

# Anglican Studies



## by Waeshael

*I am not uttering a final pronouncement nor expressing an established doctrine, but I am researching to the limit of my ability, I am discussing the meaning of the Scriptures and I do not claim to have understood that meaning wholly or perfectly, on many points I have a preliminary idea but I am not sure that I have reached in every respect perfection or a complete solution. (from Origen c. 250)*

*All biblical quotations are taken from the AV "King James Version". Additional scripture studies, commentaries, propers by Waeshael can be found at the web site [www.waeshael.com](http://www.waeshael.com) -*

*The Church Fathers who also were prolific writers during the first seven ecumenical councils are: Ambrose, Athanasius, St. Irenaeus, St. Augustine, St. Athanasius, St. Gregory, St. Cyril, St. Jerome, St. Chrysostom, St. Cyprian, Other Bishops and Doctors: Tertullian, Theodoret.*

## Introduction

At the 17th Provincial Synod of the Anglican Catholic Church meeting Oct. 10-12, 2007 in Cleveland, Ohio, Archbishop Haverland said:

*We are, therefore, in principle, not a sect but a Church, with a universal mission. In fact, as Anglicans we are less sectarian in fundamental impulse than almost any other Christian body: for we firmly assert that while our mission is universal, the particular forms of our own Anglican worship and our own Anglican culture are not exclusive. We deny that we have any unique Anglican Catholic doctrine, but rather **we stand for the unique authority of the patristic witness and the Conciliar tradition**, and we assert the incompleteness of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches in their more exclusivist claims. We are Catholic, but do not claim to be the only Catholics. We are Orthodox, but do not claim that in principle all others are heretics. We have clarity of doctrine, but a clarity that embraces East and West, Rome and Orthodox, past and present.*

*... Our primary goal is not to preserve a tradition, but to share it, even as we recognize that we will have nothing to share if we do not preserve intact what we have received.*

# Anglican Studies

## **Luke 14:1-11 17th Sunday after Trinity.**

Things you need to know:

- This is really a story about pride, hypocrisy, humility and covetousness; not about Jesus breaking any Sabbath law (He didn't).
- "Those bidden" are persons (believers) chosen by God to come to the wedding of the Church and His Son. It includes the Pharisees and Priests who are among the first to be called, even before Jesus was born, but some have refused to accept the invitation.
- Remember: The Priests and Pharisees are the guardians of the "Oracles of God" / Torah which God has given to "Moses".
- The man with the dropsy may represent people who are continually thirsty for the truth, and drink from the well of scripture but are never satisfied, for they do not take water from Jesus, which is the living water that quenches all thirst, which Jesus

calls "The way, the truth and the life".

This lesson from Jesus has eternal value. It is not an historical event that no longer has any meaning for us. Within this story are important messages from God that we can understand through communion between our soul and the spirit of Christ that is within us. So long as the story affects only our brain, we will not be able to understand the message. Beneath the text is a moral. Beneath the moral is understanding, and from this comes insight that will direct each person's behavior. We can get to this insight through our own study of the text, by meditation on the words with the help of the Holy Spirit, and by studying the Church Fathers' commentaries.

If the event is historical – though it is not necessary for the moral – there must have been a witness, presumably an apostle, not Luke, Paul, or Mark (the source of many Lukan stories). None of the other gospel writers mentions this story, so perhaps it was a story told by an apostle to the Church, and later (2nd. cent.) included in Luke's gospel account.

## The Text

“And it came to pass,

Once upon a time

as he went into the house (that they watched him).

As he crossed the threshold his disciples watched him, knowing what He was about to do.

When the text states: Jesus “went into the house”, it means that He is about to reveal some spiritual truth to His disciples. We do not know from the text if any of the guests were disciples, and whether or not any of the Pharisees were would-be-disciples of this new Hebrew sect called “The Way”. But it is reasonable to assume that both were here.

of one of the chief Pharisees

A Pharisees was a lay teacher, sometimes called “lawyer” for he interpreted the law for the people. This one considers himself important. This term “chief Pharisees” occurs only here in Luke. I could find no meaning for this term in any of the encyclopedias. I suppose Luke meant that this Pharisee was of the first caliber – someone who knew all the law, and he was rich.

No names are given to anyone, so perhaps this was a fictional account to illustrate a divine truth, like the

story of the Good Samaritan, and the story of the Prodigal Son.

to eat bread on the sabbath day,

to dine with him on the sabbath. A believer who was not a member of the household was usually invited to the Sabbath meal.

By inviting Him they were fulfilling a moral obligation, and perhaps they were inquisitive. The Pharisee did not ask Him for advice. Jesus went in to this rich man’s house to give a “lecture” on humility. The story also applies to those who are “Pharisees in the heart” today – believers who are not humble and not true followers of Christ.

And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

This story is not mentioned by any other writer. The word dropsy is unique to Luke. In fact the word dropsy occurs only here in the entire Bible. The Greek word for the expression “which had the dropsy” is υδροπικος hudropikos hoo-dro-pik-os’ which roughly means “looking watery to the observer” – and does not have the medical meaning of edema, which is the modern term for the condition called *dropsy* by ancient writers such as Hippocrates, and Philo. It was not uncommon for non-

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medical writers to use technical terms from medicine as allegory for spiritual conditions.

"a certain man" is a way of saying either that his name was well known but for propriety it was not to be written down, or it meant "let us assume there was such a person for the sake of the story, and he was one of the members of the family".

But the verses here are concerned primarily with holy thinking, not medical miracles, and I assume that the person in this story has "spiritual dropsy" – a term used by the Fathers to indicate a spiritual thirst that could never be satisfied by the Pharisees method of teaching the law of Moses.

The message is that this kind of sickness could only be quenched by living water from Jesus. You may remember a similar story of the Samaritan woman who came to Jacob's well many times a day for water and that the water from Jacob's well could never satisfy the thirst of the men she waited on. Jesus offered her "living water".

"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Joh 4:9,10.

"Jesus ... said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall

give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw." Joh 4:13-15.

And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

The Greek word translated "answering" means "to conclude to oneself", or it could be a Hebraism meaning: they expect Him to address them. In any case it is a rhetorical question, for this lawyer knew the law well. There was no law which forbade healing on the Sabbath day, only it was the Pharisees "day of rest" and it was a custom not to heal on the sabbath.

And they held their peace.

He was their invited guest, to whom they must be courteous, and they did not talk.

And he took (him), and healed him, and let him go;

The text implies that Jesus performed a healing blessing on one of the family – and there is no mention of any objection. Perhaps they knew him to be a Prophet who could heal people.

Jesus apparently laid hands on the person and blessed him. The phrase "let him go" means literally "to free fully" and has been also translated as "forgive". Perhaps when Jesus removed His hands from the person it was a

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letting go of the person and a forgiving of sin. The expression "let him go" probably did not mean that the person left the room, for the sabbath meal is a sacred occasion.

I think Jesus is telling us that only through His grace could a "dropsy thirst" be cured by His living water. We too are sufferers when we thirst for understanding but seek it from a source which does not know Jesus Christ. In another parable, the Samaritan woman *drank from Jacob's Well, (Torah)*, but she could not learn the truth about the Messiah from this "well", for the teachings about the Messiah are veiled in Torah, and few people apart from Moses and the Prophets understood about the Messiah. Only by drinking the living water of Jesus Christ can the Samaritan woman, and we, know the truth.

And answered them, saying,

A rhetorical question, again. Jesus reminds the lawyers of these verses in De 22:4. but says it in different words.

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again." De 22:4.

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?

Now, someone let out the ass and the ox on the sabbath in order to find water. This they call "work" and advise others against doing such a thing. So Jesus is implying – you Pharisees do this, but you teach others not to.

"The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?" Lu 13:15.

**Jesus said:** "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not." Mt 23:2-3.

Most readers assume that there was a law which prevents this action on the Sabbath – but there was no such law. God's law requires them to help a brother lift the animal up again, sabbath or not.

In the case of healing: the Pharisee told people not to heal on the sabbath. But there is no law against healing on the sabbath. Just as there is no law against rescuing an ox on the sabbath. The Pharisee knew this, but he taught otherwise – that is why Jesus implied he was a hypocrite (see Luke 13:14). Righteous and holy perhaps, but hypocrite also.

In many commentaries the translation is "fallen into a well" (NEB and others). In some mss. the sentence

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finishes with "and would give him water" i.e after the rescue. Presumably the "animal" was thirsty and seeking water ( like the man which had the dropsy).

And they could not answer him again to these things.

They did not argue the law against Jesus's position, and they did not yet understand Him. So Jesus told a parable.

And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, This implies that the Pharisees were amongst those people *bidden* – they were the first to be called by God.

when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; This was Jesus's criticism of the *Chief Pharisees* whose pride of being called puffed them up, so that they felt they should be given the best seats at any event. You can sense what is coming in this lecture. The Pharisee is being warned *the first shall be last etc.*

saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; i.e. do not covet the best seat in the house, do not count yourself the most important person.

Jesus is referring to Proverb 25:6

Pr 25: 6 Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: 7 For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than that thou shouldst be put lower in the presence of the prince

whom thine eyes have seen.

lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place;

Perhaps the Chief Pharisee thought that there was no one more honorable. But to suggest that the God who called him, would introduce him to a more honorable person, was an "eye opener". The thought that he would have to give up his "place" to this more righteous person (prophet/apostle/disciple) has other implications.

You will remember that Jesus told his disciples to be more righteous than the Pharisees.

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Mt 5:19 , 20.

and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

Shame because the Pharisee is to be taught a lesson by a "superior" on a subject that he should be an expert in – the law.

But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room;

Be humble and listen – be ready to learn.

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that when he that bade thee cometh,

This refers to Jesus or to the Prophets.

he may say unto thee, Friend,

when friend is capitalized "Friend" it has the meaning that the speaker is an intimate of the other. In the NT Friend occurs only 5 times, and in each case it refers to a close relationship between Jesus or God and the person. So a person who is called of God (bidden) and is humble can become a Friend of God. Abraham was such a man and was called the Friend of God.

go up higher:

This has the spiritual meaning of ascending in holiness, through learning and understanding. Here God (*He that bade thee*) offers to provide this understanding.

then shalt thou have worship

the Greek is δόξα doxa dox'-ah, we see this in "doxology", "glory be to God" it also means "dignity" and "glory"

in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

you will be "glorified" i.e we will make it apparent to your friends that we have blessed you with honor and dignity.

From this we understand that Jesus is promising to the Pharisee that they will be so honored if he will become humble and listen to God.

Then Jesus quotes from the Proverbs 18:12 and 29:23

"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility."

"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."

For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

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### **What must we then do?**

We must humble ourselves and not think that we already are among those blessed of God, as did the Pharisee. Behave as if you were among the blessed that Jesus described in the Sermon on the Mount, even if you do not believe that you are living as God wants you to live. Be a peacemaker – don't create anger. Be merciful – give people the benefit of the doubt, don't be prejudiced, try and understand people. Be a seeker after righteousness – spend time during every day to read what others did to become right with God – start with Abraham's story. Read Matthew 5-7 (KJV, KJ21, KJER, Douay-Rheims Bibles) to become familiar with the Sermon on the Mount.



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Jesus said to his apostles and teachers: *teach all to observe everything I have shown you.* God has not yet shown to many people, what He showed to the apostles. *For many are called but few are chosen.* There are teachers who do not understand scripture – and you should not listen to them. \_\_\_\_\_

We must learn the truth from God, and not from any other source than God's word, and from His teachers who interpret those words. We must listen to authorized teachers, such as the Church Fathers, and the Divines of the Anglican Catholic Church. We must learn from our own teachers but not necessarily emulate the behavior of any teacher, for some do not obey what they preach.

Emulate Jesus's behavior. Do not be a hypocrite. Do what you believe to be the truth.

### Notes:

#### On the meaning of “dropsy”

*St. Augustine Sermon on the Mount P458*

*When men are in the dropsy, they are full of water, and yet are always thirsty. They are full of water, and yet they thirst for water. How then canst thou take pleasure in opulence,*

*who hast thereby this dropsical desire? Gold then thou hast, it is good; yet thou hast not whereby thou canst be made good, but whereby thou canst do good. ask, What good can I do with gold? Hast thou not heard in the Psalm, “He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his righteousness remaineth for ever.” This is good, this is the good whereby thou art made good; righteousness. If thou have the good whereby thou art made good, do good with that good which cannot make thee good. Thou hast money, deal it out freely. By dealing it out freely, thou increasest righteousness. “For he hath dispersed abroad, hath distributed, hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever.” See what is diminished and what increased. Thy money is diminished, thy righteousness increased. That is diminished which thou must soon have lost, that diminished which thou must soon have left behind thee; that increased which thou shalt possess for ever.*

*John Wesley 1790 Sept 21*

*15. “But is there no way,” you may ask, “either to prevent or to cure this dire disease?” There is one preventative of it, which is also a remedy for it; and I believe there is no other under heaven. It is this. After you have gained (with the cautions above given) all you can, and saved all you can, wanting for nothing; spend not one pound, one shilling, or one penny, to gratify either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life; or indeed, for any other end than to please and glorify God. Having avoided this rock on the right hand, beware of that on the left. Secondly. Hoard nothing. Lay up no treasure on earth, but give all you can; that is, all you have. I defy all the men upon earth, yea, all the angels in heaven, to find any other way of extracting the poison from riches.*

*THE WORKS OF DR. JOHN TILLOTSON, LATE  
ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY.*

*[But covetousness is not the thirst of nature, but of a diseased mind. It is the thirst of a fever, or of a **dropsy**; the more a man drinks the more he desires, and the more he is*



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*inflamed. In like manner, the more the covetous man increaseth his estate, the more his desires are enlarged and extended, and he finds continually new occasions and new necessities; and every day as he grows richer, he discovers new wants; and a new poverty to be provided against, which he did not think of before, comes into his mind: Et minus haec optat, qui non habet; "and he that is without these things covets them less than he that hath them." So far is a covetous man's attaining to riches from giving him satisfaction, that he who hath scarce any thing at all is many times much nearer to contentment than he that hath got so much; nay, so unreasonable is this appetite, as to desire more, even when the man knows not how to bestow what he hath already. This Solomon observed long since (for the vices and humours of men are much the same in all ages), Eccles. iv. 8. "There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother; yet is there no end of all his labours, neither is his eye satisfied with riches, neither saith he, For whom do I labour and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail." And indeed what can be greater vanity and folly, than to be at certain pains and labour all the days of a man's life, and yet to be uncertain all the while for whom it is that he drudgeth and taketh all these pains?*

*And if this be the nature of this vice, the more it gets still to covet the more, then nothing can be more unreasonable than to think to gratify this appetite; because, at this rate, the man can never be contented, because he can never have enough; nay, so far is it from that, that every new accession to his fortune sets his desires one degree farther from rest and satisfaction; for a covetous mind having no bounds, it is very probable that the man's desire will increase much faster than his estate; and then the richer he is, still the poorer, because he is still the less contented with his condition. However, it is impossible that the man's desire should ever be satisfied; for desire being always first, if the man's desire of riches advanceth and goes forward as fast as riches follow, then it is not possible for*

*riches ever to overtake the desire of them, no more than the hinder wheels of a coach can overtake those which are before; because, as they were at a distance at first setting out, so let them go never so far or so fast, they keep the same distance still.*

