

1. A Seat at the Table—Luke 14:1-24 (This is quite the fascinating text. It is about insiders and outsiders; it is all about the others; it is about self-perception versus God's perspective; it is about Jesus brutally exposing hypocrisy. It is as much an uncomfortable read as it was an uncomfortable moment—centered around a Sabbath table feast organized by Christ's nemeses, the Pharisees. Let's set the scene—Jesus is at this meal, but don't think his invitation was a goodwill gesture. He was there to be set up for a likely healing-on-the-Sabbath debate. Next to him was a man with dropsy—some type of obvious facial deformity—also not an usual invitee to such events. The two are connected. It was the Sabbath. They knew he would heal and he did—which started the entire uncomfortable situation. As Jesus addressed them about the healing he did so in such a way that they could not engage him as planned. He exposed their hypocrisy on this matter and they knew it—so they remained silent. He then used their silence and this setting to not only further expose their motives, but also to emphasize how different priorities really are in the kingdom of God)
2. All About the Others (the one at the table and those not there)
3. All About the Kingdom
 - a. The kingdom placement remains the lowest place—14:1-11 (just consistent with everything else Jesus taught on the last being first here. Nothing new had they been paying attention to him instead of jockeying for the most important seats)
 - b. The kingdom priority includes the others—14:12-14 (Other than bringing in the man with the dropsy to bait Jesus, it probably never occurred to them to invite anyone other than folks just like them to their table. Here Jesus makes it clear that the kingdom of God is about more than that)
 - c. The kingdom privilege can be lost—14:15-24 (As an insider sitting around the table—one guest self-affirms their place at the table. In his mind he is eating a feast in the kingdom of God, a privilege not known by the outsiders. But Jesus turns that thought upside down with his parable. The others have a place too. In fact they will replace all of the insiders who do not fully embrace the way God's kingdom really is. **They were concerned with their position in the kingdom, while it never occurred to them to be concerned with their possession of the kingdom.**)
4. All About Us (Let's see—probably most of us would see ourselves as insiders with a seat around that table—so what is our takeaway from this uncomfortable event?)
 - a. The ability to humble ourselves remains vital to realize the kingdom
 - b. Specific attention must be given to others by us
 - c. Excusing away our kingdom responsibilities will not work
5. (In terms of the kingdom; the teaching of Christ; the understanding of what it is all about, I will end with Christ's words) "Come for everything is ready." (But are we ready? Ready to really embrace Christ's kingdom values; ready to embrace whatever changes that entails; and ready to embrace the others for the kingdom sake? All uncomfortable questions—just like they were then, but then again that is Jesus—always challenging us to be our best selves; to be our kingdom selves. Are we ready?)