

Read: Luke 14:1,7-17

A Seat at the Table

Luke 14:7-11

When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: 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. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. 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 the other guests. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

One day Jesus was invited to join a group of Pharisees for dinner. He watched them choose the best seats at the table for themselves. So he told them a story about a wedding feast. When Jesus told stories, he did it to teach a spiritual truth or lesson. At first glance it might appear he was just teaching them proper manners for a meal, but his true purpose was much deeper.

Jesus was able to look into the heart of these Pharisees, and he could tell they were spiritually sick. They felt they deserved a place of honor at dinner and even eternal life in heaven because they were so great and did lots of good works. Jesus confronted their sin of pride because he knew if they continued in this way of thinking, they would miss their invitation into heaven.

Jesus' story is a good reminder for us, who often struggle with the sin of putting ourselves first. Instead, Jesus encourages us to be humble as we live together with people each day. To not seek to always be number one, but to look for ways we can serve and lift others up.

More importantly Jesus guides us to understand that he is the one who chooses the seats in heaven. Martin Luther beautifully reminds us how we received that invitation into heaven. Listen: *He [Jesus] has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. What a remarkable truth—a truth that leaves no place for pride and only room for humility.*

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name three people you see each day.
- Think of a way you can show each of them love and kindness.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- More than just bad manners, what was the problem the Pharisees had that Jesus needed to point out?
- *True or False:* You deserve a seat in heaven.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What does Jesus mean when he says those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted?
- Reread Martin Luther's words in our devotion. Explain what they mean in your own words.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Savior, we marvel at the humility you showed by leaving your place in heaven to come to earth to save us from our sins. Help us to model your humility as we interact with others each day and to put our trust solely in you. Amen.