

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

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In today's gospel lesson Jesus is doing more than just giving some helpful advice on how not to be a jerk or avoid getting embarrassed.

- ❖ Showing us something important about who God is and what God does,
- ❖ And what that means for us who are made in his image

Pride comes from us wanting to put ourselves in the place of God.

- ❖ We want to be the “Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things,” like the collect for today says
- ❖ We want our lives to be all about us – but, you see, that's not what God is like.

When he tells us to take the lowest place, Jesus is reminding us of the way God's kingdom always comes.

- ❖ Throughout the Old Testament we see God choosing to work through the refugee, the barren woman, and the younger son, and the New Testament is no different.
- ❖ When God himself enters the world, it's not as a pillar of cloud or fire, a majestic, celestial being, or even an earthly prince.

He comes instead as the son of a poor couple living in the country, and even then, only after asking the young virgin's permission.

- ❖ Jesus didn't seek out the places of honor, but was rejected by the rulers and authorities and even fled from earthly power when it was offered to him.
- ❖ At every turn he chose to reveal God's glory to the poor, sick, weak, and marginalized because the way of the kingdom is the way of love.

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Now what it really means to love is to will the good of the other, no matter what it costs or how it's received.

- ❖ One of the most beautiful images I've heard used to describe this is God pouring Himself out like water,
- ❖ always cascading down to the lowest place, rushing to settle where He's most needed.

Jesus tells us to take the lowest place because that's who God is and that's what we're made for.

- ❖ Humility frees us from our self-absorption so that we can love as God loves, without any self-interest.
- ❖ If we're always trying to lower ourselves to lift up others, nothing will be beneath us.
- ❖ If we know that God's grace is sufficient for us and that His power is made perfect in our weakness, no task will be too big for us.

When we join our wills to God's and share His delights and desires, we'll begin to experience the eternal celebration here on earth, and our lives will be an invitation for everyone around us to take their seat at the table.