

The Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Luke 14:1-14  
September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

He Took Him and Healed Him, and Let Him Go

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, we praise Thee for Thy goodness and mercy toward us, and beseech Thee, pardon and amend what is amiss in us; help us grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; enable us more and more to serve Thee with all lowliness and meekness and brotherly love, by holy, unblameable, and useful lives; and, amid all vanity of this present world, keep us united, by a living faith and by the power of the eternal Spirit, unto Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, that we may escape the bitter pains of eternal death, and receive the promised inheritance in heaven; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Evangelist St. Luke sets the facts of the narrative for today out for us clearly. Our Lord + Jesus is invited to eat bread; to eat a meal. The place where our Lord is invited is the home of a ruler of the Pharisees; someone holding a high position among the Pharisees. The day that this meal took place at the home of one of the rulers of the Pharisees was on the Sabbath—the day of rest. This meal on the Sabbath at the home of one of the rulers of the Pharisees would have followed all of the prescribed rules and regulations governing the Sabbath. Only the distance allowed to travel on the Sabbath would have been observed. Only the work necessary to be done would have been allowed. This is why the Evangelist St. Luke also includes two more details to the narrative.

First, it is told us that the Pharisees “watched Him closely.” In other words, this gracious invitation to eat at the home of a ruling Pharisee was nothing more than a ploy to catch our Lord + Jesus doing something for which they could accuse Him. It was a trap! They had laid a trap before our Lord to make sure that He would follow all of the Sabbath regulations; that He would not break the Sabbath. This is why the trap is baited with a bait which our Lord + Jesus could not resist. St. Luke the Evangelist tells us that there suddenly appeared, out of nowhere apparently, a man with dropsy. This man appears on the scene quickly without any real background into who he is. The only information we receive about this certain man is his condition. He has dropsy.

Dropsy is what we refer to in modern times as “edema.” Edema is the abnormal accumulation of serous fluid in a body cavity or cellular tissue. In short, it is the accumulation of water in a person. A person with dropsy is literally drowning in his own skin. It is a serious condition. It is a life-threatening situation. This certain man with dropsy had a serious illness that could cause his death at any moment. However, he does not appear suddenly and without fanfare because of any compassion on the part of

the Pharisees gathered there to dine with our Lord + Jesus. NO! He is there as a trap! He is simply there to see if our Lord + Jesus would heal this man on a Sabbath; to see if the Lord + Jesus would, in their estimation, break the Sabbath.

We see our Lord + Jesus try to rescue the Pharisees from their sinfulness. His aim is to lead them into repentance. Therefore, He asks them a question. “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” They remain silent. So, our Lord + Jesus gives them the answer by His actions. He turns His attention to the man with dropsy, “and He took him and healed him, and let him go.” The certain man with dropsy, now healed, comes into the narrative quickly, and is dismissed just as quickly. He is not the point of the narrative of the Evangelist St. Luke. This is a rarity when it comes to the healing narratives; many details are given about the person being healed. Not so with this certain man, he comes and goes from the narrative quickly and quietly. He is not the point of the narrative; the impenitence of the Pharisees is the point of this pericope. The fact that they lack humility and are full of pride is the main point of the narrative.

It is this arrogance and pride our Lord + Jesus spends the rest of his time at this meal in the home of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath from which He tries to get them to repent. He begins by asking them another question. If their donkey or ox fell into a pit on a Sabbath, would they not rescue it? Of course, they would! The Pharisees are not completely evil people. They would have compassion on an animal that fell into a pit on a Sabbath. They would “break the Sabbath” to rescue that animal. However, St. Luke tells us that they would not admit that to the Lord + Jesus. They remained silent once again. Their pride and hubris are on full display.

The point our Lord + Jesus is making to them, is that if they would do this for an animal, should they not also have the same compassion on their fellowman who is troubled and in need of help on a Sabbath? The answer is yes, they should. They should not be using a man with dropsy as a trap for the Lord. They should have instead willingly brought this man into the presence of the Lord + Jesus to heal him. The certain man with dropsy was drowning in his own skin. They should have had the compassion to do what they could to help him. Here was the Lord + Jesus—Who had proven to be a great healer—this man should have been brought to our Lord by the Pharisees to heal this man, not be a test for the Lord + Jesus.

It is easy for us to point our fingers at the Pharisees and accuse them of being arrogant, uncompassionate men. But we are to see in this text our own pride and arrogance. We are to see in ourselves our own lack of care and compassion for our fellowman. We are not to imagine how little we are like the Pharisees, but see just how much we are like them. For there is only One Person in this narrative who is without sin and the effects of sin. There is only One Person who has ever been sinless in this world—our Lord + Jesus Christ. He is the only One Who can boast that He is without sin—without pride, arrogance, and coldness. We like the Pharisees are always looking for ways to exalt ourselves above our situation. We are typically without humility.

This is why our Lord + Jesus tells a parable that seems to be unrelated at first glance. This parable at the end of the narrative of the Evangelist St. Luke is a commentary on the events that went before. That they laid a trap using a dying man shows their pride and lack of humility. It shows how much they exalted themselves over the Lord + Jesus. Instead of being repentant and knowing rightfully humbling themselves in the presence of the Lord of All Things; instead of being aware of their situation—that they are filled with sin and rightfully deserve the punishment which has been declared for all those who remain in their sin and unbelief—they exalt themselves above the Lord and seek to catch Him in a trap.

Their scrambling and fighting over the best seats in the house are just symptoms of the hubris that exists in each of them. This same pride exists in us too. It affects us more than we care to admit.

It is a natural human reaction to make ourselves out to be the best person we can be. How often do we rather hide our embarrassing behaviors, and paint ourselves in the best light? We do this not only ourselves but also those who we have made out to be our heroes and role models. They can do no harm. Neither can we. Our temptation is to exalt ourselves as much as possible. When we see how much sin has entrapped us, we should rightly humble ourselves. For, like the man with dropsy who was literally dying in his skin, we too are drowning in the sinfulness that corrupts our entire being. Because of the effects of sin in us, we have no standing upon which we can exalt ourselves. Neither did the Pharisees.

The only One Who has a right to exalt Himself is the Lord + Jesus, the Christ. He can rightly exalt Himself, for He has already humbled Himself by coming down from Heaven and taking upon Himself our flesh. He laid aside His throne and crown—His divinity—in order that as the Lord God He might dwell in our human flesh, so that He could fulfill perfectly the Law and will of the Lord God, and suffer and die in our place on the tree of the holy cross. None of us could have atoned for our sins by doing this, therefore, we rightly should humble ourselves and take our place at the lowest place, for that is what we deserve.

Our Lord + Jesus, however, by His perfect life and atoning sacrifice on the cross, heals us through faith of our sinfulness. He takes us from being in a state of dying in our own skin and takes us from our state of humility weighed down by sin and shame and exalts us to be members of His eternal Kingdom. He takes us from the lowest place, and places us in a place of honor. We remain in that place of honor whenever we humbly confess our sins, and acknowledge our pride and lack of compassion for our fellowman.

We have been invited by our Lord + Jesus to come to His house on this Sabbath Day, and eat a meal with Him. This meal is the very Body and Blood which He offered on the tree of the holy cross for us Christians to eat and drink under bread and wine. This invitation to His holy house is not an invitation to be trapped in our sin and shame, but it is an invitation to receive His gifts and to hear about His compassion for us. On account of His compassion for us, He has healed us of all of our sins, and exalts us to join Him in our eternal home in Heaven with all the saints and angels. Come, my dear friends, and let us take our place of honor at our Lord's table, humbling ourselves through faith in His redeeming sacrifice for us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Lord God, Heavenly Father, we pray Thee so to govern and guide us by Thy Holy Spirit that we may with all our heart hear and receive Thy Word, and truly sanctify the Lord's Day, to the end that we may, in turn, be sanctified by Thy Word, that we may rest all our confidence and hope on Jesus Christ, Thy Son, amend our lives in accordance with Thy Word, and avoid every offense, until we shall, by Thy grace in Christ, be saved forever through the same, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*