

Title: Healing of Dropsy
Text: Luke 14: 1-14
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Luke 14: 1: And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that “they watched him.”

Christ is the one by whose obedience many shall be made righteous—by the obedience of one. But the Pharisee’s looked to their own obedience for acceptance with God. Therefore they watched Christ.

A legal spirit watches others. Sinners should indeed look to Christ and Christ only—we should believe on Christ.

Isaiah 45: 22: Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.

Believers are to lay aside the sin that besets us and run the race set before us...

Hebrews 12:2: Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

But these men were swollen in pride, considering themselves wiser than others, expecting God to receive them by their obedience, rather than the obedience of Christ. So they watched the Lord for the reasons the swollen legalist watches others: to find fault, to accuse, to condemn, to correct, to self-justify, to gain a following, for filthy lucre, for the praise of men. But chiefly: to exalt self as more holy than others, to be viewed by men as high and lifted up, as masters and lords over men.

When a sinner is swollen with pride and a legal spirit, there is no room for love and mercy, only judgment and wrath, bitterness and divisions, rather than peace and rest. And brethren, that is the way of the old man of flesh that remains in us—you and I are Pharisee’s by nature—that old man will be in us till the day we die.

So how are we cured and continually cured of this swelling disease of pride, of legalism and self-righteousness?

Title: Healing of Dropsy

Luke 14: 2: And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

This man was probably invited by the Pharisee in hopes that Christ would heal him and the Pharisee could accuse Christ of breaking the law of the sabbath. Perhaps, he simply came in of his own accord. But this we know: our Savior is God. He is in control of all of this. We see it in the disease this man had.

Dropsy was a blood disorder, incurable by man. Among the symptoms, it caused extreme swelling and inflating of the body, due to an overabundance of water. Every word in the scriptures is significant—here is a man with dropsy.

Christ overruled the whole affair, so that the man with the dropsy had a sickness which exemplified the very condition of the Pharisee’s—our condition, except Christ heal us, abase us, and continually do so, teaching us in our hearts by his grace.

Like as this man's blood was corrupt—our first man, our old man is corrupt. We were born with a blood disorder incurable by any sinner. It is a disorder called sin: dead in trespasses and in sins. Even after we are born of the Spirit, Romans 8 says, "If the Spirit of Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin."

Like as this man was swollen with water—sin makes sinners swollen with pride of self, swollen with vain idea we are good, inflated with pride of our wisdom, swollen by our works, all of which is vain water.

So here sits a man swollen like the Pharisee's were swollen and inflated with their pride and self-exaltation.

Proposition: I want us to see an example of how Christ alone abases his child and makes us to rest in Christ. And as we see the Lord deal with the Pharisee's, try to think of the Lord dealing with the Pharisee that is in you and me. Christ continually does this in those he saves—it is how we are preserved and persevere in faith.

I. FIRST, CHRIST USES THE LAW TO SHUT OUR MOUTHS

Luke 14: 3: And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day? 4: And they held their peace.

Christ knows our heart—"And Jesus answering." They asked him nothing but he answered their hearts. Christ always gets to the heart of the matter.

Christ shuts the mouth of those he saves by making us to see that we do not understand the law, and/or, that we are misusing the word of God. He said, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" Is it lawful to show mercy on the Sabbath day?

It was their understanding and their proud tradition that it was not lawful, unless absolutely necessary.

Luke 13:14: And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

Yet, the Sabbath day was all about mercy and rest in Christ. The Sabbath was made by God for man, not man for the Sabbath. The Lord completely provided all provision on the 6th day, so that on the 7th day: a man, his servants, even his beasts were completely provided for by God so that they were given rest from all their works.

The Sabbath day pictured the day of grace when God makes his child to behold that Christ is our Sabbath rest, in whom the works of salvation are finished. After the 6 days of creation, God rested the seventh day because there was no more work to be done. Christ came to where his elect are in mercy. He finished the work of redeeming his people and sat down because there remains nothing else to be done for his people.

When God makes Christ our Sabbath, we behold and believe that all provision is made, so that the believer has sweet rest, free from the bondage of attempting to establish our own righteousness, free from the worries of ever being forsaken of God. We can spend all our lives worshipping God. God has provided all. And Christ is All.

But the Pharisee's used this day, the word of God, not to declare mercy and rest given by God, but they turned it into a work for righteousness. Instead freeing men they bound men; instead of rest they taught works; instead humility, they exalted self over others. They had completely misused the word of God.

Application: Before conversion, sinners don't understand the word of God. Sinners use the law unlawfully—rather than shutting our mouths in guilt—sinners try to obtain life by the law. Sinners even use the promises and precepts of the gospel the same way, to bind men and exalt self, to make themselves acceptable to God. And brethren, after conversion, believers can fall into the same legal spirit. The word of God is not to be used to exalt self but to exalt Christ before sin-sick sinners in need of his mercy and grace, as we wait on Christ to work obedience in his people.

For instance: the doctrine of election is to be used to declare that Christ is the Elect of God. Christ was chosen by God to save all those God elected unto salvation and gave to him before the foundation of the world. Election is a doctrine of the mercy and grace of God toward sinners who would have never chosen God. It is to humble us, not to make us proud.

The doctrine of particular redemption, of limited atonement—is to teach the successful, finished work which Christ accomplished for those given him of the Father. It is to declare the good news that God is not trying, but has reconciled his people to himself, even when were enemies in our minds by wicked works, that God has provided himself a Lamb, that God is just and the justifier of all who believe, that is not by works of righteousness we have done but by the work which Christ has done that his people are redeemed from the curse of the law and made the righteousness of God.

We ought never compromise the truth of God but faithfully declare the truth. But when we get caught up in vain questions and striving about the word of God, we make ourselves the focus rather than Christ.

Illustration: You have found your friends or coworkers rejecting the truth of the gospel and discovered by experience that it does no good to strive with men.

Especially within the church we are taught to avoid such strivings—they will eat as doth a canker and overthrow the faith of some. I am not talking about the freewill, works religionist, but you and I who have been called by God's sovereign grace.

The tabernacle, the furniture, the priest and the offerings all give us varied glimpses of Christ's person and of what he suffered and accomplished on the cross. Seeing God used so many pictures to foreshadow Christ, I can assure you not one of us has even scratched the surface of what all was involved on Calvary's tree when Christ laid down his life and redeemed his people.

We need each other. Christ our Head tempers the members of his body together—he gives one a better understanding of one aspect, another a better understanding of another—that Christ might teach us of the glorious mystery of his person and work and unite us to each other. But how vain and swollen with pride I become if I think I have all understanding and so that I do not need the other member.

Illustration: Two fathers may desire to teach their children and both may be correct in each one's teaching. But if they fight all they teach the children is how to fight and both end up swollen with pride. How easily we can use the word of God for self rather than to exalt Christ! So we need Christ to take his word and shut our mouths, just as he did in the first hour? To prick us and deflate us of our vain pride, to show us we know nothing as we ought, that's the picture we see here—**v4: And they held their peace.**

Illustration: The argument.

II. WHEN CHRIST HAS WOUNDED US THEN CHRIST ALONE HEALS US AND SETS US FREE.

And he took *him*,... When we are inflated in pride—we have the sinful dropsy—how gracious is Christ to yet take us to himself. His grace changes not. He took us when he became Surety for his elect in the everlasting covenant. Christ took us when he took all the sin of his people upon himself to suffer and die in our place on Calvary's cross. In time, Christ took us when he called us to himself through the gospel through the power of the Holy Spirit. He continues to take us, turning us from our vain pride back to him that we might be partakers of his holiness.

And healed *him*,.. It is the blood of Christ—the gospel of redemption accomplished—wherewith the Spirit of God purges our conscious from dead works to serve the true and living God—and continually cleanseth us of our sin...

1 John 1: 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: 7: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

He cleanseth us by continually making us to see we have nothing in ourselves, wherein to glory...

Isaiah 53: 5: But HE was wounded for our transgressions, HE was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon HIM; and with HIS stripes we are healed.

And he let *him* go. Just as Christ freed us from the bondage of the curse of the law by being made a curse for us, only Christ can free us from the bondage of our sin-nature. Only Christ can free us from the bondage of legalism when we fall into that awful pit again and again.

John 8: 36: If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

III. BY REVEALING OUR PERSONAL NEED CHRIST SILENCES THE ACCUSER WITHIN US.

Luke 14: 5: And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day? 6: And they could not answer him again to these things.

Christ used something personal to these men and says if even a beast of your own needed mercy, you would not object. You do with your own as you will. If you see even a beast of your own in need you do as you will to save him. The man that had the dropsy had no objections to this miracle of mercy on the Sabbath day? He was shut up to mercy. Mercy and grace was his only hope.

Can Christ not do with his own as he will? The elect of God are the ones that are as brute beasts fallen into the pit. But by God's electing grace, we are Christ's beasts—we belong to Christ. So in mercy, he came to his own, in our pit and straightway pulled us out and continues to do so. When the Lord brings us to see we are the one, personally, in need of mercy that is when the proud accuser within us is silenced.

Pride and lack of need makes the old Pharisee swell up, accusing, and striving and raising his objections, but when Christ shines his light and shows us we are the ones in dire need of his grace, that is when the Pharisee in us is silenced and the accuser is silenced and we cease objecting to mercy in Christ.

IV. CHRIST TEACHES US HUMILITY.

Luke 14: 7: And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, 8: When thou art bidden of any *man* to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; 9: And he that bade thee

and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

Brethren, we have been bidden by God to this feast of the gospel in his house. But Christ is the Guest of honor! Christ must and will have all preeminence. So Christ teaches us to make ourselves the least.

Luke 14: 10: But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. 11: For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

To be greatest in the kingdom of God is to be the least—Christ made himself of no reputation. He became obedient even to the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him. If by his grace, he brings us down, to cast all care upon him, in due time—Christ shall **“say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.”** He shall do so in the day of conversion, lifting us out of the present trial and in the day of glory.

V. CHRIST TEACHES US TO TRULY LOVE AND TO LOVE MERCY RATHER THAN JUDGMENT AND RESPECT OF PERSONS.

Luke 14: 12: Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not...thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

Christ is not calling the righteous, not calling those who have any ability to recompense again to him. We don't want to be found preaching to men: rich in their wisdom and works in this world, nor to that old man in us who thinks himself rich and in need of nothing, to them who can recompense again to us. Such men will surely recompense to you bragging about how you made your point and everyone's head is so swelled with pride they can't stand to be around each other. Look at the next few verses, this is who Christ is calling.

Luke 14: 13: But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

God loves helpless, poor, ruined sinners: The poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. This is what we are. This is who we are sent to proclaim the gospel unto.

Luke 14: 14: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

If our religion is for filthy lucre—to be recompensed by men, to be exalted by men, to gain a following—we have missed the gospel entirely. Christ shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just when he shall be glorified for justifying each one of his sheep. And each believer he has called and brought low, to trust him, shall be recompensed when we behold Christ glorified in that day and all his children saved by him alone.

When we are swollen in pride:

- 1) Christ shuts our mouth with his word—we know nothing as we ought
- 2) Christ takes us, heals us and sets us free
- 3) Christ shuts the mouth of the accuser within us showing us it is us who needed and to whom he gave his mercy then we delight in mercy
- 4) Christ teaches us humility—to be great in the kingdom of God is to be least
- 5) Christ teaches us to truly love—we are poor with nothing to recompense to him—love as Christ has loved us. Read 1 Corinthians 13: 1: Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2: And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and

understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3: And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4: Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5: Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6: Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8: Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. 9: For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 10: But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. 11: When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12: For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. 13: And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity.

Amen!