In the fourteenth chapter of Luke Jesus was in “the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath…” All eyes were on Him when “a certain man [came] before Him who had the dropsy.” It was the Sabbath and those who were in the house wanted to know if it was “lawful to heal on the Sabbath.” They really didn’t want to know the truthful answer; they were not interested in the truthful answer; they just wanted to trap Jesus. Jesus healed the man and it gave Him the opportunity to teach His audience a parable. It was about choosing “best places” to sit when invited to a meal. When He finished His teaching He then addressed the ruler of the Pharisees who had “invited Him” to the meal with these words of wisdom written in verses 13 and 14.

“When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. 14 And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just.”

When we invite people to a meal in our home we usually, if not always, never invite the very people the Lord said to invite. Sometimes our motivation for inviting those who we do is the very motivation that Jesus said would be the case. We feel an obligation to return the favor; we were invited into their home so we feel obligated to invite them into our home.

Who would invite strangers into their home for a meal – especially strangers as described by Christ – strangers who are “poor,” “maimed,” “lame,” and “blind?” Imagine having around your dining room table with its clean table cloth, expensive china, and polished silver, people who are dirty, shabbily dressed, missing one or both arms or legs, crippled with twisted feet, or with milky eyes trying to find their seat. But those are the very people our Lord said to invite.

Jesus always practiced what He preached. There is not one thing that Jesus said in His ministry to which we can point our fingers and say, “Aha! What a hypocrite! He talks the talk but doesn’t walk the talk.” That is also true in this case. But, you ask, where and when did Jesus ever do this Himself? He did not have a home with a dining room. Didn’t He even once say that “the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head?” When and where did He ever invite people to a meal in His house with a fancy dining room?

Oh, brethren, if only we could see ourselves as well as God saw us before we were in Christ and “added” to His church. If only we could see ourselves without the blood of Christ covering our sins. If only we could see ourselves as well as we are able to see other people. I know that we are exhorted to “examine” ourselves and not others at this time but,
without being too obvious, look at those who are here in this assembly as we prepare to eat the “loaf” and drink the “cup.” Some of us are extremely “poor” in what we have done for Christ. Some of us have been severely “maimed” because of sin. Some of us are woefully “lame” in our walk with Christ. Some of us have been terribly “blind” to the blessings and to the Word of God. Some of us have been all of these things and continue to wrestle with some or all of these ailments. And yet in spite of all of this, Christ has invited us into His house, the church, to commune with Him at His Supper Table. Not one of us individually and not as a group could we ever “repay” Him for what He has done for us. We could never live enough lifetimes to make restitution for the sins that we have committed, some of which are impossible for us to make restitution. Besides, restitution does not earn us redemption. Restitution does not give us forgiveness. It is only by the work of Christ on the cross that our sins can be forgiven. It is only by His blood that our sins can be covered.

But for the blood of Christ, we can hardly imagine what we would look like in the eyes of our holy, righteous Redeemer as we take our place at His Table in His house. We come spiritually stumbling to the Table far from having the perfect righteousness that we will receive from Him at the time of our resurrection. But still the perfect righteous One has invited us knowing that He cannot and never, ever will be repaid – not even in part. And we come; we gladly come. We praise Him as we eat and drink His meal. We confess to Him as we eat and drink His meal. Week after week after week until Jesus comes again for His blessed bride, the church, He invites us “poor,” “maimed,” “lame,” and “blind” spiritual misfits to the King’s Table.

At this Table there is no low place or high place or best place. There is not one who is exalted above another or one who is lower than another. The chairs at this Table are all level, on the same spiritual plane. Even the pathway that leads to the Table is level. But at the head of the Table is the pre-eminent One, the exalted One, the head of His body, the church. All eyes should be upon Him.

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PRAYER

God, our Father in heaven, thank you for allowing us to be at this holy Table today. As we sit here, help us to so examine ourselves that we see ourselves as You would see us were we outside of and uncovered with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Bring before our faces our unrighteousness and so fill us with Your Spirit that we will repent and seek Your forgiveness. And at the same time, Father, stir our hearts to rejoice and be thankful for our salvation in Christ. We ask you to bless the loaf and accept our thanks for the cup. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.