

# What Would Jesus Do?

Luke 14:1, 7-14

INTRO:

Jesus. He can be a little upsetting sometimes. He can be a difficult guest in our lives too. Rules within God's kingdom are different than those by which the world lives. Those whom we place on top, sometimes end up on the bottom. And the opposite happens too, when those on the bottom end up on the top. Jesus upsets our values with his values.

ME:

When I was in seminary, I wrote a song about this. I borrowed some guitar music from a friend in college and wrote these words:

*when you wanna move to the front of the line  
you better hold your breath, brother step behind,  
because the most is least and the last first,  
only Christ can quench you thirst...  
you look for truth everywhere  
don't look to the world 'cause the world don't care  
they'll try to hammer nails in your hands  
they don't follow God they follow their own plans*

I know it's pretty sad, but it was the best I could do! Even though I wrote the song about this text, that doesn't mean I've done very well applying it to my life as a follower of Jesus.

YOU:

**Are you familiar with this idea?** The idea of not seeking the best place for yourselves. The idea of humility. Jesus has invited us sinners to come and eat with him. He has invited us to come hear his teaching. He invites us to bend our lives toward his way. Listen to him speak as he reminds us of our sin, even as he feeds us and ministers to us. He will continue to form us into a people who know his will and have the grace to do his will.

After we pray, let's see together what Jesus would do in LUke's Gospel:

GOD:

***Luke 14:1 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. 7 When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; 9 and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host***

*comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. 11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.' 12 He said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."*

WE:

Jesus is at the table and in Luke that is the place where Jesus does most of his most significant teaching. Jesus critiques the self-seeking attitudes of the guests and host. Jesus is not even talking about good table manners either. Jesus is talking about Kingdom standards:

*All who lift themselves up will be brought low, and those who make themselves low will be lifted up.*

Then Jesus turns to the host. The motivation for much of our hospitality is **self-interest**. It is truly the motivation for most of our behavior. Jesus is plainly criticizing us at a very deep level.

Let's move from our tables of hospitality to Jesus' table of Holy Communion. As we do we can expect some surprises. Jesus isn't always a well-behaved and pleasant guest. And he can be quite the challenging host too.

At his Table, as we celebrate in remembrance of him, we experience a savior who means *to change us in order to save us*.

We were warned at the beginning of Luke that things were gonna be different now. As Mary sang she told that with the coming Messiah, the mighty and proud will be brought low and the lowly will be lifted up. This is the **fulfillment** of that prophecy.

When we are meeting someone for the first time we are probably very careful about what we say. You may notice that Jesus is different. Here he is, perhaps his first time at this Pharisee's house, **and what does he do?** He slams both host and guests. Jesus is different. Maybe we forget that too easily. We think of church as a time when we come to get close to Jesus, to touch base with what we've always believed, to reassure ourselves that we've got this thing right. But then comes Jesus in all of his conspicuous difference.

### ***How different are the ways of Jesus from our ways?***

What a great gap between his system of values and ours. Those whom we fight to sit next to at dinner, Jesus has no use for. Those whom we exclude from our economy, our educational system, our systems of health care, even our church, Jesus invites to a great banquet where the poor, the maimed, the blind, and the lame sit at the head table for free.

During a class discussion in a public policy course, someone said, “**Look. I’m tired of their whining. They’ve had their chance. Hey, I never owned slaves. I’m tired of hearing about all that. They just want everything to be handed to them without earning it.**” And the woman she was responding to looked at that bracelet on her wrist—the one that said WWJD, you know, “**What would Jesus do?**”—and, knowing the sorts of things that Jesus does, she said, “**That’s just what we would expect from a guy who has had everything handed to him by his parents and has earned almost nothing that he’s got.**”

**What would Jesus do?** When you’re invited to a fancy banquet, don’t sit with the rich and powerful; you go eat with the kitchen help. And when you give a dinner, invite those who nobody would dare invite anywhere. **WWJD.**

THE BOTTOM LINE:

***Followers of Jesus would do is choose humility in life.***

YOU:

**How can you apply this to your life?** Here’s what you can do about this today, and this week:

- if this is a new muscle for you, open the door for others, allow others to go before you in line at the store or in traffic.

- if this is a muscle you have used before, find ways to go deeper with it. Think of a situation in your life, or a relationship in which you could choose to be more humble. And then become more humble and watch dividing walls crumble in that relationship.
- when you think of creative ways to do this today and this week, tell someone about it, tell me about it.

CLOSE:

I read how last year a professor and some students had one of these Sunday encounters with Jesus. They were once again reminded, in the scripture and the sermon, of that great, raw difference between our ways and Jesus's way. A visitor came out of the service really upset by the sermon. She confronted the professor at the door. She didn't like the sermon and was offended. **"I'm a guest here,"** she said. A number of students looked on with glee as this guest got him. Then one of the students finally stepped forward and said, **"Look, lady, have you never been in church? You act like you're surprised to hear something offensive in the service. Here, we get jerked around and beaten up on lots of Sundays. It's about Jesus!"** Right. It's about Jesus.

Let the Spirit release your spiritual creativity about how you can follow Jesus and how you can live like Jesus. Because it's about Jesus.

***Let's pray to Jesus now before we feast at his table of grace....***