

Home Group Notes - More Than a Meal - **Week of March 18, 2018**

SHARE IT

What indicates that social standing is now huge in America? When did it become something you thought about?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *This should be a slow pitch down the middle. Social media is filled with examples of people looking for glory or throwing stones.*

STUDY THE SCRIPTURE

Jesus tells a story in Luke 14:1-15 with two fulfillments: present and future.

The backdrop of this story is Jesus' promise to host a feast in the kingdom of God. 13:29)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Leaders, you may want to read Luke 13:23-35. There, the lead question is about who will be saved or enter the kingdom. This backdrop about who will enter the kingdom leads into Jesus doing three things: (1) challenging the authority and false teaching of the Pharisees by healing on the Sabbath, and (2) teaching on the need for every person to humble themselves and accept God's invitation, and (3) Jesus teaching on God's broad invitation to every person, even those who socially are outcasts.*

Read 14:1-6. What is the setting? Who, When, What? (1)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Jesus is having a meal with Pharisees, a sick person is invited (possibly a plant by the Pharisees knowing that Jesus would heal), and the disciples. The agenda of the Pharisees is to "carefully watch" Jesus to catch Him in an error of following their rules and authority.*

The Pharisees were "watching" because they considered themselves the authority on what is "lawful." How does Jesus' miracle and explanation challenge their self-assigned position of importance?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *The Old Testament Law allows a person to rescue a son or even an animal on the Sabbath. Jesus taught and demonstrated His authority and His obedience to God's intended message in the Law. He did and taught something that revealed that He is God or at least someone with God's power and authority.*

Read 14:7-12

What triggered Jesus' parable? What is at the root of the "guests" choices? (7)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Guests were taking positions to elevate themselves in social standing. This triggered Jesus' teaching on who will be elevated by God. This teaching answers the questions of 'Who is valued' by God?' The answer is, all people who humble themselves and accept God's invitation.*

What did Jesus say to do? (8,10) What would this require of them?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Jesus said to take a humble position and allow God to declare their value or standing.*

What is the promise / principle that Jesus applied? (11)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Jesus said, "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." In short, Jesus was telling people to humble themselves, let God be God, and avoid pride which results in humiliation. This projects beyond social status. This is also talking about who gets into the supper with Jesus in the Kingdom. The prideful do not make it into the kingdom.*

How did Jesus apply this to who is invited? (12-13)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Do not only invite people who can repay or increase your social standing. That is again, a form of pride and self-exaltation.*

What is the reward for this humble choice? (14-15)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Jesus said, "Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." The result of humbling yourself before God is a place at the table with Jesus in the kingdom.*

Who is the host to the kingdom meal? Who is invited? (15)

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Jesus is the host. He invites all people and those who humbly accept His invitation will have a place at the table.*

DISCUSS TOGETHER

Why is social standing so important to us? What is at the root of concern?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *We wrongly think that we bring glory or value to ourselves by having others value us. This is not true.*

How does aiming for social standing affect our decisions?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *We end up making decisions to please or impress others rather than pleasing God. We think that this will somehow fulfill us or make us feel better about ourselves. It is a hollow promise that doesn't work long range.*

How do Jesus' words in 13-14 reflect God's invitation to His kingdom?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *Jesus said He came to seek and save the lost. We are all spiritually "poor" or "blind" and need Jesus healing. God invites all to come. However, if we are prideful, we won't accept God's judgment that we are blinded sinners, broken and in need of redemption. Therefore, only the humble will accept God's kind and inclusive invitation.*

How might Jesus' story about including people change us?

NOTES TO LEADERS: *We are called to imitate God by inviting in all, regardless of social standing. We demonstrate our own understanding of our grateful and humble faith when we invite in people from all places of social standing.*

May our Lord empower you to shepherd with his grace and truth, Steve