

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
AAAA. Christ's Call For Unselfishness
(Luke 14:1-24)

I. Introduction

- A. The Pharisees of Jesus' day were guilty of a lot of unrighteousness that grew out of selfishness. Thus, in Luke 14:1-24, Christ critiqued several of their unrighteous deeds and called for unselfishness.
- B. Paul predicted that in the latter days of Church History, selfishness would characterize a lot of people, making for difficult times for believers (2 Timothy 3:1-2a).
- C. In view of the timeliness of this subject, we view Luke 14:1-24 for our insight, application and edification:

II. Christ's Call For Unselfishness, Luke 14:1-24.

- A. Jesus called for unselfishness in place of heartlessness toward the afflicted, Luke 14:1-6:
 - 1. One Sabbath Day, Jesus entered the home of a Pharisee to eat a meal, and the event included in the group of guests a man who had an abnormal swelling of his body, Luke 14:1-2 NIV.
 - 2. This was a test by the Pharisee and his guests, Luke 14:1b. The Pharisees debated whether one could walk about on the Sabbath with a locust's egg, a jackal's tooth or with a nail of the cross of one who had been crucified as a means of healing various ailments (Herbert Danby, The Mishnah, 1974, p. 106 (Shabbath, 6.10), so they sought to embroil Jesus in their own heated divisions on healing to undermine His ministry!
 - 3. Christ addressed this issue, asking if the Law forbade healing on the Sabbath, what the Mosaic Law did not oppose, and the Pharisees were stunned by this disarming question, remaining silent, Luke 14:3-4a.
 - 4. Jesus then healed the afflicted man and told the Pharisees that if they had a son or an ox that fell into a well on the Sabbath, they would pull it out, Luke 14:4b-5. [The earliest manuscripts read "son" and not "donkey" or "sheep" in verse 5 (Bruce M. Metzger, A Text. Com. on the Grk. N. T., 1971, p. 164)].
 - 5. The Pharisees remained silent, unable to reply to Christ's comment or healing action, Luke 14:6.
- B. Jesus called for unselfishness in place of pride over other people, Luke 14:7-11:
 - 1. Christ also noted that the guests had picked the places of honor at the table in a pecking order of those who viewed themselves as the greatest down to those who viewed themselves as the least, Luke 14:7a.
 - 2. Thus, Jesus told the guests to choose the lesser places so that the host might not humiliate them by making them take a lesser seat but ask them to take a higher seat than the seat the guest had taken, Luke 14:7b-10.
 - 3. The lesson was that all who exalted themselves would be humbled, but those who humbled themselves would be exalted, Luke 14:11.
- C. Jesus called for unselfishness in place of greed, Luke 14:12-14:
 - 1. Christ then told the host that when he gave a luncheon or a dinner, that he was not to invite his friends, relatives or rich neighbors who could reimburse him in some way, Luke 14:12a. Such an invitation was given typically to obligate the guests to "heap benefits on him in return for his hospitality." (Luke 14:12b; J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 330)
 - 2. Rather, Jesus called for the host to invite the poor, the maimed, the lame and blind, people who could not return the favor, and God would later bless the host in the resurrection of the just, Luke 14:13-14.
- D. Jesus called for unselfishness in place of disrespect for the Lord, Luke 14:15-24:
 - 1. One of the guests at the meal then made the statement, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God," Luke 14:15. The Pharisee making this statement evidently believed that he would eat at that feast simply because He was a Hebrew and a theologically conservative Pharisee.
 - 2. Jesus responded to this statement, clarifying that though God's invitation to Israel to eat at the feast in the Messianic Kingdom went out to all Israel, only those who personally responded to the invitation would participate. Indeed, the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame and even those in the countryside, what would apply later to believing Gentiles, would participate in the kingdom feast because of their response to the Lord's invitation, Luke 14:16-23. Those who did not respond would be excluded from the feast, v. 24.
 - 3. Thus, Jesus called on His countrymen humbly to accept God's invitation to enter the kingdom by faith.

Lesson: *In contrast to the selfishness that exists in the world, Christ called on people to be unselfish instead of heartless toward the afflicted, unselfish instead of being proud over others, unselfish instead of being greedy and unselfish instead of disrespecting the Lord by not responding to His invitations.*

Application: *May we heed Jesus' call to be unselfish and not heartless, proud, greedy or disrespectful of the Lord.*