



Have You Changed Your Mind?

Luke 14: 1-14

July 14, 2019

We are going to be in Luke Chapter 14 and Verses 1 through 14. This morning's message is titled *Have You Changed Your Mind?* Looking into the Word of God, we are going to be reminded of our need to think differently on a number of issues.

I stand before you this morning as a man with German blood flowing through his veins. The big Saltzmann controversy is that there might be more French in our background than some people in our family are willing to admit. However, the reality is that I am predominantly of German heritage.

There is a certain stereotype of the German people that they are stubborn and hardheaded. You can even look at pop culture articles about German people and you will find that they are like a bunch of stubborn German Krauts. Our people, in their history have eaten lots of sauerkraut. I personally eat it too for its health benefits. But Germans are also known to be an obstinate people, unbending.

Is the condition of being stubborn really something that is unique to the German people, or is it something that is common to man and woman tending to be a little bit stubborn? We can be people who get set in our ways. Once we are thinking according to a particular pattern, it is hard to swerve.

However, I am here to remind you, brothers and sisters in the Lord, that in Christ this cannot be so. We are to be people being constantly transformed by the renewing of our minds. We are to be men and women, boys and girls, who are willing to dismiss our natural ways of thinking about things and we are to be those who, by the Spirit, will line ourselves up with a biblical perspective on the issues of our lives.

Just like we read in the prophecy of Isaiah a couple of weeks back, we are willing to forsake our thoughts and ways and walk according the Lord's thoughts and ways. So, as we grow in Christ, we will be those who think differently about God and religion. We will be those who think differently about ourselves, and we will be those who think differently about the people around us as well. We will think according to Scripture as the Living Word of God takes root within us.

This morning we follow Christ into the home of a prominent Pharisee in an unnamed town, somewhere on that path to Jerusalem that Jesus was walking upon. One of the religious leaders, a ruler of the Pharisees we are told, invited Jesus into his home to have dinner with a bunch of other Pharisees.

I will tell you what, if there were ever a stubborn and obstinate people, even more so than the Germans, it would be these Pharisees. These people were so set in their ways that there is a certain phrase that Scripture uses repeatedly to speak of them. They were stiff-necked. They were so set in their thoughts. Just like an animal on a leash, the Lord said they were going this way, but the Pharisees said they were going another way. They were stiff-necked.

If there was any area where the Pharisees were unbending, it was in relation to their Sabbath Law, what they were allowed to do and not allowed to do on the Sabbath Day. We have encountered this time and time again in the Gospel of Luke. I think that this will be the seventh Sabbath controversy that we encounter in Luke.

After Jesus had tangled with, interacted with, and admonished the Pharisees repeatedly again on this issue, the question will be: Have they changed their minds about this yet? Is their thinking any different?

As we continue through this dinner party and observe Jesus' boldness in confronting issues, He will not only deal with the Sabbath issue, but two additional issues as well. There are three areas where we need to be willing to rethink these issues.

It is not just that we have to change our minds, but I think these are issues that we must have a new mindset on. Because there is something of a Pharisee living in each and every one of us, we need to take to heart these issues that rise up here as well.

We are going to be rethinking three issues. First, rethinking your religious rule. Second, rethinking your view of yourself, particularly your view of yourself in comparison to other people. Are you practicing humility? Third, rethinking your circle of fellowship, those who you bring into your friendship, your hospitality, your love, and your care.

These are the three things that we are going to be rethinking today before the Lord. First, have you changed your mindset:

1. About your religious rules (14:1-6)?

Notice I used the words *your religious rules*. I'm not talking about the clear instruction of Sacred Scripture. I am talking about your additions—human traditions added to the Word of God.

Again, what we have learned walking through the Gospel of Luke is that these Pharisees of Israel, they had this massive list of regulations to help people to obey the Old Testament Law of Moses. The Law of the Lord said something, then the Pharisees added these Traditions of the Elders to help people to carry out the Law that was written in Scripture.

If there was one area where the Pharisees of Israel had the massive and crazy collective case of obsessive-compulsive disorder, it was in relation to the Sabbath Law. God said to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy. Don't work on the Sabbath day. This means to cease and rest. It is a holy rest before the Lord.

So to help people to live this out, according to some historians, these men compiled one thousand five hundred and twenty-one extra rules to help define what it was to work or not to work on that day. Like we have said before, they did not wear their Sunday best, they wore their Saturday straightjackets that were placed upon them by the Pharisees.

One of their rules that was that no medical care could happen on the Sabbath day unless it was a life and death situation. If it were some chronic illness, it would have to wait until another day, even if that person could be treated right then and there.

That was one of their rules, and Jesus kept encountering this rule. Jesus encountered it once again in our passage this morning. Let's look at how this is laid out before us. Luke Chapter 14 and Verses 1 through 6:

¹One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. ²And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. ³And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?" ⁴But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. ⁵And he said to them, "Which if you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?" ⁶And they could not reply to these things.

Here is another Sabbath controversy here. It is really a matter of Jesus confronting not the Law of the Lord, but the human addition to the Law of the Lord.

Here before us we find that there was a man who somehow found his way into the home of the Pharisee. It would seem that he was planted there because we see that these Pharisees were watching Jesus carefully. This is a dramatic scene.

According to one commentator, Barclay, "it's the language of interested and sinister espionage." Jesus was under scrutiny. The old Puritan, John Trapp wrote, "They watched as intently as a dog doth for a bone." It was like a dog that was dialed in, totally focused in.

This man was afflicted with a condition called *dropsy*. What that means is that you could not give this man anything to hold onto. If you gave him a cup of hot tea, he would drop it. If you gave him a plate of First Century fish tacos, he would drop it and food would go all over the place. Why are you grinning? Just kidding, that is not really what dropsy was. Bad joke, just making sure that you are still with me.

Dropsy is an older, less technical term for a condition that today would be known as edema. It is swelling of certain parts of the body because of fluid retention. Typically with a particular aspect of this condition of edema, it is called pitted edema. It happens often around the feet and ankles and lower legs as a result of congestive heart failure or kidney or liver issues.

Especially with the congestive heart failure, the pumping action does not keep the fluids circulating like is necessary and gravity causes the fluid to collect to the bottom, so there is swelling.

This was a very, very sick man. This man was there in front of Jesus. It is almost like a non-intended compliment to Jesus because if, in fact, he was placed there by the Pharisees so they could see what He would do. It was as if they knew that this man was going to get Jesus' attention and His care.

Jesus took control of the situation there in Verse 3. Notice it says

³And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees

This is the language of *He answered them*. The interesting thing about it is that He answered them when they had not said a single word. Yet, Jesus answered them because He knew the score. He knew what was happening. He knew what they were doing and said, *Okay, we have been through this over and over again*. Then Jesus just asked them the question, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?*

Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was made for man. It was for rest. It is okay to do somebody good on the Sabbath. It is not like you are doing a lot of work to build your bank account to get ahead. It is okay to help somebody. That is the point that Jesus kept making.

Jesus confronted the Pharisees with this, and they were silent. They did not say a single word as He, I would imagine, just took them in with His gaze. Then Jesus went right ahead, and He healed this man right there in their midst. Jesus did not just heal the external symptoms. Jesus healed whatever heart or internal issues that man had along with his physical symptoms.

That man was visibly changed right in front of the Pharisees, so that he left that occasion looking very different than he did when he came in. Jesus was showing them the Messianic view of work on the Sabbath, telling them that it was okay to do somebody good on that day. Jesus was saying, *Even you, if your ox or a family member fell in a pit, you are going to do a little exertion to get them out. You know that's okay!* He challenged them.

What we see here is that there were two kinds of power at work in that house. First, we see Messianic power by which Jesus was able to bring healing to a person with a disease. This was a miracle. Miracles are something that don't happen every day, but God can perform miracles.

This miracle was a sign by Jesus, not only done in compassion, but also to show what His everlasting Kingdom is going to involve—perfectly restored healthy people in resurrection bodies. This is just a glimpse of that. That is one kind of power that was at work there.

The other kind of power was the power of a stubborn hard human heart, where Jesus was doing good. Not only was Jesus reasoning with the Pharisees, but He was also giving them a glimpse

of miraculous working power, but still they stood there silent before Him. That just goes to show how set in our ways we can become.

So we must be men and women who are thinking, *Lord, help me to be careful not to become a legalist. Help to be one who sees the beauty of Your Word, but is cautious and careful about extra-human rules and regulations that can be added to it. Help me to have a heart of mercy and love, even as I walk in the ways of Your Word.* We must be careful!

I was thinking about how this might work out in our lives. I think of a command that is given to us in Scripture in I Peter 1:15 and 16. It says in that place:

¹⁵but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

Christians are to be people who pursue holiness. In the pages of Scripture filling that out, yes, what we find is that the Lord calls His people to be distinct in this world. We are to pursue holiness of speech. It is in the Bible! We are not to use our capacity of speech for crass, coarse kinds of language.

We must be careful about and pursue holiness as far as God’s design for sexual intimacy—a man and a woman within marriage. We must pursue holiness in so many different aspects of life, but we must be careful to keep a heart of mercy toward people who are struggling in sin. We must be careful that we don’t become like the Pharisees and we become separatists.

Being a Christian pursuing holiness means that we can have a heart of love as we interact with people who curse like a sailor. We can have a heart of mercy even as we are among people who get drunk and get high. There is a boundary. We are not to be a person who is un-sober at any time, but we, with a heart mercy, can be among those who are for their good. We can even be among them on Sunday, being light in this world that Jesus has called us to minister to.

So we must be careful about extra rules and regulations. We must continue with hearts of grace in this world that we have been called to. Have you changed your mind about religious rules, all the Pharisaic legalistic attitudes that we don’t want to rise within us?

We continue. Second, how:

2. About your view of yourself (14:7-11)?

About your view of yourself in relation to other people. Your instinct and the desire of your flesh is going to be toward self-elevation, having the sense that you are just a cut above other people. There is the sense that lives inside of us that we might think ourselves better than others.

New Testament Scripture warns us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. It is written there because that is what comes to us. It is natural to us. We must think ourselves as servants of others.

We see this as it is laid out as we continue at this dinner party. This dinner party started with these people very closely and carefully watching Jesus, but as we continue what we find is that Jesus was also observing them. We see that Jesus noticed how the Pharisees were positioning themselves at the table in relation to other people that were there.

In a gathering such as this in First Century Israel, the tables would have been low to the ground and positioned in a u-shape. The head of the house, the host, would have been at the head position at the front of the table. The others would be positioned in relation to him according to their place in society. The most prominent guests would be closest to the host. Then on it would go.

All this was happening here and when it came time for them all take their seats, Jesus noticed that these men all felt like they needed to be the one's closest to the head. They were trying to maneuver and position themselves accordingly. Jesus observed this and then He called them all out on it, giving them a piece of wisdom.

Look at what is written in Verses 7 through 11:

⁷Now 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, ⁹and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with the shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But 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. ¹¹For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Jesus gave this word of wisdom to all those men who were trying to get the best seats for themselves.

I try to enter that room and picture what it must have been like, because what we find in the next paragraph that we will read in a few moments is that there were no so-called lower-class people there. They were all the people from that rank of Pharisees. Those were the only ones invited.

These were a bunch of men who were always the heavyweights. Whenever they went to a party, they would always be given the prime positions, the places of honor. But at this party, the men were all heavyweights, each one was used to getting the prominent seats. So, it was almost kind of a logjam that occurred.

They were trying to figure the seating all out, and Jesus was watching it happening. He was saying, *Just take the lowest seat. It can work out very well for you if you do. If you take the big seat, and the host thinks there is somebody more prominent than you, he will send you back to the kiddy table. Watch out! However, if you take the lower seat, it could be that the host will tell you to come up and be higher.*

There is that level of proverbial wisdom in what Jesus said. However, digging deeper still, in that context Jesus gave this statement of truth that is at the heart of God—whoever humbles himself will be lifted up. Whoever lifts himself up in pride, he is going to be humbled. But whoever humbles himself truly out of a spirit of love, carried by the Holy Spirit, this is something that God delights in.

So Jesus was saying, *The time comes one way or the other where if you defer to others with a spirit of joy and humility, God is going to take note of that, and you will be lifted up in due time.* We need to be people that are not jockeying and positioning ourselves. We will take whatever seat. Let's just be a blessing to other people, right? That is the way of Christian humility.

There was brother in Christ who lived in the 20th Century who had a way of communicating profound truths in a very quaint way. He had a comic strip called Peanuts—Charles Schultz. In one of these cartoons, there was Linus and Charlie Brown sitting down together talking about all their plans for when they were grownups.

Linus, the kid with the blanket, he said to Charlie Brown, *When I get big, I'm going to be a humble little country doctor. I'll live in the big city, and every morning I'll get up, climb into my sports car and zoom into the country! Then I'll start healing people. I'll heal everybody for miles around!* And reflecting further he concluded this speech with, *I'll be a world famous humble little country doctor.*

I read about that I thought that he got to the heart of the tension that can be living within a follower of Christ because, on the one hand, we know the value of being a humble servant who goes about trying to help people in a quiet way, without a bunch fanfare and just being a doctor out in some little country agrarian village.

But then something rises up and, oh wait a minute, the lust of the eye. I want that sports car. The lust of the pride of life. I want to be a world-famous small country doctor, so that people hear about me. That's just the tension that lives within us.

We like accolades and Jesus was telling us not to worry about those things and to not maneuver for them. When we are filled the Spirit, we will have the mind of Christ who did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but He emptied Himself. He made Himself nothing, taking on the form of a servant. He humbled Himself even to the point of death on a cross. And what did God do? God raised and lifted Him up.

We don't worry about those positions or all those accolades. Filled with the Spirit, we need to seek to serve others with love, knowing that it pleases the heart of the Father. This requires an entirely new mindset, because the way of the world is to promote ourselves, to get a step above others, doing what it takes to do so.

In Christ, we trust God. We just serve people and we do so with an integrity that God helps us to live with, and we let God lift us up in His way and in His time. Wouldn't it be much better to know that if there is any kind of promotion that occurs in life, it is God that has done it, rather than us trying to muster it for ourselves?

So, have you changed your mindset on the view of yourself that needs to be recognized that you are a step ahead of everybody else, deserving of such honor? By the Spirit, we must walk in another direction.

Finally, changing the mindset:

3. About your circle of fellowship (14:12-14)?

We continue in this dinner party. One thing is for sure, it was never a dull dinner party when Jesus was there. He is going to challenge their thinking once again. Jesus had addressed all the guests, then He addressed the host.

In what He did next, I think that we all need to be rethinking who we include in our circle of fellowship and hospitality, those we give to and those we include. Let's look at what happened. Looking around, Jesus noticed all the the prominent guests there, so much so that there was a seating crisis because they all thought they were worthy of the best seats.

So Jesus addressed the host. Verse 12:

¹²He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

I read that and I asked: Are you kidding me? Did you read what was just there? Are you kidding me? Did Jesus just say that whenever we have a dinner or a party, we can't invite our family and our friends? Are you serious? What is going on here? Somebody help explain it.

After studying this I thanked the Lord for that little book on my desk called *The Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*. Grammar is important in the study of Scripture. The author of that text is a scholar in the Greek, and he pointed out that in this text the form of language Jesus used was present, active, imperative that indicated something that was continuous, something that was happening over and over again.

In his commentary that I am thoroughly enjoying, William Hendriksen also translates this text by saying that where this text says *do not invite*, the sense of it is to not habitually invite your friends or relatives or your neighbors over and over and over and over and over again—present active continuous, something that happens time in and time out, time in and time out, time in and time out.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus is not forbidding you to invite your friends and family over for dinner. He is forbidding you from ONLY inviting your friends and your family over to dinner, and not

being one who is welcoming and deliberately inclusive of those who may really, really need to be at your table as well.

The question that comes to us as we analyze our thinking here is this: What if Jesus were to observe your practice of hospitality? What if He were to make some observations about who it is that is at your table, who it is that is with you at coffee or out to dinner? Is that an exclusive list of people who you find encouraging and pleasant to be around?

Personally, I like being around people who I find encouraging and edifying and who challenges me in ways where I come away feeling encouraged and recharged. But does your pattern of hospitality and your pattern of hanging out with people, does it include anybody who might be in some ways a challenge for you to be around, somebody that would require your patience, somebody who might be easily excluded from people repeatedly because of some issue?

Are those people ever found in your circle of friendship? If not, Jesus would say to change your mindset. You change your mindset and you start including people in need. Brothers and sisters, I was so convicted about this, because I get to go spend time with fellow pastors, trying to nurture the soul, so this was challenging for me, Jeffrey Thomas Saltzmann, and I hope it is challenging to all of you.

There are people even around us who are aching with loneliness because they never make it into somebody's home or to their table. Who does the Spirit of God bring to your heart? Who is it that you need to include where there is nothing that they could do to ever repay you for it, but you are going to be repaid in the Kingdom at the Final Judgement?

Who could you bring in? Do you ever bring them in? This is the Lord speaking to us through this Word. I appreciate the atmosphere that Chris and Janelle have been seeking to cultivate in DOXA. Pastor Chris came in with a brilliant list of the DOXA Ten Commandments.

I'm sorry I don't have this one verbatim, but one of those Ten Commandments to the DOXA students is that you shall be intentionally inclusive and welcoming of any person who walks through that door. We are not going to have these little subgroups within DOXA. We are going to welcome people into our fellowship.

Brothers and sisters, cliques are a danger for teenagers. Cliques are not only a danger for teenagers. Cliques are a danger for middle-aged people. Cliques are a danger for people walking into the sunset of life. Do you have eyes for people who are alone or in need? Are you bringing them in to bless them, to encourage them that they might be replenished and uplifted by the time that they spend with you?

That is what Jesus is saying to us here. That is what He is challenging us with. I pray that we can also say, *Lord, give me eyes to see and a heart to serve those that You would have me serve.* We ought to pray that our hospitality and our generosity is focused on people who need it, because this is a word that comes from the Messiah to us. Have you changed your mindset on these things?

As we finish, I want to conclude by saying this: You and I need a Savior really badly. Certainly in me, and I am guessing that within you, there may be a tendency to judge other people based on your own standards. Even if you judge people according the Word, there may be times where you do it with ego and pride that is not fitting for a child of God.

It could be that you have a view of yourself where you just kind of like to walk around with your head in the clouds, thinking that you are better than other people. There might be a tendency for you to exclude people that the Lord would have you include.

I think that each and every one of us has been guilty of this. Each and every one of us has committed sins of omission and commission but, thank God, that Jesus loves sinners such as us. Thank the Messiah that He came into the world and He lived a perfect and righteous life in our stead. Thank the Messiah that He shed His blood to wash away our sins, that He lived a life that He transfers to us that we might be clothed in His righteousness as we stand before the Throne of the Living God.

Thank God that when we come to a humble repentant faith in Christ, He gives us the gift of His Spirit, that we might be transformed from within by the renewing of our minds, that He is at work with patience and with grace to make us new people who represent His Kingdom on this earth.

We have a Savior. We have a Savior! He spilled His blood and He paid for our shortcomings. When we look to the cross where Jesus died, I pray that we will see there the grace of our redemption and I pray that we will also find inspiration to take up our cross and live in the pattern that Jesus lays out for us.

We need Jesus and we need Jesus very badly. With that, I'm going to pray and ask Him to help us with these things, and I'm going to pray that we will all be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Let's go to the Lord.