

“Christians, Walk to the Beat of a Different Drummer”

Did you hear about this guy? For the second straight August in Virginia a man, wearing an old TV on his head, has done the same thing. During the night he delivers old TVs onto the porches of 50 unsuspecting homes. There doesn't seem to be anything sinister about this man's intent other than it's a good old fashioned prank. In describing this “TV Santa Claus” we might say, “He walks to the beat of a different drummer.” That expression means you go against the normal behavior of a group or society. That can be both good and bad. Today, Jesus talks to us about one way in which it is good for Christians to walk to the beat of a different drummer. Listen to Luke 14:1, 7-14.

“One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: ‘When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’ Then Jesus said to his host, ‘When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.’”

Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex, 6th in line to be King of England and his wife Meghan Markle, Duchess of Sussex, are creating quite the stir at royal dinner parties. They are breaking royal dinner party etiquette by demanding that they sit next to each other instead of the tradition that husband and wife sit across the table from each other. They are also causing a stir with their public displays of affection (PDA) at these royal events. They are walking to the beat of a different drummer. In our sermon lesson for today Jesus takes up the topic of wedding/dinner party etiquette. As he does that we need to understand that Jesus is getting at the deeper issue of humility. The dictionary defines humility in this way: “not arrogant, having a spirit or manner that is respectful and shows care and concern for others.” Jesus wants each of us to consider every aspect of our lives and test for humility. Jesus wants each of us to examine what our attitude is about ourselves and what our attitude is about other people. The answer to those questions is an indicator of your spiritual health and how well you are doing in serving others and reaching them for Christ. Jesus wants Christians like you and me to walk to the beat of a different drummer, the drummer being Christ, by displaying humility in our lives.

Jesus wants humility to take place at home, at church, at work, at school, in small groups, in private, in my dress, in my speech, in my actions, in my activities, in my attitude, in my planning, in my decision making, in everything. So let's take a humility test this morning based upon the Scripture lessons we have heard this morning and also upon the whole Bible. Let's take that test Jeff Foxworthy style. Do you remember comedian Jeff Foxworthy's “You might be a redneck...” monologue? Let's take a humility test by pondering - “You might be guilty of arrogance...

- If you have responded to someone else's negative words or behavior toward you with anger, a grudge, desiring revenge, an unwillingness to forgive.
- If you struggle to admit when you are wrong.
- If someone calls you to repent and you ignore their loving spiritual care.
- If you get defensive when someone offers you loving constructive criticism.
- If you have purposely hurt someone else's reputation with other people.
- If you have ever considered yourself better than someone else and you showed it by treating them differently than those you deem to be equals or more important than you.
- If you have ever put on display with selfish words and actions that you consider yourself better than others and deserve better things than others.
- If you think that some people are not worth spending time with.
- If the determining factor for building a relationship with someone else depends on if you think your needs, popularity, career, business, or life enjoyment will benefit from that relationship or not.
- If you find it necessary to tell other people all the wonderful good things you have done.
- If you get upset when your work or gift or volunteer service isn't properly recognized or appreciated by others.
- If other people having a good day or bad day depends on whether YOU are in a good mood or a bad mood.
- If you regularly make fun of other people and give them a hard time.
- If you struggle to be pleasant and encouraging to other people.
- If you struggle to say "thank you" to people who have helped you.
- If your work ethic, body language, and attitude gives other people the impression that what you are being asked to do isn't worth your time or is below you.
- If the way you spend your money shows you only care about yourself and you don't care about others less fortunate, including spreading God's Word.
- If you ignore God's command to gather weekly with other Christians to hear God's Word and encourage one another because you think other things are more important.
- If there are certain people you are unwilling to share God's Word with because you don't like them for some reason.

We could continue to play the "You might be arrogant if..." game, but let's allow the psalm writer to summarize arrogance for us. **"The arrogant...stray from your (God's) commands" (Psalm 119:21).** Anytime we fail to fulfill a command of God we are guilty of the arrogance of telling God that his way of doing things (the beat of his drum) is dumb and our way of doing things (the beat of our drum) is much better.

True humility admits that there have been way too many times in my life that I have been "ME first/what's in it for ME" self-centered, uncaring, disrespectful, mean, or in other words – arrogant. True humility admits that I am no better than anyone else and that I deserve nothing from God but this - **"For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled" (Luke 14:11a)** with God's eternal wrath and punishment in Hell. When a person is humble in repentance for their arrogance, they are ready to enjoy the humility of their Savior Jesus and the benefits that go with trusting in him as Savior. When Jesus came into this world, he didn't scramble to take the highest place. He took the lowest place. A humble birth. A humble life. A humble death. And there is no place humbler than the cross. That's as humble as you can get, hanging on the cross, suffering Hell and dying to pay for all the arrogant sins of the world piled on your

shoulders. Jesus didn't just give a portion of his income that didn't affect his lifestyle – he gave his whole life for you, me, and all so that we can enjoy this promise – **“he who humbles himself will be exalted”** (Luke 14:11b). Through humble repentant faith in Jesus you are exalted with forgiveness now and for eternity for your arrogance. And even though humility now on this earth is often times overlooked and gets nothing in return, Jesus makes this promise – **“you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous”** (Luke 14:14). When you get to Heaven God is going to exalt you beyond your wildest imaginations for eternity.

Do you know what happens when you ponder these things, and believe these things? It keeps us clinging to Jesus as our Savior and that will result in being given a seat at the eternal wedding banquet in heaven. And pondering these things also does this - day by day and little by little God changes you. He changes you from someone who is arrogant, into someone who is humble. He changes you from someone who is self-centered, into someone who is filled with the desire to **“love your neighbor as yourself”** (James 2:8). I read a story recently about a man who was an example of someone who did just that. Booker T. Washington lived from 1856-1915. He was an African American who went from being a child of slaves to an American educator, author, leader in the African American community, advisor to US Presidents, and president of a college – Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. The story is told about a time during his presidency at that college. A woman walked up to him who didn't recognize him, and said to him, “Why don't you come over here and chop some wood for me.” She probably looked at the color of his skin and assumed that he was an ex-slave looking for work. Mr. Washington didn't resist. He politely chopped wood for the lady, and after it was all over – it took a while - she gave him a couple coins and said, “now be on your way.” A few days later this lady discovered that this man was the president of the local college. And so she went to the college and visited him in his office, and apologized for treating him in such a low manner. But Mr. Washington was humble. He said, **“I don't mind working, and I had the time, so I was happy to do it. I believe in being humble, and chopping wood was the perfect way for me to be humble that day.”** This week, look for ways to be humble and giving to others. Walk to the beat of a different drummer, your Savior Jesus. Let God be the one who exalts you and pays you back. Amen.