

BIBLE DISCOVERY

Get more out of the message



LUKE: Cost of Discipleship

Luke 14:1-11

We're diving back into the Gospel of Luke. After nine chapters introducing us to Jesus and His call, Luke now takes us with Him on the road to Jerusalem (Luke 9-19). Along the way, we'll hear some of Jesus' most famous teachings and stories, as He shows us what it truly costs to follow Him and why following Him is worth everything.

The Big Idea

(What is the author's point?)

In Luke 14:1–11 at its heart, this passage confronts pride. It exposes our instinct to secure recognition and control our standing, and it calls us instead to trust God to assign honor. The Kingdom of God is “upside down”: the last became first, mercy triumphs over status and true righteousness is measured not by appearance or position, but by a humble heart aligned with God.

Why It Matters

(Why is this relevant to us?)

That division between Jesus and religiosity still stands, along with the question of which way we will choose if we truly want to know God. Like the Pharisees, we can subtly claim honor through professional titles, ministry visibility, academic achievement, social media influence or being known as the smartest or most morally correct person in the room. **Jesus invites us into a different way, choosing humility because God Himself brings honor in His time.** We are freed from self-promotion and can wait, trusting that true recognition comes from Him. This reshapes everyday life: slowing down for a struggling coworker instead of guarding our schedule, welcoming those who feel out of place, releasing comparison and choosing compassion even when it costs us status. **Jesus' healing shows that God's Kingdom centers on restoration and mercy, which is good news for sinners and the overlooked, not an exclusive social club for the religiously impressive.** It calls us to rethink what we assume about the Kingdom of God and to embody its generous, upside-down grace.

Good to Know

(What are some helpful insights into this passage?)

Luke 12 & 13 set the backdrop for chapter 14 by exposing false security and religious hypocrisy while calling people to humility and repentance. These themes prepare us to see Jesus confront distorted values at the meal, where kingdom priorities overturn human status and honor.

“They were watching him carefully” (v. 1).

This is the third time Jesus is an invited guest to a Pharisee's meal. Each time He unsettles His hosts by exposing their hearts and offering a different vision of God's Kingdom. Their close watching reveals suspicion, not openness.

“And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy” (v. 2).

The man Jesus heals has dropsy, a condition characterized by abnormal swelling caused by fluid buildup. While not always life-threatening, it could be physically uncomfortable, noticeable and socially embarrassing, especially in a culture that often associated visible illness with shame. By healing him, Jesus demonstrates the compassion of the kingdom over the rigid rule-keeping of the Pharisees.

“But they remained silent” (vv. 4, 6).

The Pharisees remain silent because Jesus' questions expose the weakness of their position. Their silence also reflects their posture of watching and judging rather than engaging honestly. They cannot refute Jesus' compassion, yet they are unwilling to humble themselves or change.

“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor” (v. 8).

Public meals were highly visible social events where honor and shame were reinforced in front of the community. Hosts controlled seating, meaning status was ultimately assigned, not self-determined. To be asked to move down would result in public shame, while being invited higher brought public affirmation.

“Friend, move up higher” (v. 10).

Jesus uses a familiar social scenario to expose the quiet competition for recognition happening in the room. His teaching echoes broader biblical themes that God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. The language of being “moved up higher” anticipates the greater reality that ultimate honor comes from God, not from human systems.

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (v. 11).

In Jesus' upside-down Kingdom, lowering yourself is the only way to move up!



THIS WEEK'S
Bible Discovery Author
Jen Wojtysiak

Group Guide

Following the series with your group?

- Start with some [icebreaker questions](#).
- Read the passage together before you dive in.
- Share any insights from the message. Use the questions below to get your conversation started.

Conversation Starters

1. Compare and contrast: How do the Pharisees define the Kingdom of God? How does Jesus?

2. Why do you think Jesus was invited to this meal? What does that reveal about the Pharisees and lawyers?

3. While we may not have places of honor in seating arrangements in today's culture, Jesus reveals our human nature and desire for recognition. In what ways are we tempted to "take the higher seat" when Jesus calls us to be humble?

4. How can we be humble? How might our lives look different if we were humble like Christ?

Prayer

Lord, thank you for being a compassionate King that saves us from our pride. Help us to follow your example, suffering for the sake of others and caring for the least of these. Help us to trust you for our ultimate honor. Amen.