

# Matthew 23:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

## Analysis

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**And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues**—the verb *philousin* (φιλοῦσιν, they love) reveals not mere acceptance but craving for honor. *Prōtoklisiān* (πρωτοκλισίαν, first reclining place) at feasts and *prōtokathēdrias* (πρωτοκαθεδρίας, first seats) in synagogues both emphasize *prōtos* (πρῶτος, first/chief)—the Pharisees' obsession with social rank and public recognition.

In ancient banquets, seating reflected social hierarchy; the closer to the host, the greater the honor. Synagogue seating likewise communicated status, with leaders facing the congregation. Jesus exposes how religious leaders leveraged spiritual authority for social prestige, converting ministry into self-promotion. This love of honor directly contradicts Jesus's teaching that the greatest among you shall be your servant (verse 11).

## Historical Context

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First-century Mediterranean culture was intensely honor-based, with seating arrangements communicating precise social standing. Roman banquets used *triclinium* arrangements where proximity to the host indicated status. Synagogues reserved prominent forward-facing seats for elders and teachers, making them visible to all worshipers during the service.

