

Title: DINNER CONVERSATIONS, LUKE 14:7-24  
(Chatham, NJ; 08/28/16, AM) [Pc – Topical]

Theme: Jesus' dinner conversation exhorts us to make good choices to be humble, to entertain the poor, and to make sure we accept God's invitation to the Kingdom banquet.

Purpose: To exhort us to be humble, feed the poor, and not neglect our spiritual lives.

Introduction:

1. Jesus engages in dinner conversation.
2. He is at the table of a "ruler of the Pharisees," 1.
3. Whereas in last week's scripture the reason he gives for the healing was for providing the needs of animals, here it is for rescuing an animal or son in danger.
4. His hosts kept silent, 6.
5. He is more than just another guest. Jesus rebukes and teaches his hosts.
6. These are more than a list of good table manners.

I. Choose the Lower Seats: Humility, 7-11

A. The Seating Arrangement

1. Jesus addresses the guests who sought the most important seats, 7
2. Choose the seats of lesser importance
3. Maybe you'll be moved up
4. This is all about status; to be held in high esteem by peers
5. We presume to be somebody important
6. Proverbs 25:6-7, in the king's presence: better to be brought forward

B. The broader lesson beyond seating choices

1. Choose humility: a candid recognition of the limitations appropriate to the human being as a creature of the creator; He's God, you're not (I'm not)
2. Seeking to be exalted is inappropriate in the Kingdom of God
3. God opposes the proud
4. He who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted, 11
5. Humility in relationship to others is essential to an authentic relationship with God

II. Choose Guests of Lower Social Status: Associate with the Lowly

A. Hospitality with a higher purpose

1. Jesus specifically addresses his host
2. "In the cultural circles of the elite and would-be elite in the Hellenistic world, to invite the poor and outcasts would be perceived as a reckless waste of social capital." (*Luke*, Garland, 578)
3. The Pharisees had their own set of purity standards that created social distinctions.
4. One of the shows Janet and I like to watch portrayed a man of means who married his servant girl: his peers looked down their noses on both of them
5. Jesus rejects such stratification of society; James 2:9, partiality is a sin
6. Doing what he suggests could alienate many friends
7. Yet Paul tells the church: "Associate with the lowly," Romans 12:16

B. Choose a different reward

1. Jesus has already taught that his disciples should lend without expecting anything in return, 6:32-36
2. This is an extension of that
3. He rejects the system based on balanced reciprocity

4. Hospitality loses its real significance when we only expect to be paid back
5. John Newton of Amazing Grace fame once said, "One would almost think that the passage . . . was not considered a part of God's word; at least I believe there is no passage so generally neglected by his own people." (*Luke*, Jeffrey, 186)
6. The payback is from God, not society
7. Can we not do this as a church? As individuals?

### III. Choose to Attend the Banquet

#### A. Invitation spurned

1. In response to a comment from one of the guests, Jesus tells a parable in which the invitees make excuses for not attending
2. The guest may be assuming he has an assured place at the banquet table
3. The parable is a warning
4. Worldly concerns often triumph over spiritual needs
5. In relationship to the eternal kingdom, these excuses sound lame: a field, oxen, a wife
6. They reject the privilege offered to them

#### B. Note who does attend

1. All the people who are not in the inner sanctum of Pharisaic society are the ones who attend
2. These are the same people they are supposed to invite to their dinners
3. None of the original invitees will get to eat
4. It is their own choices that prevent them from sitting at God's table
5. The parable insinuates that those present at this dinner are refusing God's Kingdom
6. We must be careful to make sure we accept God's invitation

#### Conclusion:

1. Kingdom living begins with humility: humble yourself and you will be exalted.
2. Kingdom living also demands that we reject some of the social norms of worldly society: don't just hang around your personal a-listers.
3. Kingdom living finally demands attention to spiritual matters, response to the Gospel, and its daily demands.
4. The Gospel invites everyone to taste the forgiveness of God and to experience the hope of eternal life.
5. Don't keep refusing the invitation.