

# AT THE TABLE

It's that time of year again for Thanksgiving! It's a beautiful time to be with family and friends and enjoy deep conversations and good laughs. We consider everything God has done for us throughout our lives and what is yet to be revealed. Yes, there's always something to be thankful for, isn't there?

Today, we're looking at Jesus' invitation to recline at the table. You've read this passage through the week in **Luke 14:7-24**. I won't rehash this since we read it together last week, and many of you have read through it this week. Jesus discussed the need for humility (don't take the seat of honor), the need to be thoughtful of those who are without or typically not invited (don't invite your friends and family who can/will repay you), and finally, how only those who accept the invitation will enjoy the master's banquet (same lesson found in **Matthew 22:1-14**). If we were to back up to chapter **13:22-30**, we'd learn how many of God's own people behaved wickedly, therefore they would not enjoy reclining at the table in the Kingdom of God with those of old. Several passages speak of a banquet. In fact, in **Revelation 19**, we read about a marriage feast in vs. **6-10**. This vision brought John to his knees in worship (though he shouldn't have worshipped the angel). It was the Jewish belief that the coming of the Messiah was accompanied by a great meal (see **Isaiah 25:6**). However, there would be those from all around the world who would. I consider this the correct interpretation because of Jesus' words to an outsider in **Matthew 8:10-13**. This leader understood authority, and while he experienced it himself, when it came to Jesus, he was unworthy to have Jesus in his home.

This actually brings me back to Luke. Now we're going a bit further to chapter **17**. Let's begin with **vs.7-10**. I'm bringing this up to encourage thankfulness, not to damper the mood. There's so much I don't deserve. The other night, I tried to find a video of Cadence when she was a little baby. She was sitting on my chest with her little feet towards my head. I'd take her little feet and hit my neck as if she were kicking me. I'd make a silly face and act like it choked me. She was grinning so big. She began to laugh for the first time. That little baby laugh is so precious. The body finally works together, and her little vocal cords let out the first legit laugh. It was a beautiful moment. I'll never forget it. I was worried when I couldn't find the video. I finally found it on an older backup. I lay in bed afterward and thought about all these moments with the kids. Several things came to mind: how quickly time passes. How many moments I've accumulated with the kids. How I'm not the only one. There have been billions before me, and God knows them all. How I will come and go without making a real mark on this world (and that's okay). How unworthy I am of it all. I'm genuinely not impressed with myself. God alone is good. Yet, He's called me to the table to recline with Him when I don't deserve it. I should be waiting at His hands and feet with thankfulness to even be in the room. The blessing to serve Him a meal. I want to say that I was there and saw Him. As John said of Jesus, "I'm not even worthy to untie His sandal strap."

I'm ending this message today with the passage that follows. It's an example that reflects the realities of life, not only before Jesus' time on earth but every day that follows. We so quickly forget the blessings of God. **Luke 17:11-19**. We see a common denominator in the gospel accounts. The outsiders tend to appreciate God's gifts more than the insiders. I should relate because we're all Gentile. Yet, at this point, I'm closer to the Jew than the Gentile. I've grown up blessed by God, being taught and believing that I'm favored by Him. His love was always proclaimed, and I never felt like an outsider regarding what I believed and taught. I've always been "in" while so many were "out." On top of that, most practically, I've never been without. Yet, that's an understatement. I've never been close to being without what I need. Most of the time, I've had what I wanted (to a reasonable extent.)

**As we sit at the table . . .**

- Consider who's across from you.
- Consider how God's cared for you.
- Consider that He's invited you to a banquet.
- Thank Him, not only in word, but in deed and truth.