**Week of May 3, 2019**

**Luke 14:7-14**

7 And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, 8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; 9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. 10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. 11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. 12 Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. 13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: 14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot\* recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

**Understanding the Scriptures**

Today’s lesson is coming from the book of Luke and Jesus is discussing signs of character. On this occasion, Jesus is invited to the home of a Pharisee who was also of the leaders of the Pharisees. It was the Sabbath. The Pharisees invited a sick man, perhaps hoping to tempt Jesus to heal Him on the Sabbath which, strangely would have violated their religious laws and given reason to have Jesus arrested. When it was time to be seated, Jesus noted how the guest hurried to get the seats closer to the host, since those seats signified one’s prominence and status in society. Social status was conveyed by seating in first-century Palestine and Greco-Roman society. Jesus rebuked this action and instead, advised guest to have a humble attitude and take a seat that is of a lower status instead of presuming they deserve a seat of honor. Jesus taught the guests that if someone was to arrive that was of a higher social status than they were, it would be quiet embarrassing to have to be asked to move to a lower seat. Thus, to avoid the embarrassment, start off in the lower seat and then wait to be asked to move to a higher seat. It was Jesus’ intention to teach that when people desire to gain honor for themselves, they are often humiliated and put in a position where they have to accept that are not as important as they think they are. After Jesus confronted the guests’ hypocrisy, Jesus addressed the host and turned the tables on him. Jesus encouraged the host to adopt the character of hospitality by extending an invitation to the poor, those who could not repay him in the same manner as his prominent guests. In the Greco-Roman world, inviting someone of inferior status was acceptable, but inviting a crippled or poor person was not. Jesus’ point is that Christians should live their lives seeking ways to serve those who may not be in a position to meet their own daily needs. This is the same gracious attitude God demonstrated toward us when He sent Jesus to save an undeserving world of sinners from their sin.

Reprint from the Sunday School Publishing Board