

The title of this morning's sermon is, *"Everyone Who Exalts Himself Will Be Humbled."*

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's gospel verse by verse and we find ourselves at chapter 14, verses 7-11.

Please stand with me for the reading of God's Word...

Luke 14:7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, **8** "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, **9** and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. **10** But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. **11** For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

You may be seated. Let's pray.

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This morning's verses pick up right where last week's verses left off. Look at verse 1...

Luke 14:1 One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully.

Jesus is still dining at the house of this ruler of the Pharisees and **verse 3** says...

Luke 14:3 And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees,

Lawyers and other Pharisees are present. The end of **verse 1** says they **were watching [Jesus] closely**, but while they watched him, he watched them too. Look at **verse 7**...

Luke 14:7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited (this means invited to the Pharisees' house), when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them,

The synagogues and assembly halls of the first century had benches around the outside wall and a few benches in front. Most of the congregation stood or sat cross-legged on the floor. There were a limited number of good seats and they were the ones the Pharisees always wanted...

Mark 12:38 [Jesus] said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to...**39** have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts.

Where people sat said something about their prominence and importance. There was a "pecking order." The most honored people sat closest to the host.

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Now maybe you say...

"This doesn't really apply to me, because I don't care where I sit."

The issue was obsession with position or status, so this can apply to us:

- Do we care about position or status?
- Do we want to be noticed or praised?

These are ways we choose the best places.

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Jesus continues...

Luke 14:8 “When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, 9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place.

Jesus warns if we take an honored seat for ourselves, someone more honorable might come along and we have to give up our seat for that person, which would be very embarrassing...and this brings us to lesson one...

Lesson One: Humility can prevent humiliation.

Sometimes one of the real blessings of humility IS the absence of humiliation!

Have you ever noticed the most embarrassing moments in our lives usually involve pride?

- Saying something we shouldn't have said
- Arguing when we should've admitted we were wrong
- Doing something people said we shouldn't do, because we were being stubborn

Imagine what this looked like in the parable...

A man is invited to an important event. He arrives and sits in a very prestigious place, which causes everyone to see him. He sits up a little straighter, pushes his shoulders back, and looks around to see everyone noticing him. He's feeling really good about himself.

But then the host of the event asks him to move to make room for the important person who's supposed to be sitting there. The man has to get up and move to a lower place with everyone watching, which would be humiliating.

But here's the important thing to notice...

The humiliation doesn't come from sitting in the **lowest place**. The humiliation comes from sitting in the **place of honor** and then having to move to a lower place in front of everyone....so they can all see you're not quite as great as you thought you were.

Humility would prevent this humiliation, which is why Jesus makes the recommendation in the next verse...

Luke 14:10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you.

Now imagine what this looks like...

A man is invited to an important event. He arrives and sits in an insignificant place. Nobody notices him, but then the host of the event sees him and asks him to sit right next to him...which everyone notices.

But let me be clear about one thing these verses are not guaranteeing, and one thing they are guaranteeing...

These verses aren't guaranteeing promotion in this life, although that's a possibility. We could pursue humility and God could bless us with prominence and success, but I would not tell people that if they are humble they are going to be exalted. There have been plenty of people who pursued humility and were never exalted in this life as a result.

But the verses are guaranteeing promotion in the next life. People who are not rewarded for their humility in this life, are rewarded in eternity.

It takes two things to pursue the humility Jesus is prescribing:

- It takes faith. It takes trusting God instead of trusting ourselves.
- It takes patience. It takes waiting and not trying to manipulate circumstances ourselves.

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Jesus summarizes it this way...

Luke 14:11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

This is one of the most common themes in Scripture:

- **Psalm 75:6 Exaltation comes neither from the east, west, nor south. 7 But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another.**
- **James 4:10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up**
- **1 Peter 5:5 All of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time**

When God says something this many times, we know it’s important.

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Pride gets us in trouble. It puts us at odds with God and makes Him **resist** us.

Isn’t that a sobering thought? God opposing us?

But if we pursue humility, God gives us grace, which is to say he works for us.

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Sometimes we are confused about what humility is and isn’t. Humility isn’t putting ourselves down and thinking terribly of ourselves. It’s not being Eeyore: *“Thanks for noticing me.”*

Maybe you’ve heard this before...

Humility isn’t thinking less of ourselves. Humility is thinking of ourselves less.

Humility is preferring others to ourselves and putting them before us.

That’s why **1 Peter 5:5** says, **“be submissive to one another, and be clothed in humility.”** Peter associates submitting to each other – or thinking of others before ourselves – with humility.

Philippians 2:3b In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself (this doesn’t mean thinking others are better; it means thinking of others more than we think of ourselves). **4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**

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Consider this...

God let Paul visit heaven. This experience was so incredible it could’ve made Paul proud, so he said...

2 Corinthians 12:7 (NKJV) Lest I should be EXALTED above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be EXALTED above measure.

God hates people exalting themselves so much he gave Paul a thorn for his own good to keep him humble.

I read this and think, “I don’t want God to have to put thorns in my life.”

And if we do have some thorns we should recognize they are there to keep us humble.

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I'd like to briefly address the kids for a moment...

I know it's hard to be humble with your parents, but trust me, as your pastor and a father of nine, when you humble yourself before your parents it melts our hearts. It blesses us beyond measure...and God sees it!

And what does God do with the humble?

He exalts them!

When you are prideful with your parents – digging in your heels or pouting – you are choosing to be disciplined by your parents and humbled by God.

Your life will be radically different if you start practicing humility now instead of being forced to learn it later.

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And for married folks...

Humility can be difficult in marriage It's hard to humble ourselves before our spouse, especially if we're upset with them and think they should be humbling themselves!

But don't grow cold in practicing humility in marriage!

God wants to use your humility to do great things and bless your relationship.

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It's not easy to apologize humbly without making an excuse: "I'm sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me."

But as we practice humility God will soften hearts and bless – or exalt – our marriages:

- Humble hearts make for great marriages.
- Proud hearts make for miserable marriages.

Be the first one in the relationship to choose humility over and over and watch God work.

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There is a perfect example in the Old Testament of someone who disobeyed this parable, and that's Adonijah...and this brings us to Lesson Two...

Lesson Two: Adonijah exalted himself and was humbled.

In **verse 8** circle the words **sit down in a place of honor** and write, "Adonijah." And then turn to **1 Kings 1**. We won't turn back to Luke.

This book picks up at the end of David's life. He probably only has months left to live.

God punished David with problem-after-problem, usually from his own children – which can be the most difficult kinds of problems – and all of this aged him...

1 Kings 1:1 Now King David was old and advanced in years. And although they covered him with clothes, he could not get warm.

When people get old they experience poor circulation, which makes it difficult to stay warm.

Physically speaking – not emotionally, mentally, or spiritually – David is weak and feeble. He can't get out of bed and care for himself, say nothing about care for the kingdom.

This sets the stage for what happens with his son, Adonijah. Skip to **verse 5**...

1 Kings 1:5 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, “I will be king.” And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

Who prepares chariots and horsemen and fifty men for themselves to run before them?

Interestingly, this is the exact same thing Absalom did. Knowing what happened to Adonijah’s brother should’ve discouraged him from doing the same thing.

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Adonijah should have supported his father in his old age, but he saw David’s weakness, took advantage of it, thought David was too feeble to stop him, and tried to seize the throne for himself.

Contrast Adonijah and David and you see two men who exemplify the parable Jesus preached:

- David was anointed to be the next king. He KNEW it was God’s will for him to rule, but he would not exalt himself. He wouldn’t make any move for the throne while Saul was alive OR EVEN WHEN SAUL WAS DEAD. He ruled over Judah, in Hebron for 7 years, before God exalted him and put him over all Israel! He took the lowest place until God said, “Friend, move up higher.”
- Adonijah on the other hand was willing to try to take the highest place from his father while he was still alive.

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You could ask how could Adonijah become such an arrogant, selfish person?

The answer is in **verse 6**...

1 Kings 1:6 His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, “Why have you done thus and so?” He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

Because David never disciplined Adonijah – or even asked him why he was doing certain things – he ended up being a proud, selfish man. Few things ruin children faster than not being disciplined.

The Bible says David was a handsome man, and he was attracted to beautiful women, so it doesn’t surprise us that he had attractive children. But in Adonijah’s case it was a problem because it contributed to his pride.

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In **verse 5** look at the words **Adonijah exalted himself**. Exactly what Jesus said not to do!

If you write in your Bible, you can circle these words and write, “**Luke 14:11**,” which says...

Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled.

This is exactly what’s about to happen to Adonijah.

Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

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One of the things that makes the military different than many other occupations is the potential to be severely humbled. In most jobs the worst that can happen is being fired, but in the military, you don’t get fired because the government owns you. Instead, you get screamed at and taken down a few notches.

Occasionally you’d see someone do something prideful and foolish like argue with a commander, disobey a command, or blame someone else. You want to get as far away from them as possible because you know they just set themselves up to get blasted and you don’t want to get hit in the crossfire.

I'm sure there are kids who have seen their siblings act foolishly by challenging their parents' authority and they wanted to move away because they knew their sibling was about to be humbled.

This is what I think of when I read this verse about Adonijah: he set himself up to get blasted.

Skip to **verse 11**...

1 Kings 1:11 Then Nathan said to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, “Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king and David our lord does not know it? **12** Now therefore come, let me give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon.

Nathan the prophet, who has been a good friend to David throughout his life, knows if Adonijah becomes king, he'll murder Bathsheba and Solomon because they pose the greatest threat to him because Solomon is supposed to be king.

1 Kings 1:13 Go in at once to King David, and say to him, ‘Did you not, my lord the king, swear to your servant, saying, “Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne”? Why then is Adonijah king?’ **14** Then while you are still speaking with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words.”

2 Samuel 3:2-5 lists David's sons, and Adonijah is the fourth. His 3 older brothers are Amnon, Chileab and Absalom. We know Amnon and Absalom are dead, and there's a good chance Chileab died as well, because there's nothing recorded of him.

So, Adonijah seems like the logical choice to succeed his father, but apparently at some point in the past – we don't know when – David promised Bathsheba her son, Solomon, would be the next king.

Because Nathan and Bathsheba knew Solomon was supposed to be king, it means all those close to David, including Adonijah, knew this as well. This reveals Adonijah's behavior was complete rebellion against his father's wishes.

You might wonder why Nathan went to Bathsheba instead of going straight to David, and there are two possibilities:

1. The law required everything be established by at least two witnesses. Bathsheba would be that second witness, and Nathan chose her because her son is supposed to be king instead of Adonijah!
2. Or the second possibility, which is what I think: Nathan knew David was generally indulgent toward his sons.

Nathan and Bathsheba go to speak to David, and skip to **verse 29**...

1 Kings 1:29 And the king swore, saying, “As the Lord lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, **30** as I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel, saying, ‘Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,’ even so will I do this day.”

David said he'd settle things that day.

Because of David's age and weakness Adonijah didn't count on him putting forth any resistance, but that ended up being a huge mistake.

Now things are about to get really cool...unless you're Adonijah...skip to **verse 33**...

1 Kings 1:33 And the king said to them, “Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon. **34** And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ **35** You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my place. And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah.”

Adam Clarke said, “*People couldn’t use anything that belonged to the king without forfeiting their lives. As David offered Solomon his mule, this was full evidence that he’d appointed him his successor.*”

This was a huge, wonderful celebration. Adonijah was trying to do this for himself, but this is what David did for Solomon...and this brings us to lesson 3...

Lesson Three: Solomon was moved up higher and honored in the presence of all.

If you write in your Bible you can circle the words, “have Solomon my son ride on my own mule,” and write, “**Luke 14:10,**” because Solomon was **in the lowest place**, but David said, “**Friend, move up higher.**” [And he was] **honored in the presence of all.**

Look at **verse 38**...

1 Kings 1:38 So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon. **39** There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, “Long live King Solomon!” **40** And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise.

Proverbs 29:2 says **When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice** and that’s what’s happening here. There was no mention of rejoicing when Adonijah made himself king, because he was unrighteous.

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Notice the end of **verse 40: the earth was split by their noise.**

That’s pretty loud, isn’t it?

Can you guess who heard the celebration?

1 Kings 1:41 Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished feasting. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, “What does this uproar in the city mean?”

Adonijah was still in the middle of throwing himself a huge celebration.

Try to imagine what this was like...

Adonijah is rejoicing over becoming king when everyone hears this **uproar** over Solomon becoming king!

1 Kings 1:42 While he was still speaking, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came. And Adonijah said, “Come in, for you are a worthy man and bring good news.”

Good news for David, Solomon, and those loyal to them, but not for Adonijah.

What Adonijah is about to experience is one of the most humiliating situations in Scripture...

1 Kings 1:43 Jonathan answered Adonijah, “No, for our lord King David has made Solomon king, **44** and the king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites. And they had him ride on the king's mule. **45** And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon, and they have gone up from there rejoicing (“Everyone is happy about Solomon being king instead of you”), so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise that you have heard. **46** Solomon sits on the royal throne.

Skip to verse 49...

1 Kings 1:49 Then ALL THE GUESTS OF ADONIJAH TREMBLED AND ROSE, AND EACH WENT HIS OWN WAY.

I wish I could've seen Adonijah's face when he received this news.

He quickly experienced a 180:

- He tried to celebrate himself, but his brother ended up being celebrated
- He tried to take the throne, but it went to his brother

Everyone abandoned Adonijah. His guests were afraid because supporting him would mean their deaths.

He found himself all alone. He didn't have any of the prominent people with him anymore, such as Abiathar the high priest and Joab, the general of the Army.

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These people came to celebrate with Adonijah, but they never really cared about him. All they cared about was being on the winning side, and now that they know that's not Adonijah's side, they're gone. They had no loyalty to him.

What kind of friendship could he expect from these people? They just betrayed David, so why wouldn't they betray him?

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Let's not forget how all this happened. Look back at **verse 5 Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"**

Think of the application to Jesus's parable...

Adonijah took the best place and had to give it up to someone **more honorable** than him, and that happened to be his brother, Solomon. Then with shame he had to take the lowest place.

You might also notice Solomon never said anything throughout this whole situation. There's no boasting or gloating. As much as Adonijah is the exalted being humbled, Solomon is the humble being exalted.

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Let me conclude with one more lesson...

Lesson Four: Jesus is the premier example of humility followed by exaltation.

In a sermon about the humble being exalted, how can we not think about Christ?

Solomon is an example of humility followed by exaltation, but Jesus is an even better example.

The humility...

Philippians 2:7 [Jesus] emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Philippians 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus had the right to teach the parable in Luke because He fulfilled it perfectly. He deserved the highest seat and He took the lowest one, but He will be moved up to the highest place by the Father.

Jesus has been exalted by God, and so we must choose who we're going to exalt:

- Are we going to exalt Christ in our lives or are we going to exalt self?
- There's only room for one king in our hearts.

I will be up front after service, and if you have any questions about anything I've shared or I can pray for you in any way I would consider it a privilege to speak with you.

Let's pray.