

Luke 14:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

Analysis

Jesus shifts to teaching: 'And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them.' Jesus observed the guests' behavior—'when he marked' (ἐπέχων, epechōn, paying attention to) 'how they chose out the chief rooms' (πῶς τὰς πρωτοκλισίας ἔξελέγοντο, pōs tas prōtoklisias exelegonto). The term 'chief rooms' (πρωτοκλισίας, prōtoklisias) means places of honor, couches closest to the host. Their maneuvering for status revealed pride and self-importance. Jesus uses this social ambition to teach kingdom values—humility, not self-promotion; service, not status-seeking. The parable that follows (vv. 8-11) illustrates these principles.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern meals followed strict protocols of honor and precedence. Seating arrangements communicated social hierarchy—proximity to the host indicated importance. Guests jockeying for honorable positions was common and expected. However, Jewish wisdom literature warned against presumption (Proverbs 25:6-7). Jesus draws on this tradition while radically expanding it—kingdom citizens shouldn't merely avoid presumption but actively embrace lowliness. This teaching threatened the entire social order built on hierarchy, honor, and status. Early Christianity's countercultural humility attracted the marginalized while alarming the elite.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' observation of social dynamics demonstrate His attention to everyday behavior as revelation of heart condition?
2. What contemporary forms of jockeying for position and status exist in churches?
3. How should kingdom values reshape Christian attitudes toward honor, recognition, and advancement?

Interlinear Text

λέγων δὲ πρὸς τοὺς κεκλημένους παραβολήν
he put forth And to those which were bidden a parable
G3004 G1161 G4314 G2564 G3850

ἐπέχων πῶς τὰς πρωτοκλισίας ἐξελέγοντο λέγων
when he marked how the chief rooms they chose out he put forth
G1907 G4459 G3588 G4411 G1586 G3004

πρὸς αὐτούς
to them
G4314 G846

Additional Cross-References

Luke 11:43 (Parallel theme): Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

Matthew 23:6 (Parallel theme): And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

Philippians 2:3 (Parallel theme): Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Luke 20:46 (Parallel theme): Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

3 John 1:9 (Parallel theme): I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not.

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