

SERMON FOR AUGUST 28, 2022

TEXT: LUKE 14: 11

THEME: THE HUMBLE ARE EXALTED

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

In the name of Jesus:

It was some time ago when I was in line behind a family at a restaurant that offered an all you can eat buffet. The father was with his children and the dad told his kids in no uncertain terms to get behind him in the buffet line, saying to his kids: “After me, you come first.”

Can you imagine that? A parent saying to a child, “After me you come first?” Think about it, though, that saying can be the motto of how many people live their lives today. They, the individual, comes first. After their needs and wants are met, then they might think about anybody else.

It certainly flies in the face of what Jesus said in our text for today: “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

When Jesus said these words He was at the dinner guest at the home of a member of the Pharisees. But this is not just any member of the Pharisees, this is the home of the rule of the Pharisees. The ruler of the Pharisees has invited all of the important people to have a place at the table for dinner. The hoi polloi as it were, the movers and shakers, those people who people look up to and want to be like. There were the teachers of the Law, the ones who would know the Bible and what it means to please God. The church officials, the government leaders, the movers and shakers in the community. If you were a name in the community, you would be there and have a seat and place at the table. Someone would look at the guest list and say with conviction, “these are the ones who are important, these are the ones in whom and through whom God would get the glory and honor. ‘

But something happens that upsets the apple cart and causes such a stir and commotion among the guests. Someone uninvited shows up, a man with dropsy, one whose body is so filled up with fluid that it is difficult for this man to move, and when he does he is in constant pain.

At first, the man goes unnoticed, but after a while, no one can help but notice him. “How did he get in here,” they asked. “Who invited him?”

The Law said that no one should work on the Sabbath, and certainly the dinner guests were people who kept the Law. But Jesus, seeing this man as he was, had mercy on him and healed him, making him whole once again.

A discussion ensued. Jesus is breaking the Law! But wait, Jesus isn't breaking the Law or the Sabbath, He is actually keeping the Sabbath by showing mercy on one who needed mercy, healing the man and giving him the help he so desperately needed.

The dinner guests came seeking to be served by the host of the dinner. They came to the dinner, looking at the guest list, seeing their place on the list, what table they were to be seated at, and sought the places of honor where they could not only be seen but also be served first. Jesus used this situation to teach them, and us, about what it is like in the Kingdom of God.

A great exchange takes place in the Kingdom of God. The exalted are lowered and humbled, while the lowly and despised are elevated and

exalted, given places of honor and prestige that they neither earned nor deserved. This is exactly who Jesus is and what He has done for you.

For as the Apostle Paul writes: “ Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” Jesus lived the life of humility, born of a Virgin, living His life is love for the Father and in service to you and others. He came not to be served but to serve. He came down from heaven to give His life unto death, paying the price to make you a member of His Kingdom. He died a humble death, yet rose again in victory over sin, Satan, and death.

He, Jesus, has made you His own and has made you a member of His Kingdom. In Baptism He has washed away your sins. Look at what you have seen today. Little Daniel Barte, a child, has become a child of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. A baby has nothing to offer to God. A baby just receives in love that love and care that his parents offer to him. He is totally reliant upon his parents. What a wonderful picture of

what God has done for you in Baptism. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords has come to you, has made a place in your heart and life where He lives. He has given to you in your Baptism a saving faith and a new life to live.

So how then are you to live that life? In humility, by God's grace through faith in Jesus you are to live your life in service to others. This is what Paul again writes in Philippians 2: "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. **5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." Live your life in humble service to others, showing others the love God has showered upon you in Jesus.

Dorothy Day was a famous Catholic social worker who lived in the 20th century. A medical student at Harvard volunteered to work at the

agency she headed. The student, Robert Coles, excelled in school and was rather proud of himself, a person of his standing volunteering to help the poor. He had a degree in psychiatry and he volunteered at the agency was something that he thought others would sit up and take notice of.

Coles arrived at the agency and asked to see Dorothy Day. He was going right to the top. The secretary said she was in the kitchen. He went into the kitchen and saw her sitting at a table, talking to a man who looked to be disoriented and disheveled, with his medical training Coles believed that this man was addicted to some type of substance. He obviously looked like a homeless street person. Day was sitting at the table, listening intently to what he had to say, giving him her full attention. She didn't notice Coles coming into the room. He stood by the door and waited for her to finish. When she finished her conversation, she arose and then noticed Coles by the door.

She asked him if he wanted to speak to someone. He was astounded, Day was famous, and the person she was speaking with was a derelict. Coles had never experienced anything like this before. Coles

then understood that humility, true humility, identifies with a person so completely that it cuts through all the things that separates people from one another. It was just two people, the one showing care and concern for the other.

This incident changed Robert Cole's life, he learned more in that moment than anything that he learned in the four years he attended Harvard. He saw in that moment what it means to be humble, he saw in that moment that this is exactly what Jesus did, "who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but humbled Himself and took on the form of a servant.

This is our calling, to serve others as Jesus did, loving others just as He loves us. For He who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

To the glory of God and in Jesus' name.

Amen