the house of a prominent Pharisee for dinner (Lk 14:1-23). It was the Sabbath, and among the invited VIPs were a number of Pharisees and experts in the law, who were carefully eyeing Jesus to see if he would do what they considered unlawful—heal the man with edema in their midst. Luke mentions the growing Sabbath controversy in two earlier passages (6:1-11; 13:10-17). In this instance, he asked his antagonists, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" Then he healed the man. And afterward he justified his action by asking, "If one of you has a child or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?" While they did not reply, their unspoken answer was undoubtedly "Yes."

Two sayings of Jesus follow in verses 7-14, one directed towards the invited guests (vv. 7-11) and one towards the host (vv. 12-14). On the first

saying about being a banquet guest—"When you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests" (v. 10)—one commentator writes: "The imagery recalls Proverbs 25:6-7, where the author writes that it is better for the host to call someone up than to assert oneself to try to get his attention" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 392). Lest anyone miss the point, Jesus makes it perfectly clear, "For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted" (v.11).

On the second saying about being a banquet host—"When you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed" (v. 13)—the same commentator writes: "Beyond worrying about what seats we get as guests at a table, there is the question of whom we seek to serve as guests. Jesus calls us to serve those who cannot repay our kindness" (393). The reason behind this saying is simple. If you invite VIPs, who are able to repay you, they likely will, and "you will be repaid" (v. 12). But if you want to "be blessed" by God, you must invite those who cannot repay you. Do that, and God will repay you "at the resurrection of the righteous" (v. 14). In either case, you will be repaid, but wisdom says the latter is better. Solomon writes, "Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward them for what they have done" (Pr 19:17). "What is given to the poor is really a loan to the LORD. The implication is that God will repay the loan-with interest!" (Roland E. Murphy, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 22, *Proverbs*, 144-45).

In context, Jesus' sayings have to do with the kingdom of God and not just table manners. Here "banquet" surely alludes to the kingdom. "When seen in the broader context of Luke 14, it is probable that an allusion to the concern over the question of who will enter the kingdom of God (thought of as a **dinner** or feast) is intended. Jesus' advice not to invite one's **friends, brothers, relatives, or rich neighbors** probably implies that one cannot assume that only those whom we respect (or envy) are also respected by God. Others, such as **the poor, the crippled, the lame,**

and **the blind**, are valued and respected by God and will be among those invited to the great feast of the last days. If one is to be like God, one should extend one's kindness and mercy to those people as well. But Jesus' immediate point is in v. 14. If one invites those who by religious

standards of the day are viewed as outcast from the kingdom, one **will be blessed** (truly happy) and accordingly will receive a reward from God **at the resurrection of the righteous"** (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NICNT, 222-23).

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

The Message of the Passage

Be generous to those who cannot repay you in kind, so that you might be blessed and repaid by God at the resurrection of the righteous.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22.

Is Jesus' second saying *only* about inviting the disenfranchised to dinner?

Do you think Jesus expects his disciples to take his second saying *literally*?

How would you apply Jesus' second saying *personally*?

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 12 **then** I.e., after instructing *guests* on banquet etiquette, Jesus instructs *hosts* on the same. "In the context of Jesus' dining with a Pharisee (14:1-6), Luke introduced two unique sets of ethical teachings illustrating Christian attitudes and behavior. The first set (14:7-11) was directed to partakers of a meal and the second (14:12-14) toward the hosts. The first set of teachings is called a 'parable' (14:7), which is somewhat surprising, for what follows does not appear to be what is traditionally thought of as a parable. Luke intended for his readers to understand that the following ethical teachings involved more than just instruction about how to behave at a meal. That the instructions should be taken literally is, of course, true. However, they were also metaphorical and teach a general attitude toward self and others appropriate to member of God's kingdom (cf., 14:15)" (Stein, 388).

v. 12 **luncheon or dinner** "It is uncertain whether the primary difference between these two terms involves the time of day or the kind of meal. The latter is more likely in light of the use of the latter term for 'banquet' in 14:16" (Stein, 390).

v. 12 **friends . . .** All of these individuals have one thing in common. They are all likely to repay the host in kind by returning his hospitality. "Jesus did not prohibit having friends over for a dinner/banquet. His words are better understood as reflecting the Semitic idiom 'not so much (friends . . . neighbors) as rather (needy)'" (Stein, 390). Put differently, Jesus did not mean "never x, but only y." Instead, he meant "not only x, but also y."

v. 12 **will be repaid** In this case, the context indicates that the host will be repaid (*passive voice*) by his invited guests.

v. 13 **but** What Jesus said to his host regarding hospitality is founded on a *contrast* between two strategies for preparing the guest list described in the passage.

v. 14 **will be blessed, repaid** In contrast to the use of the passive in verse 12, these are *divine* passives, which imply that in this case, the host will be blessed and repaid, not by his invited guests but by God.

v. 14 **resurrection of the righteous** Christ died on the cross. He "breathed his last" (Lk 23:46; cf., Jn 19:33) and "gave up his spirit" (Jn 19:30). His dead body was buried (Jn 19:38-42; Mk 15:42-47), but on the first day of the week, the same body that went in the tomb came out of the tomb—the perishable clothed with the imperishable and the mortal clothed with immortality. Resurrection refers to the transformation of the *physical body*. One commentator writes: "The great majority of the ancients believed in life after death; many of them developed, as we have seen, complex and fascinating beliefs about it and practices in relation to it; but other than within Judaism and Christianity, they did not believe in resurrection. 'Resurrection' denoted a new embodied life which would follow whatever 'life after death' there might be. 'Resurrection' was, by definition, not the existence into which someone might (or might not) go immediately upon death; it was not a disembodied 'heavenly' life; it was a further stage, out beyond all that. It was not a redescription or redefinition of death. I was death's reversal" (N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 82-83). Resurrection implies embodied life *after*, life after death. The resurrection of the righteous, that is, the first resurrection, occurs prior to Christ's thousand-year rule (Rev 20:4) and unfolds sequentially—Christ is raised first and then when he comes, those who belong to him are raised (1Co 15:23). The unrighteous dead are raised following the millennium (Rev 20:7-15).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

I really admire how kids seem open to friendships with all kinds of different people. I have been convicted lately that I have a friend bubble. I gravitate to people like me. I have friends who act, think, believe, talk, and behave like me. This week's lesson has been a gentle nudge to pay attention and be a friend to those outside of my bubble. The hard truth is I'm an introvert who prefers the safety of what is comfortable. It is difficult for me to get out there and strike up a conversation with people I don't know well. Every day I pick my son up from school at the park. He stays busy trading PokÈmon cards, playing football, or swinging on the monkey bars with a random collection of kids. I watch a dozen adults interacting, smiling, enjoying each other's company, but I stay in the car. God is calling me out of my car, to be a friend that spreads His light. What if someone needs a word of encouragement? What if someone needs a friend? What if someone has never heard about Jesus and His saving grace? What am I doing in my car? Honestly, this makes me very nervous, but I am fully prepared to act in obedience. Are you in a friend bubble? I am praying for you to "get out of your car" this week, to encourage someone who might need a friend and be the light to someone's darkness.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Lk 14:12-14.

1. What is a parable?
2. Who are we not to invite when having a banquet or feast? Why?
3. Who are we supposed to invite instead? Why?

What Do You Think

Why do you think Jesus told this story?

What R U Going To Do

Invite someone that you normally don't spend time with to come to your house this week.

Core Comp

Stewardship – I believe that I belong to God and all my stuff belongs to God.

Memory Verse

Colossians 3:12 – *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.*

KIDPIX COUPON

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30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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