



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
AND
IMMANUEL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
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August 31, 2025

Pastor James Enderle

12th Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: [Proverbs 25:6, 7a](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 18 *(Red Hymnal)*

Second Lesson: [James 2:1-13](#)

Gospel Lesson/ Sermon Text: [Luke 14:1, 7-14](#)

WOUNDS THAT HEAL
Those Who Exalt Themselves Will Be Humbled
A SEAT TAKEN OR A SEAT GIVEN

1. A lack of _____ is the root _____.
2. Be humble or be _____.
3. Christian humility is _____.
4. Jesus says, "Friend, move _____.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

CHILDREN'S DEVOTION

I have a picture here. What is this a picture of? It is kids playing musical chairs and taking the good seat. We'll talk about that in a second. Have you played musical chairs? It's kind of fun. The music goes and you all go around until the music stops. Then you have to sit down. The interesting thing is that there is always one less seat than there are people. So someone doesn't get a seat. It's a fun game. But as it gets down to less and less people, at the end there is one chair and one person gets to sit.



Have you ever seen musical chairs when people are fighting over a chair or they are trying to sit down and one person just plops right on the floor because they can't get a chair? Have you seen that before? If you're that person who doesn't get a seat, can that be a little bad? People see you and you're trying to get the seat and you fall on the floor. It's not a very good seat. Also, if you win and you get first place, can you become kind of boastful and go "Yay!!! I got first place!!!" because you got the good seat?

In our sermon today, we are going to talk about how we don't want to take the best seat. We don't want to humiliate others and how pride and thinking ourselves better than others is one of the greatest sins, mainly because it leads to many other sins. So when we look at things, we want to have humility and to think of others as greater than ourselves and not say "I'm better than you" or "You're better than other people." And most of all, when we seek humility we can say "God, I need your love. I need your forgiveness."

Jesus was the humblest. He came down to live in our place, to die for us and to give us an awesome place—to give us heaven. So when you're playing musical chairs and you think about those seats, maybe you can think about the place and the seat that Jesus gives you of forgiveness and love and heaven. Let's say a prayer.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your love and mercy. Help us to not fight for the greatest seat or to be prideful and think ourselves better than others, but to see ourselves lowly because we know that we make mistakes and we're sinful. But you have loved us and forgiven us and you give us a great seat. You give us that hope, peace and forgiveness and heaven. So help us to see your love and mercy and trust in you above all things. We thank you and pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

SERMON

If you've been to a wedding recently, I know there are quite a few of you who actually have. We had a couple in the last month here. I was just joking that we had one a week ago and it feels like a month ago when that wedding was. A lot has been going on. But you can really understand the picture that Jesus is talking about when you think about a wedding banquet. As much as we have seating, more and more at a wedding people actually don't put assigned seating. Some just say "You pick your spots."

But, imagine if you were at a wedding and there are some open spots and there actually were some reserved tables up in front but the sign fell down. So you are sitting up there and everyone is finally getting all their spots and all of a sudden you see that some of the relatives up in the front are coming and haven't sat down yet. They are supposed to be at the table that you're sitting at and now everyone else is sitting down, so up in front of everyone, you have to go from the front as the family is coming up and saying "I'm sorry. This is our seat," and now you have to find a spot, which is probably way in the back and is the only open seat.

For us, you can understand a little bit of what this is like, but in a culture of honor and shame, where Jesus is telling this parable, this would have been a very shameful thing. This would have been very dishonoring. And in our text, we are going to really see that

it's much better to have a seat that is given to you instead of a seat that is taken. When we're thinking about our place, is it **a seat taken**, something that I take, or when we are being proud, is it **a seat taken** from me, or is it better to have **a seat given**? That's where we get into what Jesus is talking about.

When Jesus told parables, oftentimes when we study the parable you might look at a parable and think, "What are you talking about?" Even the disciples often would go and say "Jesus, can you explain what this parable is all about?" What is very fascinating is for this parable, do you need any explanation? Then think about the context of where it's told. It's being told at a feast. There is a prominent Pharisee and notice what it says about Jesus there. It says: ***One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched.*** There is this banquet going on and people are watching Jesus. Then it says: ***When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable...*** Here is a fine meal and Jesus tells a parable about a meal. The people He is talking to and encouraging to take this to heart are there and, of course, they really understood it. So He goes into the parable and says: ***"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."*** Don't take that place of honor but take a lower seat. Later on when He kind of tells the second parable, He says: ***"When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid."*** The warning here of taking the higher seat and the second part of having a feast and inviting all the popular people is about what a lack of humility does. It's what pride does. Pride puts you on display. This is exactly what the Pharisees were all about. They wore the fanciest of clothes and they paraded out in the street. They fasted so everyone could see them. They wanted everyone to see them and to see that they were holier and so great, so they put themselves out on display. So Jesus is warning about this pride.

What does a lack of humility do? What does inviting everyone there so that you can get good things do? **A lack of humility is the root of many sins.** You can think about pride and how when I put myself out there to be the most important, it causes so many sins.

The book we're reading on Sunday nights, Mere Christianity, later has a full chapter and it calls pride the "chief sin." Why is it a sin that leads to so many sins? What was the sin of the devil? It was pride. He wanted a higher place. What did the devil tempt Adam and Eve with? He said, "You can become like God. God is keeping something from you." So they had a lack of humility. They were prideful and said "We can be like God." And Luther says almost every sin is a sin of the First Commandment (you shall have no other gods), because we put ourselves to be most important. A lack of humility, when we are prideful, it causes us to think we know best and it puts ourselves up in front of others and puts down others. Think about in relationships, how I have to be right or it

has to be done my way. That can destroy so many relationships and marriages and it takes the heart away and puts you on a pedestal.

So what happens when we don't have the lack of humility? What happens when we are prideful? Jesus explains in the parable. If you take that high place, it says: ***"If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place."*** Later in Verse 11: ***"For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled..."*** What happens when we have a lack of humility? When we are prideful? The saying often goes, "Pride comes before the fall." Think about it this way. **Be humble or be humbled.** Have you experienced that? You can probably think about when that has happened in your life—at school, among your friends, you start boasting and think you know everything. Or you got the greatest shot, you're the best and then that fall comes really hard. Or at work, you become boastful and proud but then the boss cracks down on you and you've made a big mistake because in your pride, you missed something. You can probably remember a time in your life where your pride got in the way and it led to a large fall, where you weren't being humble so then you were humbled. This is important. We need to be humbled at times because pride causes so many things. We need to learn from it and see what to cling to, what to go to.

Jesus encourages the people then to take the lower seat. ***"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.' For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*** Humility is something that is much higher regarded in Christianity than many other places. Why is Christian humility so important and kind of overlooked? It's because people don't really understand the purposes of it or how you can have true good humility. **Christian humility**, we can summarize as saying it **is placing yourself lower**; to not put yourself in the highest seat but to take a low seat. What does that look like? You can summarize Christian humility in a couple different ways.

The first one has to do with sin. To understand that no one is righteous and all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. I know some 1st and 2nd Graders learned that this week. What does that remind you of is that "I am no greater than anyone else." Pride is saying "I'm better than you. You're not as good as me." And when I can understand that sin unites us, that "I am the worst of sinners," it puts me in a lower place and it humbles me. Maybe you can think about it this way of thinking sometimes "Am I capable of evil things?" Sometimes we think "Well, I haven't done that, or I haven't done that horrible sin, so I'm a pretty good person," but we probably forget that lie or that horrible thing that "I don't want anyone to know." So sin puts us lower because of the truth. We have that sinful nature and what good thing does that lead us to? It's the good thing of repentance; that "I can't do it on my own and I need to cling to Jesus." If you're not humble, if you don't realize your sin, is there any reason to repent? Repentance is a turning away from sin but it's also trusting in Jesus, that He has forgiven

me, and that He has done the work. So when I'm humble, when I understand that I have sinned, I can repent and cling to Jesus in faith.

When I cling to Him then, this is kind of the second definition of Christian humility, you can think about when you see that proud person. Do you notice a proud person? Yes. You can see it. Do you notice a humble person? The humble person really doesn't make it about themselves, but a proud person is all about themselves, so how do we think about humility in a Christian sense? It's not about thinking of yourselves too little or thinking about yourselves too great, but thinking about yourself less. That's kind of the definition of selflessness—to think about yourself less.

Sometimes you think about people like they are humble because they really beat themselves up and they don't think that they are great. If you beat up on yourself all the time, you're still making it all about yourself. We understand the proud people, the people who think about themselves all the time as being great. That's not humility. Also when you say you're miserable, you are always thinking about yourself, too. Notice that, yes, we talk about being sinful, but we don't say that we're miserable. So we think about ourselves less. We're selfless. So who do we think about? We think about God. Think less about yourself and think more about God. What does this look like?

In catechism class this week, I showed a meme, a picture of a man who is cheering and excited. It says "A Christian at a sports event." Then the next line says "A Christian at church," and the picture was solemn. My point isn't that I want you to stand up and cheer in church and yell "Yay! Woo!" But what do you get excited about? What do you think about all the time? What are you talking about all the time? "Those Packers, they got Micah Parsons." Do you talk about that and talk about it and spend all the time thinking about sports and you're so excited? I even asked questions—if you go to Packer games, do you want to invite all your friends? Do you want your best friends to be there? Do you want everyone to be there? And how early do you get to the game? It's all about that. Do you want to invite your friends to church? One of the students said "No! Then she thought "Oh, wait." Why is that? Why do we get so excited about everything else? Do we love Jesus? Are we thinking about Jesus so much? Or are we thinking about so many other things and thinking about ourselves as well? It's hard because we have that sinful nature and all these other things are exciting, but how do we think more about Jesus? We can be in worship and spend time daily, connecting with Jesus, through prayer and devotions. Grow that relationship with Him and spend time with Christians and talk about Jesus.

Jesus is what is going to give you the ability to remove that pride, to give you the true sense and give you the right place—no pride and not beating down on yourself. Why is that? Why does Jesus do this? We see it says: ***"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.'"*** What is that all about? **Jesus says, "Friend, move up to a better place."** It's not a seat taken but it's only a seat that can be given. It's a seat that can be

given because it's grace and mercy and that faith is a gift. It's nothing that I can earn from God. When I understand my sin and how I've fallen short, I have to cling to Jesus and then I see what Jesus has done. What does it say that Jesus did? He came and took the lowest seat. He humbled Himself to have death on the cross. The worst of deaths! Then He took your sin, He suffered your sin, and went to hell for you and then was raised to the highest place. But then, as it says, ***"Friend, move up to a better place,"*** we don't then have a low place but Jesus gives us His place. We are now called heirs. We are sons of God. We are welcomed into the family of God because Jesus gave it to us.

We talk about forgiveness and how God has forgiven us, but we also have to understand that God has removed our shame. When you have the picture of someone that is sitting in that high seat and now they have to go and shamefully walk to the end, we sometimes understand that we are forgiven, but we hold onto that shame. "I can't go to church because I did this thing." Or "Yes, God forgives me but I'm this horrible person." God has removed your shame and He gives you honor and glory to say "You are a forgiven child of God. You are loved and redeemed," just like that prodigal son who runs to his father and wants to become a slave and the father gives him the robe and welcomes him in: restored and redeemed.

To think about that better place, what does that better place mean? You have a better place. You are forgiven. You are at peace now! So much better than anything else this world can offer, understanding you have this now but to understand there is still yet a better place. To think about your loved one, who has passed on to be with their Savior, what does Jesus say when they die? ***"Friend, move up to a better place."*** It's a place without the pain and the suffering and the horrible tragedies of this world. This is a place that we have in store. It gives us hope and meaning and it gives us a purpose to go out and tell people there is a better place. There is a better place, in here (church), where you hear of God's love and mercy, a better place in God's Word, but in the end there is going to be a better place where God brings us—through faith in Jesus, to a place with Him. Sin removed. Shame removed. Perfect and honored as a child of God.

So know of your love and forgiveness, know that you cannot earn it, a seat cannot be taken in heaven. It can only be given through faith and it is a gift by the grace of Jesus. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:7) Amen.