

Service for Week 25th – 31st August

2025 By Chaplain Andy

Our Opening Prayer.

Lord, we are told that the strongest survive- that it's a question of never mind the rest as long as we are alright. Yet you call us to another way- the way of humility, sacrifice and self-denial.

Give us the courage to live by your way, to bring closer the kingdom of God to our lives.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass
against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory
for ever and ever.

Amen

Bible Reading Luke 14,1,7-14

One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable:

"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of

honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.

If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this man your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.

Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

Holy words, Holy wisdom,

Thanks be to God.

Reflection

At formal dinners such as weddings in Jesus' time the guests would recline on couches and you were placed according to your status. Just as today the main speakers at a dinner or the principal relatives of a bride and groom would be seated at the "top table".

When Jesus went to eat with the pharisee the "top table" was the couch



at one end with other couches extending from it and facing each other like the arms of a "U." Those nearest the head couch position on which the host sat were considered to be the most important places. Jesus being a local rabbi would have perhaps been seated himself in a prominent position in the room.

But in giving his message and perhaps not to embarrass his host in any way Jesus uses the example of a wedding banquet. We know that wedding banquets were quite a feature of society in those days because they are mentioned several times in the gospels and Jesus talks, as he often did, about something that was very familiar to those present in order to give his message about humility.

There are those people who perhaps because of their own insecurity are always pushing themselves forward. They take every opportunity to get preferential treatment to jump the queue or to get the best seats at an event. They promote themselves in every way they can even when it means being rude or disrespectful to others. Those people existed in Jesus' time just as they do today.

Jesus' message was to say that if we are followers of Christ then we should act in a totally different way. That doesn't mean we shouldn't have ambition or that we should not try to

be the best at what we do. It also doesn't mean putting ourselves down or thinking we are inferior to anyone else. It means we should have respect for others, for those given authority and those like the banquet host that have invited us to be with them. There is a famous quotation which is 'Be nice to people on your way up because you will meet them on your way down'.

It is often the case when someone pushes themselves forward without having respect for others that eventually they come crashing down to earth. They lose their money, their job or their status. Just as in the example that Jesus gave of when a more important guest arrives, the person who pushing themselves forward is asked to go to the end of the table.

Finally, Jesus says those who are generous to and are mindful of others who are poor, are ill or disabled, will be blessed. It is another example of how we should live as Jesus Christ taught us. As Jesus said "the first shall be last and the last first"

Amen

Closing Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, forgive me that so often I love only myself, my every thought for my own welfare. Teach me what it means to belong not just to the community of faith but also to the family of humankind.

Amen.

Prayers inspired by 'Prayerfully Yours' by Nick Fawcett.