

Luke 14:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

Analysis

Jesus addresses the host: 'Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.' Jesus shifts from guests' behavior to the host's motives. Don't invite those who can reciprocate—'friends,' 'brethren,' 'kinsmen,' 'rich neighbours.' The reason: 'lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee' (μήποτε καὶ αὐτοὶ ἀντικαλέσωσίν σε καὶ γένηται ἀνταπόδομά σοι, mēpote kai autoi antikalesōsin se kai genētai antapodoma soi). Mutual reciprocity creates a system of exchange, not grace. True generosity gives without expecting return.

Historical Context

Ancient Mediterranean society operated on patron-client relationships and reciprocal obligations. Hospitality wasn't primarily charitable but transactional—you hosted those who could return the favor, building networks of mutual obligation. Jesus radically challenges this system, calling for non-reciprocal generosity that mirrors God's grace. This teaching would have shocked His audience—social stability depended on reciprocity. Yet Jesus models a kingdom economy where blessing flows from God through believers to the needy, not circulating among the already-privileged.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' command challenge contemporary Christian hospitality that primarily occurs among those of similar socioeconomic status?
2. What is the difference between reciprocal exchange and grace-motivated generosity?
3. In what ways do churches and Christians still operate on patron-client models rather than radical generosity?

Interlinear Text

Ἐλεγεν δὲ καὶ τῷ κεκληκότι αὐτὸι Ὄταν ποιῆς
said he Then also G3588 to him that bade him When thou makest
G3004 G1161 G2532 G2564 G846 G3752 G4160

ἄριστον ἥ δεῖπνον μὴ φώνει τοὺς φίλους σου μηδὲ
a dinner or a supper not call G3588 friends thy neither
G712 G2228 G1173 G3361 G5455 G5384 G4675 G3366

τοὺς ἀδελφούς σου μηδὲ τοὺς συγγενεῖς σου μηδὲ
G3588 brethren thy neither G3588 kinsmen thy neither
G80 G4675 G3366 G4773 G4675 G3366

γείτονας πλουσίους μήποτε καὶ αὐτοὶ σε ἀντικαλέσωσίν
neighbours thy rich lest also him thee again
G1069 G4145 G3379 G2532 G846 G4571 G479

καὶ γένηται σοι ἀνταπόδομά
also be made thee a recompence
G2532 G1096 G4671 G468

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:46 (Parallel theme): For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

Proverbs 22:16 (Parallel theme): He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches, and he that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want.

Proverbs 14:20 (Parallel theme): The poor is hated even of his own neighbour: but the rich hath many friends.

Luke 1:53 (Parallel theme): He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.