



*And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him. <sup>2</sup> And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. <sup>3</sup> And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, **Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?** <sup>4</sup> And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go; <sup>5</sup> And answered them, saying, **Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?** <sup>6</sup> And they could not answer him again to these things. <sup>7</sup> And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, <sup>8</sup> **When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;** <sup>9</sup> **And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.** <sup>10</sup> **But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.** <sup>11</sup> **For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.** (Luke 14:1-11)*

### It was the Sabbath Day.

*“We have been thinking and speaking of a miracle done on the Sabbath. It is evident that our Saviour had a preference for the Sabbath as a time for working miracles. How, then, is it with respect to ourselves — we who, many of us, would be glad to have a miracle wrought on our behalf, and yet have no right whatever to expect one? It is just thus — we are waiting for the Sabbath. In other words, it was intended, no doubt, to be taught us by our Saviour’s practice, that there is a special time of rest coming, when all the various troubles that hamper and injure us will be utterly removed — our burdens unbound; our fevers cooled for ever; our weakness changed to strength; all our heaviness lightened; our blind eyes made clear; our deaf ears unstopped; our feet filled with vigorous leaping blood; and all that is within us lighted up with joy, even as the house was lighted up, and music and dancing sounded in it, when the prodigal*

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<sup>1</sup> Edema (/ɪˈdɪmə/; from the Greek οἴδημα—oídēma, "swelling"[1]), formerly known as dropsy or hydropsy, is an abnormal accumulation of fluid in the interstitium, which are locations beneath the skin or in one or more cavities of the body. It is clinically shown as swelling. Generally, the amount of interstitial fluid is determined by the balance of fluid homeostasis, and increased secretion of fluid into the interstitium or impaired removal of this fluid may cause edema

*came home. There is a Sabbath coming; and as Christ wrought His cures upon the Sabbath, when He was upon earth, we are taught to look on to a day of cure that is coming — that Sabbath, namely, of rest, into which we hope to enter hereafter. It may be needful for our perfection, and the perfection of our friends, that we should still be burdened; but we are quite sure that, after the round of the six days, there will come the seventh; we are quite sure, when the time of trial has ended, the boon of health will be granted.” (the Rev T. T. Lynch.)*

Jesus has been invited to the house of a prominent Pharisee one of the chief of them, we are told.

*“And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.”*

Many other of the Pharisees were doubtless there for *“they watched him.”* How greatly would they have benefitted if they had watched Him to learn instead of to find fault.

Why was Jesus invited by one of those who hated Him and was constantly trying to destroy Him? They had invited Jesus to dinner with the intention of catching Him in an act of disobedience of the Sabbath – it was a ‘set up’ in the popular vernacular.

Why do you suppose Jesus accepted the invitation? Jesus was no recluse – He came to help all who would hear Him. He loved to be in social gatherings where men would listen – ALL men...even Pharisees; and he knew that He would reveal truth even to unbelievers.

*“And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.”*

The cunning mind of the Pharisee bypassed no opportunity in providing a means of entrapment for Christ. Seemingly, just by coincidence, a man with a grave and serious malady is present – a man who probably had not been invited had it not fit comfortably in the plans of the Pharisees to present Jesus with a temptation.

These men are ruthless. They will use even the kindness and compassion of Jesus to try and condemn Him.

They have seated the man with the dropsy (congestive heart failure) in a place BEFORE Jesus. They know that He loves to heal and to do good regardless the occasion, but today is the Sabbath! They will use this as an occasion to condemn Christ of violating the Sabbath by doing healing works on this day.

But Jesus knows the heart of men, and He knows the evil thoughts of the hearts of those who sit watching Him.

*“And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, **Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?**”*

Jesus sets the circumstances to turn the tables on these miscreants. The question restated might read: “Is it ever unlawful to do good?” Did God provide man with the day of rest for the purpose of omitting even deeds of kindness?

The Pharisees and priests of Jesus day had added so many cumbersome proscriptions to the Sabbath observance and every other aspect of the law, that men could not bear them without misery – just the opposite of what God had intended.

Jesus was continually tempted in every way that we are tempted, but Jesus never gave into temptation except in certain cases.

What were those cases? When tempted to do good, as in the present case, Christ could not resist the temptation to act out of His compassion to heal and to comfort. This was not a temptation to sin, but a temptation by sinful men of Christ to do good. He always did!

You and I are tempted, on the other hand, to do bad things not pleasing to God. But in every temptation to do evil is found an opportunity to, instead, do good. Jesus sets the example for us in every case.

Because they have set their trap, the Pharisees do not respond to the pointed question of Christ: *"And they held their peace."* Men will most often speak out when they can condemn or hurt, but will less often speak out on the part of righteousness. Political correctness restrains them from speaking righteousness but tends always to wickedness.

So Jesus poses the simple question which they decline to answer so as not to give away their plot. How many clergy, as well as laity, remain silent on issues of great importance? I have observed the silence, even on discussion groups of the church, remain stony silent on matters on which they should have strong opinion. The silence of those is like a scream in the night.

Those who are legalist often forget that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27)

The failure to accept the Sabbath in the manner and purpose for which it was given nullifies its benefits. The Christian Sabbath is not a once per week observance but a daily one. Christ has given us an Eternal Sabbath (Rest).

*"And he took him, and healed him, and let him go."* The whole will of Christ was to heal the man and not to make a spectacle of him. So Jesus, instead of having the man remain standing by for show, releases him to go his way. How different from the Pharisees who heartlessly brought the man to tempt Christ.

*"And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?"*

Had they forgotten the counsel of Proverbs 12:11 - *"A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."*

An ox or a donkey were precious to men who depended on them to produce income. If one of the Pharisees own precious animals fell into a ditch on the Sabbath, he would certainly have rescued the animal, if not out of kindness, then out of greed.

He thus shuts them. Up to this startling alternative: "Not to do good, when it is in the power of our hand to do it, is to do evil; not to save life, when we can, is to kill"

*"And they could not answer him again to these things. ∴ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,"*

Righteous words will shut the mouth of the wicked.

Jesus is an observer of men and women. He watched as the poor widow cast her all into the Temple treasury, and He has observed here how the guests of the Pharisee came into the room and chose the best seats and provisions. They sought to have their seating lend them honor when they should have allowed their honor to determine their seating. They lacked humility and were filled with false pride.

So Jesus tells them a story (Parable) to which they can relate in common life:

*“When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.”*

All of the counsels of Christ are full of spiritual and uplifting truths. This short Parable is no exception.

Jesus begins the story with a delicate allusion to a type of gathering that would be different from that of his present host of whom He has been invited. The venue is a wedding feast, but still a feast so that the same principle will apply.

When we are invited to a special event, do not exalt your importance by finding the highest place, or most visible place, to stand or sit. We will inevitably be embarrassed by our presumptive pride when we are told, curtly, to move and surrender your place to one having greater honor than you. The only place left at that time will be the place of least honor – the lowest room. *“And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.”*

He has given an example of how not to behave, but He does not leave us in doubt as to how we should behave: *“But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.”*

Notice the host refers to the man who is humble and takes the very lowest place of honor as Friend. He did not refer to the man who took the highest place as Friend. Men despise false pride and arrogance in others. If we humble ourselves, men will always elevate us in esteem. But greater is the reward in Heaven!

A college professor once hosted a tea for his graduating students. When they all presented themselves at his home, the professor had all the cups, in the right number, assembled on the table. The cups were all of different kinds. One was of stone, one of crystal, one of clay, and some were shaped curiously different from any before seen. When the professor invited the students to take a cup, the first took the crystal, the next the glass, the next the stone, the next the clay, and so forth.

As the professor watched them drink their tea that he had poured for them, he observed that they had each chosen the best cup at the table; but the purpose of a tea was not the kind of cup one drank from, but the tea which the cup contained. The quality of the tea is not changed by the quality of the cup which contains it. So with our worthiness before God. It is not some superficial position or appearance that is important, but what

is inside.

What of you and me? Do we honor Christ in all good works during our eternal Sabbath Rest in Him?