

# Exalted by Him

by Anton Bosch

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*This sermon from Luke chapter 14 focuses on Jesus' interactions with the Pharisees, highlighting the importance of humility, genuine kindness, and selfless giving. Jesus challenges the Pharisees' motives and actions, emphasizing the need to prioritize serving others without seeking recognition or repayment. The sermon delves into the deeper spiritual lessons behind Jesus' teachings, urging listeners to examine their hearts and motives in their actions and relationships.*

**Scripture:** Luke 14:1, Luke 14:7, Luke 14:12, Philippians 2:5, James 4:6, Matthew 6:1, 1 Peter 5:6

**Topics:** "Humility", "Selfless Service"

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## Description

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## Transcript

So we're in Luke chapter 14. Luke chapter 14 and I'm going to read verses 1 through 14. So Luke chapter 14, 1 through 14.

Luke chapter 14 verse 1. Now it happened as he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath that they watched him closely. And behold there was a certain man before him who had dropsy. And Jesus answered, answering spoke to the lawyers and the Pharisees saying, is it lawful to eat on the, to heal on the Sabbath? And they kept silent.

And he took him and he healed him and let him go. Then he answered them saying, which of you having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day? And they could not answer him regarding these things. And so he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noted how they chose the best places saying to them, when you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him.

And he who invited you and him come and say to you, give place to this man. And then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you're invited, go and sit down in the lowest place so that when he who invited you comes, he may say to you, friend, go up higher.

Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Then he also said to him who invited him, when you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back and you be repaid.

But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you for you shall be repaid in the resurrection of the just. So a long passage, one event, and then two statements based on parables again. And of course as you look at this it looks pretty easy, it looks pretty straightforward, but I trust that we may be able to learn a few important lessons from this this morning.

The first story is particularly interesting to watch the interaction between Jesus and the Pharisees. And so it says it happened as he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees. So he wasn't just an ordinary Pharisee, he was one of the rulers of the Pharisees.

And obviously he had invited Jesus. Jesus had not invited himself, but he is invited and he goes in. Remember that the Pharisees were looking for an opportunity to trip him up.

They were looking for something that they could pin on him so that they could have him convicted of a crime. And so the inviting him probably is a setup, it's probably a trick. And so, but he goes, but he is more clever than they.

I thank God that the Lord is more clever than the devil. The devil has many tricks and he is more crafty, the scripture says, than all of the beasts of the field. But God is all-wise, God is all-knowing.

And so the devil can never come up with some kind of snare or some kind of trick that God is not able to deliver us out of. And so we thank God that we're on the winning side, that we're on the more powerful side. I don't think anybody wants to be on a, I guess some people like to support the underdog.

Well in this case I don't support the underdog, I support the winner. And the winner is the Lord Jesus. And so he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, and that they watched him closely.

So it's the Sabbath, and we know what happens on the Sabbath. Jesus has now healed three different people, three different occasions on the Sabbath, and this has created all sorts of problems. And so again they invite him on the Sabbath, and you'll see in a moment that they had really set him up, and he comes in and he's going to eat bread.

The sad thing is that eating a meal like we will do later today together is the most intimate form of fellowship that people can have. It's one thing to meet somebody on the street and to have a conversation. It's also a similar kind of thing to speak to somebody here at church, but it's a different thing when we sit down and we actually have a meal together, particularly when we invite someone into our home.

And remember that right in the end in the book of Revelation, Jesus said, I stand at the door and I knock. If anyone hears my voice, I will come into him, he with me, and I will sup with him. I will dine with him and he with me, entering into that close fellowship.

And so this is supposed to be close fellowship, but in fact it isn't. And so it says, and behold, there was a certain man, and I like this word, and behold. Look, as if, wow, what happened here? This is a surprise.

No, it wasn't a surprise. They had brought this man, and I'm going to come back to the dropsy, but I want you to look. So he is close to Jesus.

He took him and healed him, so he's able to touch him at the meal. And so this man is there, and he is not there by chance. In one of the parables later, lessons later on, Jesus will speak about the fact that you need to not invite those people who make you look good or can reciprocate, but you need to invite those who are crippled and maimed and sick and down and out.

The Pharisees were not into this kind of thing. They weren't going to invite a sick man, and this man didn't look good at all. They were not going to invite him out of the goodness of their hearts.

They had a plan, and they had a scheme. Now, when it says that he had dropsy, dropsy in itself, from what I understand—I'm not a medical doctor—is not a disease in itself. It is the consequence of the failure of the organs.

And so what happens is that the whole body blows up with excess water. So the whole body is swollen, and it's evidence that the person is busy dying on the inside. And so the guy didn't look good at all.

He was swollen, his face was swollen, his limbs were all swollen up, and he was literally terminal. And so they were not going to invite a guy who looks like that to their fancy meal without an agenda. And so they invite him in, and Jesus sits there, and he's there, and Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and the Pharisees.

Now, many translations do not have the word answering in it. So many translations will just say, and he spoke to the lawyers. But the Greek is very specific that Jesus is answering a question.

The problem was the question had not been asked verbally. The question had been asked by the presence of the man. Jesus knew what was in their hearts.

We've seen this before. Jesus knew what they were doing. And so his answer to what was in their hearts—not the words that they spoke, but what was in their hearts—he answered the Pharisees.

So what Jesus is now doing is he is pre-empting. This is what the Israelis in their war strategy call a pre-emptive strike. In other words, you hit first before they can hit you.

Now, I'm not encouraging us to do that when you come across someone you don't like. But attack is sometimes the best form of defense. And so if you know you're going to be attacked, well then, you know, maybe you should attack first in warfare.

And so they—Jesus knows what's coming. And so he speaks first. And he speaks with a question which they cannot answer.

And his question is, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath? Now, we know from previous passages that they have said, no, it's not lawful to heal on the Sabbath, because they gave him a hard time, because he had healed people on the Sabbath. But so why does Jesus ask the question? Well, because the question doesn't have an answer. You see, if they said it is lawful to heal on the Sabbath, well then, their friends would say, you're breaking the law.

Now remember, the law doesn't say you cannot heal on the Sabbath, but their tradition said you can't heal on the Sabbath. So they can't say to him it's lawful, because then they would fall foul of their colleagues. If

they said, no, it is not lawful to heal on the Sabbath, then what are they saying? We don't care about people.

We don't care about people who are sick, and particularly this guy who's busy dying. He can die for all we care. So they didn't have an answer.

Jesus obviously knew that. And so verse 4 says, but they kept silent. They kept silent.

Probably one of the first times they didn't have an answer. Remember, these guys were very good at debate, and they could talk, and they could answer questions with questions, and they could go back and forth until the cows come home. But this time Jesus had them, and they couldn't answer.

And so Jesus takes him, and he heals him, and he let him go. And clearly the healing was supernatural, because he dealt with the cause and the symptoms. The symptoms was the blown-up body.

So obviously he had healed the cause, the organ failure, and he had dealt with the symptoms, and it was obvious that he had been healed. Again, we've spoken before about modern healers who say, well, you know, you're healed, but there's no evidence of healing. No, when Jesus healed you, you were healed.

There was no question about it. The man was clearly healed, and he lets him go. And then Jesus answered them.

So again, the same thing. They have questions in their minds, which they're not raising, but he is answering their questions before they're asking them. And he's saying, which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day? And even their tradition allowed for such an event.

The Jewish teaching said that if you had a situation like this, if a person or an animal fell into a pit, you were to rescue them and not to let them die in the pit waiting for the next day. The very fact that you had to make such a rule showed you how insensitive to humanity and how unjust their rules were, that you could even consider not rescuing someone on the Sabbath day. And of course, they would seriously have considered not healing this man.

In fact, they wouldn't have healed him even if they could, because they were more concerned about keeping their rules than about loving those who were in need. And so they could, again, not answer him regarding these things. So let me just look at that again in verse 5. Which of you, having a donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day? Remember, we've spoken recently about the Jewish way of reasoning going from the lesser to the greater.

So if you're going to rescue an animal, therefore you should rescue a person. Animal is less important than a person. And if you're going to rescue the lesser, you should rescue the greater.

This is a form of argument that you find all over the Scripture. And remember that we spoke, was it last week, week before, I don't remember, about the fact that some people in fact do care more about animals than they do about people. Whether it's their own animals or whether it's the cows that got loose the other night, if you remember on the news, people are more concerned about those cows sometimes than they are about people.

I'm not suggesting we're insensitive to animals. We need to be humane in the way that we treat animals. But we can't treat animals better than we treat people.

And so he then tells a parable to those who were invited, when he noted how they chose the best places, saying to them. Now I just love the stuff that's going on here. Let's go back to verse 1. At the end of verse 1 it says, they watched him closely.

I didn't actually emphasize that when we dealt with it. But they laid the snare and they were now watching to see how he was going to respond. But then it says, when he noted how they chose the best places.

So what was he doing? He was watching them. So they're watching him and he's watching them. And you know, remember that when we started the book of Luke, I told you Luke is, one of the reasons I absolutely love Luke is because of his attention to detail.

And how that he gives us these fine little details that the other gospel writers don't. It's no shade on the other gospel writers, they have a different purpose. But Luke is detailed.

And he's painting a picture. And if you don't read the scripture, and you know, here's one of the, maybe one of the most important takeaways this morning. And that is that all of us have hopefully read this passage many times.

And we read it, and oh yeah, so there was a sick guy, Jesus healed him, and then he tells a parable. But we don't look at the detail. And there is detail that is important.

And so Luke paints this picture. And so they're watching him and he's watching them. And he takes note of how they come in to sit at the dinner.

And then he tells them a parable about a wedding. I think it's important for those brethren who aspire to leadership to take note of what goes on in the assembly. Some people have accused me of not knowing what goes on in the church.

I know better than you think. I watch. I take note of where people sit.

I take note of people's expressions. I take note of people's reactions. I take note of who people speak to after the meeting.

Now I'm not saying this in a judgmental or critical way, but the purpose of the shepherd watches his sheep. And we'll see in the next couple of weeks that one of the sheep is missing. One out of the hundred.

One percent. We say, well one percent's nothing. They're hiking our gas prices by more than one percent every day at the moment.

And we just live with it. What is one out of a hundred? It's nothing. But when the shepherd looks over his sheep, he sees there's one out of the hundred that is missing.

And he goes after that one. A shepherd looks after his sheep. A shepherd looks at the sheep.

He sees when they are crippled. When I was a shepherd as a young boy, part of my job, and I would get into serious trouble with my father, if a sheep had picked up some kind of disease and I hadn't noticed it, your job was to take note of when something goes wrong with a sheep. And Jesus is watching.

And he's watching not so much to find fault, but he is watching to see what's going on so that he can minister to that situation, so that he can speak into that particular circumstance. So he told a parable when he saw how they chose the best places. And so the best places in a formal setting are always pretty clearly defined.

If you go to a wedding today, there's one table for the bride couple. And then all the important people sit there, the bride and the groom and his family and her family and so on. And then everybody else sits in a different order.

I remember when I was in the military that you would go to a formal dinner and every one seat was defined based on not just your rank, but based on your seniority within the rank. And so you could not sit one position higher than one position lower. You had to sit exactly where you were designated.

And so they come in and each one is looking for the most important seat. I don't know what the most important seat here would be. I know in some situations the most important people sit on the platform.

In our case that doesn't really happen. Sometimes I think the most important seats are at the back, because those are the ones that everybody's going for. But anyway, so the problem here is not where they were sitting.

The problem was what was in their hearts. They were looking for the best places, not so that they could hear better or so that they could see better, but they were looking for the places that would make them look best, that would make them look important. And, folk, we do many, many things.

And Jesus is using a simple parable, and yet it finds its expression in many things in our lives. We do many things so that we can look more important than the next person. The way we behave, the way we dress sometimes, the things that we say, the people we associate with, many of these things are there so that we can stand out as being somewhat, as being important.

And so, he says, when you're invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him. Now, obviously this kind of society is very sensitive to this kind of thing. Everybody knew who was more important.

There's the Pharisees, and as we've just seen, there's a leader of the Pharisees, and within themselves they had their order, who was more important. And so, all of this was carefully worked out. But, folk, we do exactly the same thing.

Every one of us looks at those around us, and we say, well, I'm more important than that person. I am more gifted than that person. I've been in this church longer than that person.

I have more gifts than somebody else. And we will never admit to it, but the reality is that every one of us has figured out in our own mind the pecking order in the church. And obviously we do the same out in the workplace, and obviously there it's more clearly defined, because you have a clear sense of order and of rank in the workplace.

Jesus is saying, don't take the best place, because somebody more important can come in, and obviously the host is then going to say to you, you've got to step down and go and sit down there. And that's going to be, as the young people say, that's going to be blind. That's not going to be very, that's not going to make you look very good.

And so he says, on the contrary, what you need to do, and he invited you and come and say to you, give place to this man, and you begin with lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he invites you, who invited you comes and may say to you, friend, go up higher. Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you.

So now remember, Jesus is not teaching a technique whereby you can be elevated. In other words, what I'm saying is, Jesus is not saying, well, you know, fake or feign humility, take the lower seat, because you know that's not your position, and you know that when the host comes, he's going to say, no, no, come and sit up here, and everybody can say, look how humble he is, and look how he's been exalted. That's the other side of the coin.

Sometimes we elevate ourselves to a position we ought not to be, but sometimes we have fake humility, and we say, well, you know, I'm not in that position, and we take a lower position, but the whole idea is really, I'm not going to stay down here. I know somebody's going to elevate me. Somebody's going to say, brother, come up here, and obviously we're not talking about seats in the chapel.

We're talking about our position in the local assembly. We're talking about ministry. There's a sickness amongst preachers that's all about this kind of stuff, all about who's more important than the next person, all about who is the better preacher than the other guy, and the list goes on.

I've told you before, I don't go to dinners with other pastors anymore, because it's just not good for my ego. Now, I guess I should go, because I need to be humbled. We all need to be humbled, but I'm done with sitting around the table with other pastors, and I've told you before, the first question is, how big is your church? Always.

Well, the first question is, where's your church? What is your church? Okay, you know, we're independent. Oh, no, well, that doesn't count. You know, we're part of a denomination.

That's always the first question. Second question, how big is your church? Oh, no, we just have a small church. Oh, well, brother, God bless you.

We're not going to talk to you seriously, because here's this other brother. He has 500 in his church, and here's another brother. He has 200 in his church, and, folks, pastors measure themselves by the size of their congregations.

Others measure themselves by their degrees, but it's all about who's more important, and, folks, we have the same thing in the assembly. Oh, they haven't asked me to open in prayer for a while. Why did they ask him to open in prayer? And I'm not referring to Brother Henry, but why does he get to open in prayer? And I don't get to open in prayer.

And then we try and put ourselves in the front position, because when it's open prayer, well, then we won't pray, because our feelings have been hurt. So now we're sitting in the lower place, hoping that somehow they'll elevate me and ask me to pray. Or if I do pray, I'll pray long prayers.

Now, we don't have that problem here, but I've seen that in churches, because we want to show everybody how religious I am, how big words I can use, and how long I can pray for. Thank you, Lord, that I'm not like this terrible sinner down here. I do this, and I do that, and I do the other thing.

Verse 11, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. But that is a fact. That is the Word of God.

It is not, it's not karma. It's not just the way the cookie crumbles. This is the truth of God's Word.

If we humble ourselves, He will exalt us. But He will exalt us in due time. You see, that's the problem.

We say, well, Lord, you know, I've been humble for so long. When are you going to promote me? I've been preaching for 50 years. As you know, I'm about to retire.

I still don't have a big church. Lord, when are you going to give me a big church? No, in due time. When will He exalt us? Not in this life.

And folk, I pray with all my heart that God will never exalt me and never promote me in this life, because I know the problem of pride in my own heart. I sometimes wonder, how come other pastors have blessing and have testimonies of things happening in their churches, and of people coming, and churches growing, and people are getting saved, and things are happening. Lord, why is it not happening in my church? I know the reason.

The reason is because of my pride. But at the end of the day, it's not whether we're exalted in this life. It's whether when we stand before Him on that great day, He says, well done, good and faithful servant.

Enter into the joy of the Lord. Come and sit in this place. Folk, that day will reveal it all.

Remember that the judgment of our works, and we touched on this on Thursday, is going to be based on whether it's wood, hay and stubble, or gold, silver, and precious stones. Remember that gold, silver and precious stones build small, but it stands in the day of trial. The wood, hay and stubble you can build big, but it doesn't last.

My prayer is that that which I'm building in my own life, in the life of my wife and in the assembly, are those things that will endure and will last. But he exalts himself will be humbled. Folk, this is hard.

You know, the issue of pride and self-promotion, what the new King James calls selfish ambition, the old King James, the word strife, but it's not strife in the sense of fighting, it's striving for promotion. Selfish ambition is one of the most insidious sins that affects every Christian and infects every church and is the most dangerous thing that can come into an assembly of God's people. You say, oh, it's heresy, that's the big problem.

It's immorality, that's the big problem. No, those things are easy to deal with. It's not easy to fix them, but it's easy to diagnose them, it's easy to address them.

Immorality or sin or, you know, that kind of evil, it's clear. You know what you're dealing with. False doctrine, it's easy.

You know what you're dealing with, it's black and white, this is what the person believes, this is what the scripture teaches, it's truth or it's error, simple. But selfish ambition, pride, self-promotion, it's easily hidden. Oh, let me sit in this humble place.

Now I'm watching. When are they going to tell me, brother, come sit up here? And folk, that was at the heart of the problem with Lucifer to begin with. I will be, I'm not going to sit here, I want to sit up there in

the throne of God.

And yet we have the example of the Lord Jesus, who humbled himself, though he was in the form of God, thought it not robbery, to be equal with God. In other words, he was God, yet he humbled himself and became obedient, came as a servant, and became obedient even to the death of the cross. Wherefore, God has highly exalted him.

He didn't exalt himself, he humbled himself. But on the third day he was raised, and the Father set him at his own right hand, not a position he didn't have before, but confirmed his position, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess. Folk, when we do what these Pharisees did, we follow the example of the devil.

When we do what Jesus says, humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt us. Then he also said to him who invited him, and I'm going to rush now because I'm running out of time, he said to him who invited him, when you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, your rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.

Well, here's the flip side of the coin. Jesus is dealing with how to be a attendee, somebody who's been invited to the wedding, now he's dealing with a host. And he says, basically don't be nice to people who could be nice back to you.

If I can just put that in plain English. But be nice to people who can't reciprocate, who can't be nice back to you. You see, again, he's exposing their hearts.

Why did they invite Jesus? Because they were going to get something out of this deal. Why did they invite the man with palsy? Because they were going to use him. Not because they wanted to show him kindness and invite him to have some fellowship and to have a meal.

Why did they invite the other people who were there? Because they made him look good. And not only did they make them look good, but they would invite them back. And so they would invite the most important people in town.

So those most important people will invite you back to them. And you were able to go back, you know, last night when I was at supper with so and so. So they can drop the names.

Jesus says, no, when you're going to... And this is, again, this is not about inviting people to a meal. This is about how you live your life, who you show kindness to, who you spend time with, who you give gifts to, whether it's birthdays or whatever. If you're just giving to get back, whether it's time, attention, gifts, whatever it is, a meal, you have your reward.

But when you give to those who can't give back, God will reward you. He says, and you will be blessed because they cannot repay you. So whatever we do, whether we're giving a gift, and whether it's to the church, or whether it's to somebody in need, or whether it's to somebody else, when we give attention, when we give time, when we give love, if we're doing it to get something out of it, there is no blessing in that.

Because you made a deal. You said, I'm going to love you so you can love me back. And you got what you got, what you wanted.

But if you give to those who can't give back, if you love those who cannot love in return, if you invite people to a meal who cannot afford to invite you back for a meal, if you give a gift to someone who can't respond, react in the same way, you will be blessed. You will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just. That's where the reward is.

And remember we've said before that whatever rewards we get in this life are temporary. Even if you're being good to somebody and they respond and they give you a million dollars, it's only going to last until death. But the rewards we get on that day will last for eternity.

And folks, those are the rewards we should be chasing, the rewards that the Lord gives. Now remember that when we do these things, we don't do them to receive even the praises of men. That's the other problem.

The Pharisees were good. Remember they would blow the trumpet when they put money into the bag, or into the hat, or the box, or whatever the poor man had. Jesus says they have the reward.

But he says when you do your arms, when you do your good deeds, do them in secret, and the heavenly Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Don't speak of the good things you do. Don't speak about the people you help, because you're you're drawing your reward prematurely.

You're drawing your reward prematurely. Those of us who are getting older have to have, some have had to, and some are making decisions about social security. You can start drawing social security at what, 62? You can start drawing your social security at 62, or you can wait until you're 70.

And so, you know, I want it now. But if you wait until you're 70, you're going to get more, depending on how long you live, of course. But you're going to get more.

So it makes sense if you possibly can wait from 62 to 70 for the deferred payment, you're going to get more. In fact, here's the problem. We so often settle for an immediate reward from people.

Oh, look how spiritual he is. Look how kind he is. Look how this or that or the other thing, when in fact there's a much greater reward if we choose not to take the reward now.

And we say, now I'm going to defer the reward. I'm going to save it for that day. Then he will reward me, and it's going to be a greater and an eternal and a lasting reward.

And so, folks, we need to check our hearts. Why do we do things? Do we do them so that we can look good? Or do we do them because it's the right thing to do, and that's what the Lord wants us to do? Are we choosing the easy, instant gratification of sitting in an important seat? Or are we saying, no, I'm going to serve the Lord faithfully, that he and his time will reward me? Father, we pray that you'd help us to understand. Lord, none of what we've said this morning is difficult or complicated or theologically complex.

Lord, they are simple things. And yet, Lord, to put these things into practice is so hard for every one of us. I pray, Lord, that you'd help us to understand.

Help us, Lord, to be doers of your word and not just hearers. And Lord, I pray that you'd above all help every one of us. Lord, there is not one in this audience this morning, including myself, who do not have a problem with pride.

Lord, we pray that you'd help us, that we may emulate the Lord Jesus, who humbled himself, rather than the example of Satan, who exalted himself. Lord, we thank you that you know all, that you see all. And Lord, that there is nothing that is hidden from your sight.

And Lord, that you have promised that you will repay, and that on that great day, you will reward those who have faithfully obeyed your will. Help us to do this, Lord. Help us to be doers of your word in every way.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Lord, we pray for the many who are away this morning because of the holiday. We pray that you would keep them and protect them.

And we pray that you bring us all together again safely on the appointed time. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

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