

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN AN INVITED GUEST,,, IN THE HOME OF A FELLOW CHRISTIAN AND SEEN A PLAQUE SOMETHING LIKE THIS,,, HANGING ON THEIR WALL.

***“CHRIST IS THE CENTER OF OUR HOME,,,  
THE GUEST AT EVERY MEAL,,, AND  
A SILENT LISTENER,,, TO EVERY CONVERSATION”***

I WONDER IF WE’VE EVER STOPPED TO CONSIDER,,, THAT HAVING JESUS AS OUR HONORED DINNER GUEST,,, MIGHT JUST BE A LITTLE MORE,,, THAN WE EXPECTED?

THIS WEEK,,, WE SEE JESUS AS THE INVITED GUEST AT A FORMAL DINNER PARTY,,, IN THE HOME OF AN UNNAMED PHARISEE.

BUT FIRST,,, LET ME TO TELL YOU AN OLD STORY:  
THERE WAS ONCE AN HONORED DINNER SPEAKER,,, WHO WAS IN SUCH A HURRY,,, TO GET TO HIS SPEECH THAT ON HIS ARRIVAL AND AS HE SAT AT THE HEAD TABLE,,, HE REALIZED,,, HE HAD FORGOTTEN HIS FALSE TEETH.

TURNING TO THE MAN NEXT TO HIM,,, HE SAID:

***I FORGOT MY TEETH!***

THE MAN SAID: **“NO PROBLEM!”** FROM HIS POCKET HE PULLED OUT A PAIR OF FALSE TEETH,,, AND SAID:  
**“TRY THESE!”**.

THE SPEAKER PLACED THEM INTO HIS MOUTH AND SAID: ***THEY’RE TOO LOOSE!***

THE MAN SAID:

**NO PROBLEM,,, I HAVE ANOTHER PAIR,,, TRY THESE!**

THE SPEAKER TRIED THEM AND SAID:

***THESE DON’T FIT RIGHT EITHER!***

WITHOUT SKIPPING A BEAT! THE MAN SAID:

**I HAVE ONE MORE PAIR,,, GO AHEAD,,, TRY EM!**

THE SPEAKER SAID:

***THESE FIT PERFECTLY!***

WITH THAT,,, HE ATE HIS MEAL & GAVE HIS SPEECH.

**AFTER THE DINNER MEETING WAS OVER,,, THE SPEAKER WENT OVER,,, TO THANK THE MAN,,, WHO HAD HELPED HIM,,, SAYING:**

***I WANT TO THANK YOU,,, FOR COMING TO MY AID. BOY,,, WAS I BLESSED TO SIT NEXT TO A DENTIST. WHERE'S YOUR OFFICE,,, I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A GOOD DENTIST.***

**LOOKING PUZZLED,,, THE MAN REPLIED:**

***I'M NOT A DENTIST,,, I'M THE LOCAL UNDERTAKER!***

**THIS MADE UP,,, BUT HUMOROUS STORY,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, SHOWS,,, THAT THERE ARE OFTEN TWO WAYS TO LOOK AT THINGS,,, TWO WAYS TO UNDERSTAND,,, WHAT SEEMS SO OBVIOUS ON THE SURFACE! TODAY'S SCRIPTURE,,, IS A BIT LIKE THAT! ON THE SURFACE,,, IT SEEMS SO INNOCENT! JESUS BEING INVITED,,, TO HAVE A SABBATH MEAL WITH THE PHARISEE,,, IN HIS HOME NO LESS,,, AND THEN,,, JESUS HEALED A SICK MAN AND USED IT AS A TEACHING OPPORTUNITY.**

**NOW,,, THIS SEEMS LIKE IT MIGHT BE A PLEASANT STORY,,, ABOUT JESUS AND HIS MINISTRY.**

***BUT,,, THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS,,, AS THEY SEEM!***

**TODAY,,, I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND,,, WHAT WAS REALLY TAKING PLACE THAT DAY,,, WHAT JESUS WAS TRYING TO TELL THE PEOPLE OF HIS DAY,,, AT THAT SABBATH MEAL,,, AND ALSO TO US TODAY!**

**THAT MESSAGE IS: THAT THE LORD'S WAY,,, IS CLEARLY DIFFERENT!**

**SO,,, LET'S START AT THE PHARISEE'S HOME,,, BECAUSE IT'S THERE,,, THAT WE FIND JESUS IN TODAY'S SCRIPTURE,,, AS AN INVITED AND HONORED DINNER GUEST,,, IN A PHARISEE'S HOME! NOW,,, WE KNOW WHAT A HOME IS,,, BUT WHAT IS A PHARISEE? THE PHARISEES,,, WERE ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST IMPORTANT GROUPS OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS,,, DURING JESUS' TIME.**

**THEY CONTROLLED THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TEMPLE AND THEY HAD GREAT CONTROL,, OVER MUCH OF THE JEWISH POPULATION. THEIR POWER CAME FROM THEIR RELATIONSHIP,, WITH THE ROMAN APPOINTED GOVERNOR.**

**PHARISEE MEANS: SEPERATED ONES AND THEY SEPERATED THEMSELVES FROM THE MASSES. THEY WERE PROGRESSIVE JEWS,, WHO WERE WILLING TO ADOPT NEW IDEAS,, AND ADAPT THE RELIGIOUS LAW,, TO NEW SITUATIONS.**

**HAVING CONTROL OVER THE TEMPLE,, MEANT THAT THEY HAD SHARED CONSIDERABLE POWER,, WITH THE GOVERNOR. THEY HAD BECOME WEALTHY,, AND THEY HAD POWERFUL JOBS AND NICE HOMES.**

**SO IMAGINE JESUS,, WALKING ALONG THE NARROW STREETS AND ENTERING INTO THE LARGE,, ORNATE COURTYARD,, OF THIS PHARISEE,, WHERE THERE WERE PROBABLY MANY GUESTS STANDING AROUND.**

**OUR PHARISEE- WAS STANDING NEAR THE ENTRY BETWEEN JESUS AND THE OTHER PHARISEES AND IT WAS THERE,, THAT JESUS SAW A SICK MAN,, SITTING ON A MAT.**

**JESUS STOPS IN FRONT OF THE MAN,, LOOKS AT HIM COMPASSIONATLY,, AND THEN LOOKS UP AT THE OTHERS. THEY'VE HEARD OF JESUS AND THEY KNOW ABOUT HIS GREAT HEALING WORKS.**

**BUT,, THIS IS THE SABBATH,, AND BY JEWISH LAW,, NO WORK IS ALLOWED ON THE SABBATH!**

**SO JESUS SAYS TO THE PHARISEES AND THE LEGAL EXPERTS: *WELL,, IS IT LAWFUL,, TO HEAL ON THE SABBATH,, OR NOT?***

**WHAT MAKES THIS MOMENT SO HEART PUMPING,, IS THAT THIS INVITATION,, FROM THE PHARISEES,, TO HAVE A SABBATH MEAL WITH THEM,, IS NO SINCERE GESTURE OF HOSPITALITY!**

**RATHER,, AN ATTEMPT ON THE PART OF THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS,, TO FIND FAULT WITH JESUS.**

**THEY FEARED HIM! ANY TALK OF A MESSIAH...  
UPSET AND IRRITATED,, THE TEMPLE AUTHORITIES.  
A POPULAR HERO,, LIKE JESUS,, COULD AROUSE  
ANOTHER REVOLT,, AGAINST THE ROMAN RULE.  
YET THEY WERE HESITANT TO ARREST HIM,, FOR  
FEAR OF PROVOKING A RIOT AMONG THE PEOPLE,,  
WITH WHOM,, JESUS HAD BECOME POPULAR.  
A MAN LIKE JESUS,, PRESENTED A REAL DANGER,,  
BECAUSE,, ANY TALK OF A MESSIAH,, COULD  
UNDERMINE THE PEOPLES ALLIGIENCE,, TO THE  
ESTABLISHED RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ORDER OF  
THEIR DAY.**

**SUCH A MAN,, HAD TO BE SILENCED,, BEFORE HE  
COULD SPARK AN UPRISING,, WHICH THE ROMANS  
WOULD CRUSH WITH THEIR TYPICAL CRUELTY!**

**JESUS HAD OPENLY ATTACKED THE TEACHINGS OF  
THE PHARISEES AND WILLINGLY BROKEN THE  
SABBATH LAWS AND HE ALSO QUESTIONED THE  
VALIDITY OF OTHER LAWS,, ESTABLISHED BY THE  
SADDUCEES.**

**THEN,, THE PHARISEES AND THE SADUCEES,, WHO  
USUALLY WERE RIVALS,, DECIDED TO JOIN  
TOGETHER,, TO SILENCE JESUS!**

**JESUS WAITED,, IN THE COURTYARD,, FOR AN  
ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION,, REGARDING “*HEALING  
ON THE SABBATH*”. WHEN HE HEARD NO ANSWER,,  
JESUS,, HEALED THE SICK MAN AND SENT HIM AWAY.**

**JESUS WASN'T TRYING TO REBEL,, AGAINST THE  
JEWISH LAW,, BUT RATHER,, TRYING TO SHOW THE  
RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF THE JEWS,, THAT:**

***THE WAY OF THE LORD,, IS CLEARLY DIFFERENT,,  
THAN WHAT THEY WERE LIVING,, BELIEVING AND  
TEACHING!***

***HE WANTED TO SHOW THEM:  
THAT THEY SHOULD ACT COMPASSIONATLY,,  
LOVINGLY AND RIGHTEOUSLY ACCORDING TO GOD'S  
LAW,,***

**NOT THEIR OWN,,, STIFF,,, RITUALISTIC JEWISH LAW!**  
AS JESUS ENTERED THE HOUSE,,, HE NOTICED HOW  
THE GUESTS WERE SCRAMBLING FOR PLACES OF  
HONOR AND JESUS TAUGHT THEM AGAIN BY SAYING:  
***WHEN SOMEONE INVITES YOU TO DINNER,,, DON'T  
TAKE THE PLACE OF HONOR. SOMEBODY MORE  
IMPORTANT THAN YOU,,, MIGHT HAVE BEEN INVITED  
BY THE HOST. THEN,,, HE'LL COME AND CALL OUT,,, IN  
FRONT OF EVERYBODY,,,***

**“YOU'RE IN THE WRONG PLACE,,,  
THE PLACE OF HONOR,,, BELONGS TO THIS MAN.”**  
***RED-FACED,,, YOU'LL HAVE TO MAKE YOUR WAY,,, TO  
THE VERY LAST TABLE,,, THE ONLY PLACE LEFT.  
WHEN YOU'RE INVITED TO DINNER,,, GO AND SIT IN  
THE LAST PLACE. THEN WHEN THE HOST COMES,,, HE  
MAY VERY WELL SAY:***

**“MY FRIEND,,, MOVE UP TO A HIGHER POSITION!**

WHAT JESUS WAS TELLING THE PEOPLE AROUND  
THE TABLE,,, WAS THAT A BELIEVER IN CHRIST,,, HAS  
A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT IDEA OF SELF-WORTH!  
MOST OF THE WORLD,,, FINDS SELF-WORTH IN WHAT  
ONE DOES,,, WHO ONE IS,,, HOW MUCH MONEY ONE  
HAS,,, HOW MUCH PRIVILEGE OR INFLUENCE THEY  
HAVE,,, IMAGINED OR REAL,,, AND IN HOW MUCH  
THEY ARE HONORED BY OTHERS.

BUT,,, BEING A GOOD CHRISTIAN,,, WE KNOW GOD'S  
LAW,,, AND WE REALIZE,,, THAT WE HAVE A SINFUL  
NATURE,,, WHICH ALWAYS WANTS TO GO IN THE  
OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM WHAT GOD WANTS!

AS BELIEVERS,,, WE KNOW,,, THAT WE ALWAYS FALL  
SHORT OF GOD'S STANDARDS AND WE'RE ALWAYS IN  
NEED OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS.

THEN JESUS TURNED TO THE HOST SAYING: ***WHEN  
YOU HOLD A LUNCH OR DINNER,,, DO NOT INVITE YOUR  
FRIENDS,,, OR YOUR BROTHERS,,, OR YOUR RELATIVES,,,  
OR YOUR WEALTHY NEIGHBORS,,, IN CASE THEY MAY***

***INVITE YOU BACK AND YOU HAVE REPAYMENT.***

**WHAT JESUS WAS SEEING AT THIS DINNER IS;  
SELFISHNESS,,, OPPORTUNISTIC MANIPULATION AND  
HOPE FOR FAVORS. WHAT HE SAW WAS NOT RIGHT!  
AND SO JESUS TAUGHT THEM,,, THAT;**

***BY THE GRACE OF GOD,,, YOUR THOUGHTS,,, YOUR  
WORDS,,, AND YOUR DEEDS BECOME DIFFERENT!***

**BY DOING GOOD,,, WITHOUT EXPECTING ANYTHING  
IN RETURN,,, YOUR LIFE BECOMES UNSELFISH,,, AND  
IT BECOMES,,, TRULY GIVING AND RIGHTEOUS IN  
GOD'S SIGHT!**

**AS JESUS PREPARED TO LEAVE,,, IN MY MINDS EYE,,,  
HE TOLD THOSE SITTING AROUND THE TABLE,,, THAT  
IF YOU WILL DO WHAT I HAVE TAUGHT YOU,,, YOU'LL  
BE,,, AND EXPERIENCE,,, A BLESSING,,, AT THE  
RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS.**

**THEN JESUS STOOD AND WALKED AWAY FROM THE  
PHARISEES HOME,,, AS THE OTHER GUESTS  
WATCHED HIM LEAVE.**

**THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME,,, IN THAT GROUP OF  
RELIGIOUS LEADERS,,, WHO MIGHT HAVE REALLY  
HEARD WHAT JESUS WAS SAYING AND PERHAPS EVEN  
SAW A GLIMPSE OF GOD'S WAY,,, BUT MOST THOUGHT  
HE WAS SPEAKING REBELLIOUSLY OR FOOLISHLY,,,  
AND TO THEM,,, JESUS NEEDED TO BE SILENCED.**

**BUT TO WE BELIEVERS TODAY,,, JESUS IS SAYING:  
ACCEPT THE FACT THAT WE ARE SINNERS,,, BECOME  
HUMBLE,,, DO GOOD TO OTHERS,,, LIVE  
RIGHTEOUSLY,,, IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOD'S WILL  
AND THEN,,, AS JESUS PROMISED,,,**

***WE WILL BE REWARDED,,, FOR THE GOOD FRUIT,,,  
THAT OUR LIFE PRODUCES.***

**+++AMEN+++**

1473 Wds, 6 Pages

