

The Principles of Honor

Luke 14:1-24

INTRODUCTION: I love today's text. It conveys a principle that few people really understand, but I think it is absolutely life-changing. I call it the "Principles of Honor".

Now, honor can be used as a verb or a noun. I'm using it as a verb in this sermon. It is something you do to others or others do to you.

Honor is the act of enhancing or amplifying the splendor of a person.

ILLUSTRATION: My daughter is a photographer. I always love it when she takes pictures of me because she "AMPLIFIES MY SPLENDOR". She shoots me in the best light; she poses me in the most flattering way, and she adjusts her white balance so I am a bit more tan than normal.

NOW - what she does with her camera, we can do with our words when we honor a person. We amplify their splendor. We treat them with great dignity and respect.

The opposite of honor is shame. Shame can certainly be abused, but it is not always bad. Shame diminishes another person's splendor... and at times a person should be ashamed.

The problem with our culture is that we reverse HONOR and SHAME.

- Things that should be shameful we HONOR.
- Things that should be honored we SHAME.

Until that changes - we have a serious problem. Because, you see, honor and shame are powerful things.

- What gets HONORED grows.
- What gets SHAMED dies.

That's something you have to be careful of as a parent - you should shame bad behavior without shaming the child's inherent dignity. It is possible to honor the child while shaming the behavior. You do this by conveying that you expected more of him than that. So you amplify the splendor of the person while diminishing the splendor of the behavior.

So that is what honor is - the act of enhancing or amplifying the splendor of a person. With that in mind, look with me at verse one.

TEXT: Luke 14:1–24 (ESV)

¹“One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. ² And behold, there was a man before him who had dropsy. ³ And Jesus responded to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not?’ ⁴ But they remained silent. Then he took him and healed him and sent him away. ⁵ And he said to them, ‘Which of you, having a son or an ox that has fallen into a well on a Sabbath day, will not immediately pull him out?’ ⁶ And they could not reply to these things.”

⁷ “Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸ ‘When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of **honor**, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with **shame** to take the lowest place’.”

Ok, so get the picture - you were invited to a wedding feast... is that an act of honor or shame? Honor....it was an honor that you were invited. Not everyone was invited, but you were, that enhances your splendor.

But HONOR can be addictive... so when you get there, you see several seats open, and you notice that some seats have more honor than others. Perhaps it is a seat that is closest to the couple, an elevated seat, whatever it might be. It occurs to you that you could enhance your splendor even more if you were front and center. So, a little honor was good, a lot of honor must be even better! So you push and shove until you get the best seat and there you sit. Oh, it feels good, you look so important... people are getting selfies with you. You are too cool for school, you are the cats meow, your are all that and a bag of chips.

But then, you see that through the door walks a true celebrity...it's Dwayne Johnson, “the Rock”.

Everybody suddenly rushes around them, snapping selfies and trying to look like they actually hang out.

About that time someone taps you on the shoulder and says, “Excuse me sir, you are in Mr. Johnson’s seat”.

All of that splendor you had accrued suddenly diminishes and in shame you are sent to the back of the room.

Jesus says, don't do that... instead, verse 10:

¹⁰ “But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be **honored** in the presence of all who sit at table with you”.

Then Jesus gives the principle in verse 11:

¹¹ “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

HONOR PRINCIPLES:

1. Honor is a good thing and should be desired.

Notice, Jesus doesn't instruct us to refuse the better seat when it is offered. No, you should take it humbly.

Matthew 20:20–23 (ESV)

²⁰ “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. ²¹ And he said to her, ‘What do you want?’ She said to him, ‘Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom’.”

Now what would you expect Jesus to say? How dare you ask for that, how arrogant. But He doesn't rebuke her in the slightest.

²² “Jesus answered, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?’ They said to him, ‘We are able’. ²³ He said to them, ‘You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father’.”

Remember the Prayer of Jabez? He prayed daily, “Oh that thou would bless me indeed.” Indeed means a lot. The Bible says God granted his request.

It is good and healthy to desire to be honored.

2. Honor can only be given, not taken.

Within every person, there is an artesian well of honor. You can honor as many people as you want and you will not run out of honor.

But it can only be given, not taken.

ILLUSTRATION: Honor is the CPR of the soul. You learn CPR for others, no one ever did CPR on themselves. Honor is like that - if you try to honor yourself you will humiliate yourself, but you can honor as many other people as you want.

Romans 13:7 (ESV)

⁷ “Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.”

1 Peter 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ “Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor”.

Notice that there are different degrees of honor; there is a certain honor you show to everyone. Then there is a certain honor you show to a person in authority.

ILLUSTRATION: When our kids were young, we taught them to say, “Yes sir” and “no sir”, “yes mam” and “no mam”. We also taught them to refer to adults by title. They were not allowed to walk up to their student pastor (Chip Dean), and say, “What’s up, Chip?”. They were to call him Pastor Chip. It’s a good habit to develop.

God taught the Israelites - Leviticus 19:32 (ESV)

³² “You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.”

There is an honor that you show to your elders that you don’t show to your peers. That can be different in every culture, but make sure you show culturally appropriate honor to the right person in the right way.

3. Honor should not be presumed.

Jesus teaches us in this text that you should always check yourself before you walk into a room. Always orient your heart to that of a servant....never presume honor.

Take the lowest seat. Engage in conversation with those around you. Show honor to them.

Philippians 2:3 (ESV)

³ “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Have you ever noticed that the greatest coaches are masters of reflecting honor to others?

Paul “Bear” Bryant said, “If anything goes bad, I did it. If anything goes semi-good, we did it. If anything goes really good, then you did it. That’s all it takes to get people to win football games for you.”

The best leaders are always putting the spotlight on someone else.

Walk into every room looking for someone to honor... never enter a room looking to be honored.

Honor is like giving - it is more blessed to give than receive.

4. Honor expressed results in honor experienced.

If you focus on enhancing the splendor of others, God will take responsibility for enhancing your splendor.

Proverbs 3:9–10 (ESV)

⁹ “Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; ¹⁰ then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.”

Ephesians 6:2–3 (ESV)

² “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³ that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.”

In other words, if you honor your parents God will see to it that you are honored. You see how it works?

ILLUSTRATION: Vince Everett Ellison tells the story of his father receiving word that he had inoperable lung cancer and would die within six months. He called his sons in to hear the prognosis and said, “Boys, this doctor tells me that I’m going to die in 6 months, and there’s nothing they can do about it... but I have told him that I would not die in 6 months, it’s not going to happen”. The doctor said, “Mr Ellison, I respect your faith, but you will be dead in 6 months, considering how your cancer has spread”. The boys asked how he could be so confident that he would live longer. He said, “because I always honored my father and mother... and the Lord said that if I do that, I would be blessed with a long life. I am 67 years old, and I plan to live at least until 80”.

Now that’s horrible medical advice, but it’s good theology and by the way... Mr. Ellison is 93 and still kicking.

Honor expressed results in honor experienced. The opposite is true. If we withhold honor from whom it is due, we will experience dishonor.

Matthew 13:57–58 (ESV)

⁵⁷ “And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, ‘**A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household**’. ⁵⁸ And he did not do many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.”

ILLUSTRATION: Remember how I taught my kids to honor their student pastor? That was partly selfish because, you see, I believe God put something for my kids in that man, but if they dishonored him, they would not receive what God had for them.

Honor unlocks God’s blessing for you in others.

Matthew 10:41 (ESV)

⁴¹ “The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person’s reward.”

5. Dishonor experienced unjustly produces honor.

2 Samuel 16:5–14 (ESV)

⁵ “When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually. ⁶ And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

⁹ Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, ‘Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head’.”

David said, “no don’t do that”... for two reasons -

- First, God may have told him to curse me... if he has... so be it.
- Second, If God didn’t tell him to curse me...

¹² “It may be that the Lord will look on the wrong done to me, and that the Lord will repay me with good for his cursing today.”

Jesus said it this way - Matthew 5:11–12 (ESV)

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

6. Honor and dishonor are contagious.

Jochebed must have been an amazing mother. She had three children - Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. Moses was the first prophet, Miriam the first worship leader, and Aaron the first Priest. She should have written a book on parenting.

Well, one day the three kids were into it.

Numbers 12:1–16 (ESV)

¹ “Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married, for he had married a Cushite woman.”

Now Moses married this Cushite, who is from the area of Ethiopia. So she was very likely a black woman. So if you have a problem with interracial marriage... you may not like this particular story.

² “And they said, ‘Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken through us also?’ And the Lord heard it.”

So they are dishonoring Moses for marrying this black woman. God says, tell them to meet me at the door of the Tabernacle. That is significant because it never happened... Moses enters to meet with God, but he comes out to have a conversation with Miriam and Aaron.

³ “Now the man Moses was very meek, more than all people who were on the face of the earth. ⁴ And suddenly the Lord said to Moses and to Aaron and Miriam, ‘Come out, you three, to the tent of meeting.’ And the three of them came out. ⁵ And the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the entrance of the tent and called Aaron and Miriam, and they both came forward. ⁶ And he said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. ⁷ Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. ⁸ With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

⁹ “And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he departed. ¹⁰ When the cloud removed from over the tent, behold, Miriam was leprous, like snow.”

Now... you just have to see the humor in that... she didn't like Moses marrying a black lady and God makes her WHITE with leprosy...I'm sorry that's just funny.

¹³ “And Moses cried to the Lord, ‘O God, please heal her—please’. ¹⁴ But the Lord said to Moses, ‘If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be shamed seven days? Let her be shut outside the camp seven days, and after that she may be brought in again’. ¹⁵ So Miriam was shut outside the camp seven days, and the people did not set out on the march till Miriam was brought in again.”

NOW, what is the lesson - when a person has a dishonoring spirit, you ought to distance yourself from them. It is contagious.

The inverse is true as well - if a person has an honoring spirit, get around him or her... learn from them.. let it rub off on you.

CONCLUSION/INVITATION:

If you don't learn to enjoy showing honor on earth, you won't enjoy Heaven at all.

Revelation 4:9–11 (ESV)

⁹ “And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to him who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ¹¹ ‘Worthy are you, our Lord and God,

to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created'.”

The atmosphere of Heaven is one of perpetual HONOR.