**THE LOWEST SEAT**

***Luke 14:7-14***

Sunday School Lesson

*Parables of Jesus Christ*

Week 12 – 1/7/2018

**Introduction:** In the parable of the seat at the wedding, we find Jesus reproving the Pharisees for their prideful behavior while eating bread. When Jesus enters the room, He notices that these men were being very selective with where they sat. The Bible says that they chose out the chief rooms. They wanted only the best for themselves. While our flesh always wants to be the one most recognized or catered to, Jesus admonishes that we ought to humble ourselves and prefer others above our own needs.

1. WE MUST REALIZE THAT WE OUGHT NOT TO VALUE OUR OWN IMPORTANCE. (7-8)
2. **Notice that the guest assumes his invitation meant that he was the honored guest.** The invited guest immediately looks to take the seat in the highest room. This was not done by accident. He did not just happen upon that seat. When he received his invitation, he assumed that the man was inviting him because of his importance. How presumptuous! In reality, he had been invited because the host is gracious and wanted everyone to attend the wedding. (We know this because God is the One typified as the host in this parable.) When we are prideful, we just assume that the purpose or focus of everything revolves around us.
3. **Notice that the guest preferred attention for himself over his host.** When one thinks of a wedding, the focus is typically on the bride and the groom. It is frustrating to be a part of a wedding where the parents, family, or friends seem to take it over and forget about the purpose of the event. The entire evening should be all about the couple that is getting married. There is a reason that Jesus picked a wedding to illustrate this parable. It magnifies the prideful condition of the guest in that he was more concerned about himself than about the wedding.
4. **Notice that the guest did not realize that he was one of many.** As stated in the first point, the wedding was large and filled with many guests. This is further outlined in Jesus’ parable of the invited guests, which is mentioned in verses fifteen through twenty-four. When we ponder the number of people that are living or have lived on this earth, it should really help to keep us humble. David was punished significantly by God when he numbered the people. Why did David do that? The answer is because he began to value his importance. He looked out and just had to know how many people he was king over. At that time, he was mighty proud over the number of people in his kingdom. While that number was significant in its time, it would be dwarfed by today’s population. We must be careful not to forget that there are many people in this world. What makes us more important than the other seven billion people? Having an important job or title does not make one an important person. There is always someone else who can fill that position.
5. **Notice that the guest gave honor unto himself.** The parable points out that there may be someone who attends that is more honorable than that guest. Unfortunately, the guest felt so valued that he honored himself with the best seat at the wedding; however, it was not his responsibility to determine who should receive the most honor. This was the job designated for the host. God is the One who will dictate the honor that should be given to every man. The other guests may have even felt like the guest was worthy of that seat, but the host did not share in that sentiment. We should be careful not to promote or compliment ourselves, and we should be careful even in our promoting of other people. We would not want to cause someone else to fall due to pride.
6. WE MUST REALIZE THAT THE FALL FROM PIDE IS VERY SHAMEFUL. (9)
7. **Notice that he lost his seat in front of everyone.** The implication from the parable is that the event is to begin soon. The host has come in and is designating seating. The guest lost his seat in front of everyone. Imagine how embarrassing this would be! To make matters worse, the individual who would be occupying his former seat was right there. He must have felt very insignificant to see the person who was “more honorable” than he. The parallel here is to the judgment seat of Christ. Those who are unsaved, who spent a lifetime exalting themselves, will be cast into the lake of fire. They will have their elevated seat removed out from underneath them. When you are prideful, your fall is usually witness by others.
8. **Notice that he was so ashamed that he looked for the lowest seat.** The Bible says that the guest began with shame to take the lowest room. He was so embarrassed at his removal from the highest seat that he tries to find the absolute lowest seat instead. There is little doubt that he wanted to maintain a really low profile after that. He was probably hoping that everyone would forget about it if he just slid into the background. He would have been better off if he had taken a seat somewhere in the middle. That is the issue with pride though. It is only satisfied when you are on top. When you fall though, you fall all the way to the bottom. There is no middle ground.
9. WE MUST REALIZE THAT THE WEDDING CEREMONY IS WHEN THE SEAT MATTERS. (10)
10. **Notice that the guest did get to spend some time in the highest seat.** The presumptuous guest did get to spend time in the prominent seat. The parable here shows that a space of time transpires from the guest’s arrival to the host’s arrival into the room. This is the point that Jesus was making to the Pharisees. Essentially, He was telling them that they should enjoy their chief seats now because there is a day that is coming when they will not occupy those prominent places. We should be careful not to get envious of those who are lifted up in position now. The truth is that this part of the wedding does not matter. Our time in this world is not the main event.
11. **Notice that the Lord advises to take the lowest seat, not one in the middle.** The point of this parable is not to say that the guest has to just be the lowest of everybody. On the contrary, the point is that there really is no significance to the seat that one is holding before it starts. There is no reason to spend any time picking out a seat, as the host will be assigning the appropriate seat to each guest. If you ever had a teacher in school that liked to assign seats in class, you should be able to relate with this. It was always entertaining to watch students fighting over a particular seat only to have the teacher give out the seat assignments when she entered the room.
12. **Notice that the host was more friendly toward the guest that waited in the lower room.** The host was giving of his personal space and time. He appreciated the guest that did not further impose on that. Imagine if you had a family staying the night at your home, and they came right into your house and setup in your master bedroom. Your response to them may not be the friendliest. On the other hand, if you had a guest who was content just to sleep on the couch, you would probably urge them to consider staying in your guest room.
13. **Notice that the host is going to arrive.** As mentioned, the Lord is represented in this parable as the host. We ought to remember that there will come a day where He is going to return. We do not want him to find us positioned in the highest seat. Perhaps, the presumptuous guest had planned on moving seats when the wedding was almost ready to begin. Since we do not know the day or the hour, we would be wise to stay continually prepared and properly positioned for His return.
14. WE MUST REALIZE THAT THE PRINCIPLE OF THIS PARABLE IS A PROMISE. (11)
15. **Notice that the Lord ends the parable by reiterating the principle.** Knowing how the Pharisees constantly looked to mince Jesus’ words, He did not leave any doubt on what the parable meant. In verse 11, He says that whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased. This statement does not leave any room for interpretation or doubt. In the parable itself, the Pharisees may have scoffed at the potential of someone coming in more honorable than themselves. Jesus clarifies that this is the outcome every time when it comes to pride.
16. **Notice that this reaffirms our hope in the Lord.** While Jesus is focused on addressing the issues with the Pharisees, He also is providing us with a promise of hope here. He wants His followers to know that there is no reason to fret the events in this world. We are to focus on fulfilling God’s will in our lives. The seating will be taken care of by the Lord.

**CONCLUSION**: The parable of the lowest seat should serve as a reminder to us to show humility in our lives. The price for pride is significantly higher than what we would want to pay. If we find ourselves getting puffed up, we should reflect on this parable and on Jesus’ words. Even science recognizes that what goes up must ultimately come back down. Let’s wait on the Lord to lift us up instead of spending our time on this earth trying to find the highest seat at the table.