

“Pride,” Luke 14:7-11  
Tom Johnson, September 5, 2010  
Concordia University Chapel

**“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”** For Jesus, where you sit at the table is a small window into the human soul. It’s small but reveals a huge problem—pride.

Pride is the belief that I belong at the head of the table—it’s my place in line, not yours—what happens to me is of greater consequence than you. Pride is prison—trapped in a world where the self is the center of the universe. It is a false world.

It’s why Jesus suggests sitting at the lower places and allowing others to merge in front of you. Not everyone can be as important as we think we are. There are 6.5 Billion people in this world and we cannot always be first.

Jesus wants to save us from the shocking, painful and startling realization that we may not be as important as we think we are. He wants us to see that the world will not and cannot revolve around us. He calls us to humility.

Pride, the killer of life—humility, the giver of life. Pride, the black hole of darkness—humility, the bright star of light. Pride, what caused Satan to fall like lightning—humility, what caused the Son of God to descend in love.

Pride is the most vile and offensive thing we can see in others. And yet, it is one of the most difficult things to see in ourselves. Pride does not discriminate. The poor and the rich are just as likely to be prideful.

Pride is the armchair quarterback—the couch potato who sits in the easy chair—the one who hasn’t thrown a football in 20 years—but nevertheless yells at the quarterback on television because of a bad pass.

Pride is the malicious gossiper—the one uses someone else’s personal problems as a fuel for conversation—pride is the one who didn’t grow up in an abusive home and scoffs at how someone else continues their self-destructive behavior.

Pride was Mark Twain who said, “When I was a boy of 14, my father was so ignorant I could hardly stand to have the old man around.” Humility was Mark Twain’s next sentence, “But when I got to be 21, I was astonished at how much the old man had learned in seven years.”

Pride is the voice that always has to be heard—pride is the ear that never truly listens. Pride is the voice that demands things my way—pride is the individualism that thinks everyone else needs to conform to me.

Pride says, “I do not have a problem with pride. Pride doesn’t enjoy the success of others. Pride is my certainty that you will fail; humility is my hope that you will succeed. Humility is my desire for you to move up higher.”

C.S. Lewis said, “Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call 'humble' nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.”

Humility is the one who says, “**Friend, move up higher.**” It is the focus off of ourselves to focus on God’s service to us. As Jesus said, “**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life a ransom for many.**”

Jesus is the one who primarily says, “**Friend, move up higher.**” Be lifted up. He serves us by giving us a greater vision of what this world should be like. He lifts us out of a self-centered prison. He lifts us up to a God-centered and others-centered universe.

He lifts us up by forgiving us when we fail. He lifts us up to restored relationships. He serves us by giving us life in a world plagued by sorrow and death. He lifts us up to eternal life. Once we see how well we are lifted up by God, the grace and love we enjoy becomes contagious—and we can say to those around us, “**Friends, move up higher.**”