

Sermon Title: "How to be Great"

Sermon Text: Luke 14:11

Pre-Sermon: This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word. Think about the following quotes. Maybe read them out loud. Do you agree or disagree? Ask yourself, what stands out?

- "Humility is not a mere ornament of a Christian, but an essential part of the new creature. It is a contradiction in terms to be a Christian, and not be humble." Richard Baxter
- "What does Jesus say ... to the weak and infirm, so that they might ..." appreciate and enjoy and know the great and glorious and mighty God who made all things? He says, "Come to Me, all you who toil and are overburdened, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; because I am meek and humble of heart' (Matthew 11:28-29)." Think about this statement "that the master, the Son of God, the Wisdom of God through whom all things were made, is addressing to us...What does he want us to learn of Him? "You were thinking, no doubt, that the Wisdom of God was going to say, "Learn how I made the heavens and the stars..." Learn how infinitely wise and powerful and majestic I am. "Is that the sort of thing you were thinking he would say? No; but first this: that I am meek and humble of heart. There is what you have got to get hold of, brothers and sisters, and it's certainly little enough. We are striving for great things; let us lay hold of little things, and we shall be great. Do you wish to lay hold of the loftiness of God? First catch hold of God's lowliness. Deign to be lowly, to be humble, because God has deigned to be lowly and humble on the same account, yours, not His own. So catch hold of Christ's humility, learn to be humble, don't be proud. Confess your infirmity, lie there patiently in the presence of the doctor. When you have caught hold of His humility, you start rising up with Him. Not as though He has to rise, insofar as He is the Word; but it's you, rather, who do so, so that He may be grasped by you more and more." Augustine
- "That man is truly humble who neither claims any personal merit in the sight of God, nor proudly despises brethren, or aims at being thought superior to them, but reckons it enough that he is one of the members of Christ, and desires nothing more than that the Head alone should be exalted." John Calvin

Sermon Questions: This will help you evaluate how well you were listening.

- It was said in the message today that Jesus is giving us a completely different vision for how we think about life. What do you think was meant by that?
- Why should we want to live a great life?

- The question is not should we be driven to be great, the question instead is what?
- What are the two different ways of thinking about greatness?
- What are some illustrations of how people think about greatness today in a similar way to the Pharisees?
- How does Jesus define greatness? How does he say we achieve it?
- What two helps did we give today for understanding what it means to be humble?
- We identified a number of ways to pursue humility. What stood out to you?
- What does hospitality have to do with humility?

Sermon Outline: A sermon is much more than an outline, but perhaps this outline will help you follow the sermon.

There are two ways of thinking about greatness.

One, there's the way the Pharisees thought about it:

Greatness is from people and through what you do.

This way of thinking about is very common

This way of thinking is anti-Jesus

Second, there's the way Jesus does.

Greatness from God

Greatness is a gift

Humility is the path to greatness

What does it mean to humble ourselves

How do I do it?

(1) Need Salvation

(2) Requires Confession

(3) Involves Dependence

(4) Demands Faith

(5) Take Action

Sermon Goal: This is a VERY short explanation of what I'm praying God will achieve through this message.

I want God to help us take a completely one hundred percent different approach to life than we're being taught by our culture. I am hoping that as a church we will deep down believe what Jesus says about greatness and that conviction will change our ambitions and the life choices we make.

Self-Evaluation Assignment: These are some questions to help you evaluate yourself.

1. Are you ambitious? Why or why not?
2. What are you ambitious for?
3. What causes you to feel like a failure?

4. What are some things you feel like you learned from your parents about what greatness looked like?
5. What are you teaching your children about the great life?
6. Whose approval matters most to you? Why does it matter so much?
7. How different would your life be if you believed that God valued humility as much as Jesus says He does?
8. How countercultural is your life?

Sermon Flow: This is a basic summary that might help you understand what this sermon is doing and where it is going.

- I. We are going to do four things in the introduction:
 - A. First, I will identify the text we are studying.
 1. Luke 11:14
 - B. Second, I will explain the subject we are studying.
 1. We've been talking about pride and humility
 2. But here I begin to explain that we are looking at this same subject today from a slightly different angle. As we talk about pride and humility, we really are talking about how to be a great person.
 3. And that's what we are going to focus on today. How to be great.
 - a) I demonstrate that is what Jesus is talking about in verse 11.
 - C. Third, I will give some reasons that this subject is important.
 1. I give several biblical motivations for thinking about how to be great. And really what I am trying to help you feel is that it's right to want to live a great life. I'm afraid we sometimes think there are only two options - be proud or be apathetic. But that's not true. I want you to understand that, it's not right to not be ambitious. We should be striving. We should be making the most of these lives that God has given us. But to do that, we need to make sure we are using God's definition of greatness and following God's instructions on how to be great.
 - D. Four, I will pinpoint the questions this message is answering.
 1. What is greatness?
 2. How do we live a great life?
- II. We are going to do several different things as we meditate on this text together.
 - A. First, I will give you a simple overview of what's happening in this verse.
 1. Jesus is comparing and contrasting the way the Pharisees thought about honor with how God does
 - B. Second, we are going to look at the way the Pharisees thought about honor and greatness.
 1. Here what I want you to see is that this is the default way people think about it.

2. I'm hoping you will be struck by how common this is and be willing to ask yourself if you have just been going with the flow and thinking about life like everyone else does.
 3. Because, it's dangerous! I really want you to understand that this way of thinking about life is not compatible with following Jesus.
- C. And third, we will look at how Jesus thought about honor and greatness.
1. The first thing I will point out is that he is concerned first and foremost with being honored by God in the end times.
 - a) We are going to spend a little time thinking about the glory God gives in comparison to the glory you receive from people in order to motivate you to want to be glorified by God more by people.
 - b) And then we will look at who Jesus says will receive that glory. God will honor the humble and only the humble.
 2. If being glorified by God is so valuable and God only glorifies the humble, we should then be desperately wanting to know what does it mean to humble ourselves and how do we do it?
 - a) We will quickly talk about some wrong ideas of humility again and two more important ways to get a right idea of what Jesus means by humbling ourselves.
 - b) The big thing I want you to see here is that humility begins in the heart but does demonstrate itself in our approach to life.
 - c) We will then begin to think about how to humble ourselves. First, I will stress that it requires a supernatural work of God. But since we are commanded to humble ourselves, it also requires us taking action. What do we need to do?
 - (1) I'm going to start by showing you that part of the work is identifying the ways we are seeking to exalt ourselves and confessing and repenting of it.
 - (2) But then what? As we see this sin in ourselves and call it sin, we need to go to God and talk to him and ask Him to help us overcome it.
 - (3) One big way we humble ourselves is by believing God is who He says He is, that Jesus is who He says is, and that God's promises are true.
 - (4) And then we need to apply the gospel to what we say and do. We have to connect the gospel to the way we think and act in the nitty gritty.
 - (a) And even though we are coming to the end of the message here, this is where you really need to pay attention, because we are going to see something very profound and that I believe is even more important than my ability to communicate it at this point.

- (i) In verses 12-14, Jesus shows one specific way you must apply the gospel to your life if you are going to humble yourself, and that is through extraordinary, everyday, radical hospitality.

III. By this point, we've spent so much time thinking about the text and how it applies, that I honestly haven't really left much time to draw this message together at the end. But I do hope by now I have convinced you that if we believe what Jesus says in Luke 14:11 it is going to cause us to think and live very differently than the world around us, because the main thing I want you to go home thinking about is whether or not it actually does.

Application Questions: We can't just read these passages, study them. It's vital we respond.

1. What have you learned?
2. In what ways has this message challenged the way you think about your life?
3. How might this way of thinking change our family cultures and our church culture?
4. What specific steps can you take to put this message into action this week?

Sermon Notes: This is a place you can record your own notes and thoughts as you listen to the message today so that you can think about them later.