**Around the Table with Jesus**

**The Word**

Read Together Luke 14:1-24

**The Big Idea**

The good news is that God bestows grace and honor on the needy and broken. When we fully receive that news, it can transform our relationships so that we stop seeking honor from one another and instead extend grace to each other regardless of social status.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. On Sunday we talked about the idea of seeking honor from other people. There are many ways we might want to be perceived: as successful, wealthy, smart, funny, beautiful, spiritual, nice, etc. What specific way do you most find yourself wanting to be perceived by others?

2. As you consider Jesus words in v. 7-14, are there any specific changes you want to make in terms of how you navigate relationships in your life?

3. We talked seeing ourselves as the poor, blind, and lame who have been invited to Jesus’ banquet (v. 21). We were encouraged to come to the Lord’s table in our weakness rather than our strength. As you consider how you interact with Jesus, do you find yourself more regularly interacting with him out of your places of weakness or your places of strength? What does that look like for you?

4. The gospel (= that we are the poor and needy who have received honor and grace from Jesus) can open our eyes and hearts to a specific group of people: the poor, blind, lame (v. 13). Where are those kinds of people in your life right now? What would be a faithful (and doable) response at this time in your life?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. 1st century society was based on two foundations

A. Honor

1. Relationships were driven by the goal of gaining honor and avoiding shame

2. Honor came through how people viewed you and who you associated with

B. Reciprocity

1. Gifts and invitations were not free but came with implicit or explicit obligations to return the favor

C. Meals served to reinforce the social hierarchy and create boundaries around the honored and the excluded, the insider and outsider (Picture a Jane Austin novel)

II. Our culture today continues these values albeit in a subtler way

A. The key issue is: where do we seek honor?

1. Jn 5:44: Seeking glory/honor from one another rather than from God

2. Your estimation of me determines my honor and worth: if you can see me as successful, competent, wealthy, smart, beautiful, spiritual, etc.

C. Seeking honor through one another is a harmful, unhelpful way to live

1. It harms me

a. I’m subjected to a life of endless social self-awareness where I’m constantly comparing myself to others and wondering how I measure up

b. I live a cycle of pride (when I measure up) and insecurity or jealousy (when I don’t measure up)

2. It harms others

a. When I’m constantly trying to measure up, I become blind to the needs of the poor, crippled, lame, blind (v. 13)

b. I’m so focused on myself that I don’t have room for those people

III. Jesus invites us into a different kingdom reality

A. To the guests: don’t take the place of honor (v. 7-11)

1. In one sense this is common sense and good practical advice

2. In that honor-based culture it would have been more radical

3. Jesus invites us to find our honor in the God who honors the humble (v. 11)

B. The host: invite the poor, blind, crippled, lame

1. He is undermining the principle of reciprocity and encouraging people to invite those who can never return the favor

2. Jesus invites us to seek our reward not in other’s reciprocity but rather in God who rewards us in eternity (v. 14)

IV. Seeing ourselves as the poor, blind, crippled, and lame

A. In v. 15-24, Jesus tells a parable of a man giving a great banquet

B. This parable speaks to what was happening in Jesus’ ministry: those you’d expect to come (the religious leaders) were declining Jesus’ invitation, and those you wouldn’t expect (the least and the left out) were accepting and enjoying the feast.

C. This parable may also speak to the final banquet at the end of time in which the humble will be gathered at the Messiah’s feast

D. We can find ourselves within the poor and the least (spiritually speaking) upon whom Jesus has bestowed his favor and his grace.

E. When we see ourselves as those broken people who have received honor and a grace we can never repay, it can transform how we approach our relationships

1. We no longer need to seek honor from others since we have it in Christ

2. We can extend the grace we’ve received to others without obligating them to reciprocate

3. Our eyes are opened to the poor and needy around us, and we can better see them and love them not from a place of superiority but rather true equality and friendship.

V. Communion

A. The Lord invites us to his meal and gives us honor and grace

B. We should come to the table not in our strength but in our weakness

C. The danger is to think we have it all together (see Revelation 3:15-20)