

[Everyone that Exalteth Himself] / Gospel of Luke 14:7 – 15:3

~ In our last report from our Spiritual Safari, I would have declined our dinner invitation to the Pharisees house, but we were moved along by the Spirit of God. I wanted to skip it, but the Lord directs this safari, friends; and I don't resist Him. Well, this social affair is going to get, well, ugly now. I like to sit down with friends and eat, but we are traveling along with Jesus and the disciples - and they don't have many friends, to tell the truth. There are, actually, a whole bunch of people who want to kill Jesus; and most of them are at this dinner party! They would kill the apostles with Him if they could. Honestly, we're in quite a tense situation in this account and it's awkward simply being present at this point; in a way that we do not understand. This is a situation we should avoid at all cost. Jesus walks right in at the invitation.

They placed a very sick man in the path of Jesus - right at dinner time - on the Sabbath – and guess what happened? The man was healed is what happened. Even so, this was done in very poor taste by the Pharisees. They didn't care about the sick man. They were merely attempting to trap Jesus so they could kill Him. The Pharisee's were lost religious people and, lost or saved – you WILL glorify God, my beloved! The Pharisee always wants to argue about the Sabbath; but if they have their own oxen in a ditch, they're going to do what they have to do to get the oxen out. It's only a transgression for YOU to get YOUR oxen out of the ditch on the Sabbath. We went over all of that in our last report. The religious rulers had so many different exceptions, caveats and amendments to the Mosaic Law they had made up on their own, that it could be twisted by interpretation to mean literally anything.

So, we left off in our last report with the Pharisee's making a beeline to the best seats at the dinner table when the bell was rung. They all wanted to be seen at this affair. This table would have had four sides with three seats on each side. This is a typical Pharisical customary dining arrangement. As you go around the table the most honored seat starts at the right hand of the host and proceeds from the left after that from a middle position and on around and descending in order. I can just see some poor old man Pharisee bumping around breathlessly and bungling himself into the

eleventh seat of honor in some musical chair's type fiasco. It's a shameful thing as we see these people making a run for the best place; and they're still doing it today....

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7 And he spake a parable unto those that were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him,

9 and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee.

11 For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

12 And he said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not [wherewith] to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

~ If you bumped your way into the most honored seat at this table and the religious ruler gave you the thumb; it would only take one seat movement to go from first to last. No one ever has a problem getting last place at the table because no one else is vying for it. What this really all amounts to is good table manners. Most people today socialize with the same crowd continually. We typically hang around the same people over and over again. Have you ever really thought about doing something for those who have nothing? They can't pay you back, and they can't really do much otherwise for you. How many people do you invite to share a dinner of the Bread of Life with you? Well, after Jesus healed the man and before dinner was served, Jesus looks the Pharisee in the eye and condemns him. Jesus corrected their manners, and He insulted the host; the mood is now soured beyond repair....

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

~ When you start talking about the Bread in the Kingdom of God, my safari friends, you better know exactly Who you are talking about. This is nothing in the world except a pious platitude turned cliché. It's one of those things we hear in conservative circles. The bread phrase and the phrase 'praise the Lord' are particularly abused. Don't get me wrong; it's wonderful to praise the Lord and partake in communion – if – we're observing the same doctrine. It's also important to make sure those people saying 'praise the Lord' are actually, in fact, praising the Lord by the life they're living. It would seem easier to me to steer clear of pious religious clichés and stick to a proper, correct and complete Bible teaching. Religion has been used up. Strung out in verses, the Bible is shopworn, outworn and many chronic verse grabs should just be abandoned. The Lord Jesus turns on this Pharisee; and, if this were a Hollywood movie, Jesus eyes would have flames up red and orange....

16 But Jesus said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many:

17 and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for [all] things are now ready.

~ The invitation for salvation has gone out. Whosoever will may come! That is an honest invitation that you must accept or reject. What will men do with it is God's question. The feast at the table of God as our King is a by invitation-only affair; one that must be responded to. You aren't going to buy your way in. If anyone enters, they will do so by grace; because by grace are we saved by faith, and even that is not something in and of ourselves. These are Spirit revealed matters for your personal conversation with the Lord. You're coming to the dinner feast of God as a gift that you have received and accepted, or you are not coming. God said, "come now for all things are now ready!" The only exclusion from the invitation is that you do not present yourself to Him....

18 And they all with one [consent] began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it; I pray thee have me excused.

~ Jesus reveals the Pharisaical alibi - which is a lie within the thin skin of an excuse. This is not reason. None of the Pharisees said they wouldn't come. The Pharisees said they would come to the Messiah – their only objection is that they reject the Lord Jesus Christ as that Messiah! I believe they were shocked to discover how deeply Jesus knew their motives. The hypocritical religious man will always make an excuse to cover up their contradictory something else when it doesn't fit. The first man with the field he says he bought is either a liar or a fool – I cannot determine which. Can you imagine buying property before you even saw it? This is an insult to say this to Christ, friends. The man attempting to get rich in this manner cannot be getting closer to God. The rich never seem to endure an entire safari report, either. I bet you cannot find a single wealthy church that has a Gospel ministry. The world has completely turned their back on God. That is the reasonable overall conclusion of the Spiritual Safari and we will adopt that axiom of truth as such henceforth....

19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.

~ The first man allowed possessions to keep him from Christ and this second man allows business and commerce to keep him away from a proper relationship with God; but he is also either a liar or a fool. Never look a gift horse in the mouth is an ancient aphorism - and another is: caveat emptor; let the buyer beware! Plowing isn't even done at night! This is all a lying excuse. I hear a lot about how I am supposed to earn a living and "do what's right" – and everybody must work, yes – but – one day you will die, and business will continue without you. Does that even matter to you? It matters to me. Very much....

20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

~ In Israel there was a law whereby a man was excused from going to war if he had recently married. My question is: why wasn't the wife invited to the dinner? Does she not eat - or is she doing some strange deviating diet? Natural affection is what the Lord Jesus Christ is pointing out here. The Pharisee's didn't have any.

And with that, we have seen the three main things that keep people from God. If you care to add any, let me know. 1. Possessions. 2. Business / commerce. 3. Suppressed natural affection. I wonder how many children are kept away from God by a father and mother that are not interested in the things of God? I know – most people only have one day each week to spend with the family and do family things. That keeps many away from knowing Christ!

Now, I am going to make a statement so strong here you may want to hang on to your chair. There is no legitimate excuse for not studying the Bible properly, correctly and completely. The problem is: these people do not want to come to Christ. There is sin in their lives that they refuse to give up. Sin will keep you from the Bible; or the Bible will keep you from sin. It is one of those ways in your life....

21 And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame.

22 And the servant said, Lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room.

23 And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain [them] to come in, that my house may be filled.

24 For I say unto you, that none of those men that were bidden shall taste of my supper.

~ Your invitation has been sent - written in Blood, friends. If you reject that invitation, then your sins are upon YOU! If you do not recognize the severity of verse twenty-four, then there is a real problem with your spiritual discernment. And, with that, we see the multitudes pressing in on Jesus and the disciples again. As the crowd gathers, Jesus says all terms that define human emotion or affection are comparative and must put God the Father first! This is all very hard – very, difficult, indeed. A believer is to be so extremely devoted to Christ that everything else certainly will be perceived as hate. Safari sojourners – we’re so deep in the jungle that without God, there is no way out of here....

25 Now there went with him great multitudes: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have [wherewith] to complete it?

29 Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him,

30 saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and asketh conditions of peace.

33 So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

~ I believe God wants to end this leg of our safari by seriously considering your decision for Christ and thinking it over very carefully, friends. It's time for an honest and real spiritual evaluation of your life. You can be saved simply by believing; but you will never follow Him completely, and you will never serve Him properly until you are willing to present yourself a correct living sacrifice to God. The Holy Spirit is speaking directly to your heart. There is a huge difference between being a disciple and being a believer in the multitude. The two are not the same...

34 Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill: [men] cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

XV

1 Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto him to hear him.

2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

3 And he spake unto them this parable, saying,

~ We break off in this section of Scripture with three verses to consider from chapter fifteen. It is amazing how many sinners came to hear Jesus speak. If we could get past the church member do-gooders and their gifts that have completely blocked out the unsaved from being saved because they never spread the Gospel as they should, then this world would be a whole lot better world, I am sure. This is one of the reasons I took the rolling stone attitude and “to the streets” is because I want to come into your home with the Spiritual Safari. In our next report, we will examine a unique triptych parable of a lost coin, a lost sheep and a lost son ~

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