

I. Introduction

Good morning! We haven't had a Reverend Fun cartoon in a while, let's begin with this one today. Jesus is about to wash this man's feet, but the man suddenly pulls his feet back. Then he says, "No I'm not being humble like Simon Peter... I'm just really ticklish."



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Today we are going to talk a little about humility. We are also going to talk about some things that look like humility, but are really something else. What is the true way of humility? Let's look at **Luke 14:1-14** and see a few things that Jesus taught about humility.

II. Scripture Luke 14:1-14 (NIV)

[1] One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. [2] There in front of him was a man suffering from dropsy. [3] Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" [4] But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him away. [5] Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" [6] And they had nothing to say.

[7] When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: [8] "When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. [9] If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. [10] But 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 your fellow guests. [11] For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

[12] Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or 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."

III. Teaching

In this passage, Jesus is invited to eat at the home of one of the Pharisees and while He is there, Jesus uses the opportunity to teach several lessons about humility. Of course, there are other things in this passage as well, but today we are going to focus on learning about humility.

The first thing that happens is that Jesus sees that there is a man there who has dropsy. Dropsy is a condition where fluid accumulates in the body and you swell up; dropsy is also called edema. I imagine that Jesus looked at the sick man for a minute and then looked at the Pharisees. Then, **Luke 14:3**, tells us, "Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" It was a simple question, and these guys were supposed to be experts in the law, but none of them answered Jesus. So Jesus heals the man and sends him away.



Jesus turns to them again in **Luke 14:5**. "Then he asked them, "If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull him out?" None of them answered this question either, but the question exposes the hearts of these men. If a person, or even an animal, in their own household was in trouble, they would immediately rush to help, even on the Sabbath day. But the man with dropsy was a stranger. He wasn't part of the household or even a guest; we know this because Jesus sent him away as soon as he was healed. The man with dropsy was a stranger who wanted help. But the Pharisees and experts in the law did not offer any help. You see, they loved their sons and they even loved their own oxen. But they did not love the stranger.

This is a form of pride, because it shows that they considered their own household and possessions better or more important than others. But what did Jesus say in **Luke 10:27**? Jesus said, **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and, Love your neighbor as yourself.”** If we want to walk in the way of humility, then we need to love our neighbors, even strangers, and care for them.

After this, Jesus notices that the guests are picking out the best seats for themselves and so Jesus tells them a parable about a wedding feast. **Luke 14:8**, **“When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.”** I think we can understand this easily.

There is a big wedding feast, or wedding reception, and all the guests are arriving. The best seats, the places of honor, are closest to the bride and groom, or closest to the parents of the happy couple. You arrive, and what do you do? Do you look around and decide that since you are a friend of the groom that you should move to the closest seat? Bad idea. If you do that, you might get told to move when Uncle Ken arrives. It is wiser to consider that other family members and even closer friends of the couple may be coming.



All those other people may be strangers to you, but they may be important people to the happy couple and the parents. The way of humility is to sit in the corner unless you are told to come closer. **Luke 14:11**, **“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”** This is true at an earthly wedding reception and it applies in the Kingdom of God as well. That stranger on the street corner should be treated with respect. They may seem like an unimportant stranger with no special quality that society would care about. But perhaps they are a close friend of the King. **Philippians 2:3** teaches us, **“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”**

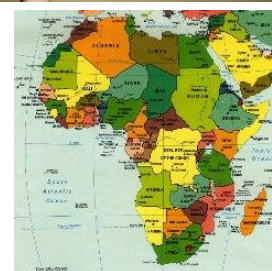
In the last section of today’s passage (**Luke 14:12-14**) we read, **“Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. [13] But when you give 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.””**

Last week we celebrated Easter in remembrance of Jesus’ resurrection, and in these verses we are reminded again that those who follow Jesus will also follow Him in resurrection. At that time, we will receive honor and rewards appropriate to the things we have said and done in this life. Scripture teaches us to look forward to that day and to lay up treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20). But ambition for honor and wealth in this world is not valued in Scripture. And social climbing through false generosity, giving simply to get something in return, is not valued at all in the Kingdom of God.

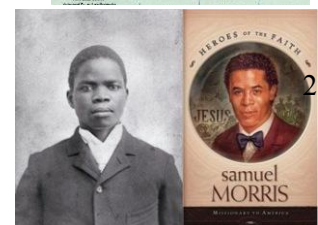
Now, Jesus is not saying that you should never have lunch with family or friends; that is not the meaning here. We need to love our family and friends and spend time with them. But that is easy. Jesus challenges us to go beyond the easy habit of inviting the people we like best and then expecting them to invite you in return. Jesus challenges us to look for and reach out lovingly to the stranger, the outsider, the weak, the powerless - the people that society ignores. And when accept the challenge, we are blessed. The way of humility considers others, even strangers and outsiders, as valuable people who are worthy of inviting into fellowship and into loving relationships.



Let’s take a brief look at the story of a man who is a good example of humility. Prince Kaboo was born in Liberia in 1873. When he was 14, he was kidnapped by an enemy tribe and tortured. But God miraculously rescued him and healed his wounds. He became a Christian and was baptized with the name of Samuel Morris. By the Lord’s leading he decided to go to America and study there. He had no money and knew almost nothing about America, but that did not discourage him. He had been told the name of a Christian in New York and that was all he needed.



Samuel found a ship that was going to New York and sat down and waited.



When the captain came, he said, *“My Father in Heaven told me you would take me to New York. I want to see Stephen Merritt who lives there.”* The captain refused, but Samuel asked again every time the captain went by and finally the captain let him on the ship. By young Samuel’s example, the captain was converted to follow Jesus and the drunken parties on the ship were replaced by Bible studies. In New York, Samuel found Stephen Merritt and, after seeing the teenager’s passion for Jesus, Stephen arranged for Samuel to go to Taylor College in Indiana.

When he arrived, the college president asked Samuel what room he wanted. Samuel said simply, *“If there is a room nobody wants, give it to me.”* The president was amazed by Samuel’s humility. Samuel soon became famous for the extraordinary combination of humility and boldness that he possessed. Samuel could barely read English, he needed special tutors for his studies, but he spoke of his faith at every opportunity.

Many, many people came to faith through Samuel’s witness. But then Samuel became ill and died in 1893 at the young age of twenty. But his witness for Jesus continues to touch the lives of uncounted thousands. If you go to Taylor College, you will find a statue and a fountain in the center of the campus dedicated to the memory of Samuel “Prince Kaboo” Morris. Some people point to Samuel and say that he was the first missionary that God sent from Africa to America. Samuel was a very humble man, but the Lord raised him up as an example to millions.



Some people think that being humble means being shy, withdrawn, and passive. But that is not what the Bible teaches. Moses was one of the greatest leaders in all of history, but **Numbers 12:3** tells us, **“Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.”** Men of great humility are often bold and passionate. But they are not bold for themselves; they are bold for the things of God and for His Kingdom. In the Bible, humble people are not lazy or passive or shy. Humble people are courageous and bold, because they abandon their pride and trust 100% in the Lord and in His power and wisdom. Humble people have no ambition for themselves, but they become servants of God and have great boldness for His Kingdom.

The greatest example of humility is our Lord Jesus Himself. Listen to what **Philippians 2:6-8** tells us about Jesus. **“[6] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, [7] but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. [8] And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!”** God Himself stepped down from the throne to humble Himself and walk in this world as the man Jesus and to give His life as a ransom for ours. That is putting the needs of others first: that is amazing humility. But at the same time, Jesus’ love for us gave Him unlimited boldness and courage.

IV. Conclusion

The way of humility is to be abandon pride, personal ambition, and self-centered living and to commit ourselves completely to serving the Lord and loving others. Instead of ambition for ourselves, we choose to become bold for the things of God. Instead of loving and caring only for ourselves and those closest to us, we choose to love strangers and those who are weak and unable to help themselves. Let’s choose the way of humility and become more and more bold in loving our neighbor and in serving God and His Kingdom.

V. Let’s pray.