

## Loving Others to Receive Love Is Self-Love

Luke 14:12-15

When a parent stops sending money to an adult child who is funding an addiction with that money, sometimes the parent will receive cold disdain and resentment in return. When a person speaks truth to a friend, the friend might get angry and cut off communication in retaliation. Sometimes a partner will draw a loving boundary in marriage, and the partner will become outraged. These good actions (e.g. boundaries, truth-telling) are good for the one receiving them. But what about the person doing good?

*Real love is the ability to do good for others without receiving anything in return.* You can say you love your spouse, or you love your church, or you love your friends, or you love your family, or you love your children, but the truth is, doing good to receive good, or *giving love to others to receive love is self-love.* This is why being a Christ-follower is impossible. It requires inner-transformation from a Divine power. "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, I may abound in every good work." (II Cor. 9:8). "The love of Christ controls me" (II Cor. 5:14). Until I rest in Christ's love for me, I'll not experience His power to love others as He loves me. Read Luke 14:12-15.

The leader of the Pharisees was deemed a good man by the people. And indeed, as we have seen, he opened his home to Jesus. He was a *spiritual, influential, and hospitable* man. Yet, we learn something about ourselves when we examine what Jesus said to this man about the good he was doing for Jesus.

### I. Jesus came to *seek, serve, and save poor, needy sinners who can never repay Him.*

The miracle of healing the man with dropsy is a picture of how Jesus Christ spiritually heals each of us. We could do nothing for ourselves. We could not help ourselves. And no one else could help us, even if they were so inclined. When the Lord first begins his work of grace in me, it is not because I wanted Him. So too, the man with dropsy (14:1-6) apparently expected nothing from the Lord Jesus. There is no indication that he even looked at him. But the Master took up the rich Pharisee's invitation to dinner because that poor man with the dropsy was there for whom the time of mercy had come. "*By God's grace I am saved through my faith in Christ; my deliverance is not of myself*" (Eph. 2:8-9).

### II. Jesus calls us to give and love others just as He's given to us and loved us.

This was the problem of the religious Pharisee. He assumed he was a loving and giving man. But, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, *otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment*" (12).

#### A. It's human nature to do what the Pharisee did.

Jesus says the only reward for doing what you do to receive in return is that which you receive. Let's not pretend. It's not love. It's not Kingdom work. It's not Christianity. It's self-love.

#### B. The reward for loving those *without means to repay* is at the resurrection.

How will you be repaid at the resurrection? What will be given there? I see two possible things;

1. Relationships. The power of one is what I call love without expectations. It's magnetic.
2. Tears removed. Those who don't understand here what you've done here, will know there.

### III. Jesus cares that we focus on His Kingdom first for the great blessings that are coming.

One who heard Jesus said, "*Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the Kingdom of God*" (v. 15).

Jesus told us to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness' and everything else will come to us.

The question I must ask this morning: *Do I love and do good things for others for their sake or mine?*