

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost, Gospel Year C

SIT, SEAT, SATE

Luke 14:1, 7-14

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

Analysis by Mark A. Marius

1 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the Pharisees to eat a meal on the sabbath, they were watching him closely. 7 When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a parable. 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited by your host; 9 and the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place,' and then in disgrace you would start to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, your host may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. 11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

12 Jesus said also to the one who had invited him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. 13 But when you give a banquet, invite those who are poor, crippled, lame, and blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."



DIAGNOSIS: Sitting at the Table

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Sitting

Where should we sit? We all want to be sitting at the table, so we must stake out our spots. Find a place to sit before someone else beats us to it. We don't want to be left standing or be excluded from the banquet room. So, as Jesus observes, it becomes every person for themselves.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): Seating

But, of course, we are never satisfied with just sitting at the table. We also want the best seats. Sure, being invited to the banquet is nice, but we base our value on the quality and position of our seats. Always looking for an upgrade if available. Sometimes it comes with great cost to us, many times it comes at great cost to others. But as long as we can be seen and people recognize our importance it is all worth it. Unfortunately, God doesn't "seat" it that way.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): Unsat(isfactory)

When the music stops, so to speak, we want to be the ones sitting in the prized seat. We have not been honest with God, ourselves and our fellow guests, We do not deserve the honor we have given ourselves. It is not our party, we don't own our seat and so the host judges our self serving actions unsatisfactory. So we are "unsat" from our coveted seat and sent away and excluded from the party.

PROGNOSIS: Serving the Table

***Step 4: Initial
Prognosis (Eternal
Solution): Sate***



Jesus had a great seat at the right hand of God. And what did he do but vacate it and come down to earth to stand with all those without seats—we who can't find fulfillment in the seats the world offers. Jesus satisfies us with the promise of an eternal seat with God—costly seats we could not afford, so he satisfies the cost. He stands and stretches out his arms and welcomes all who suffer to take with him the seat of honor. And by his death and resurrection he feeds us at the table with grace and love.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): Share

Through baptism we are through trying to stand on our own. We are through trying to buy our own seats. We are now joined to Christ's death and resurrection. We have received Jesus's invitation to share his seat of new life. And we are filled with peace having been ushered in by our Host and filled with love, grace and forgiveness at the holy table.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Serve

What a relief it is to not have to find seats. What a relief it is to trust that all the seating God provides has the same value. With this assurance, we finally figure it out: Our value is not reflected by where we sit but in God's desire for us to join the banquet. And because there is unlimited seating, we are encouraged to go and invite others to have a seat. Our invitation is especially vital to those who have been excluded by our world, or failed to realize they were invited. We are sent out to invite people in by letting them know they are loved by God and have a seat waiting for them at God's banquet. But just as satisfying, is the reward that comes—not from sitting at the table only, but from serving Christ's guests and inviting them to move up higher.