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| Slide | **Sermon** |
| 1 | Going for the Best SeatLuke 14:7-14 |
| 2 | Intro – Going for the Best Seat –  Carowinds – security for Palladium shows – folks would line up for 1 to 2 hours to get the best seats Open the gates at the back area – folks not allowed to run in the parl.But it was useless to remind them of this rule – because once the gates were open, they’d run to get the best seats. In Florida – MGM – Fantasy Live show – that closed the park. Really a GREAT show – outdoors, special lighting effects, fireworks, video projection of Disney Characters on sprays of H2O that formed a screenWe wanted a good seat, so we decided to go about 1 hour early. What that a mistake! Line was already half the park in length. We were just glad to get a seat!What is it about wanting to be first in line or getting the best seat? |
| 3 | Story about this in Luke 14:7-12Text today – Jesus to house of head Pharisee – share meal – VIP Event; guest getting best seats. Intro – Setting – Sunday lunch at the D.S. houseMinisters invited Ministers were going for the important seats Jockeying to sit at advantageous places – sitting near the D.S. if possible, if not near the pastors of growing churches or pastor withinfluential appointments, pastors in the upper-class communities where the money is abundant. Jesus noted how they were looking for the best seats!He told a parable – story that invites reader into the context of the issue being discussed. Not a super illustration – not point that could be more simply said. Parable – story and meaning can’t be separated or you lose its purpose.  |
| 4 | Told a parable. Note here – NOTHING wrong with * Recognition
* Attention
* Honor

God knows we need it. God create us that way. |
| 5 | Children today are starved for attention and recognition and will do almost anything to get it; even if they have to resort to acting out, (hitting a playmate, intentionally turning over their cup of juice – for negative attention is better than no attention!Youth today need attention and recognition and to be honored. Its best look for way to provide it.Lest they turn to drugs or gangs and unhealthy lifestyles to get attention form somewhere. Adults – we need recognition from spouses, employers, from the church. It motivates and lets us know we are appreciated and loved.  |
| 6 | Parable – Setting – wedding banquet – bit “to do”, major community social event!* VIP of town would be involved
* Photo opt for who’s who in Jewish town
* Family goes all out

(Illustration – Hardee’s commercial if you are going to do it, do it right, do it big!)VIP jockeying for best seats - striving for recognition, attention, honor from the host. Yes - nothing wrong with Recognition, Attention, and honor.It’s just when you make them the focus – when they are your goal and you live and act to receive them. |
| 7 | AND Jesus’ response to such living is - -  NO, No, No! You’re missing the point of life. Recognition, attention, being honored comes form an intrinsic source and is based on how you live your life for others.  |
| 8 | Jesus’ strategy for status seekers, wanting to be first in line . . . sit in obvious lower seats – let the host shower you with attention in front of everyone If the host doesn’t notice – good indication to look at your life and see what you stand for, what you have done - is it acceptable to God – has it made a difference for the Kingdom?Jesus’ Summary – All who exalt themselves will be humbled (humiliated) All who make it their focus on looking good, drawing attention – well, it won’t work! |
| 9 | Second part of the text – setting: Jesus to leader of Pharisees – the host – our analogy – the D.S.When you give a luncheon/dinner – don’t invite:Friends/buddiesFamilyRich, prominent neighborsAnyone that can return the favor and have you over. Instead – Have a banquet and invite: poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,  |
| 10 | They won’t repay you, nor will you get earthly recognition, attention or honor. But when it counts – at the resurrection – when you meet God face to face, you will! That’s when you’ll be rewarded.  |
| 11 | Jesus was attacking the “rub my back, I’ll rub your back” way of living. Attacking the ‘country club’ mindset of the Pharisees – associating with only those that help you first; those that can help. So, Jesus taught a new strategy for us, the status seeker we are. As usual, he turned the old strategy upside down – world’s way vs. God’s way.Humanly we spend lots of effort and time –Learning who the VIPs areMeeting the ‘right’ peoplePutting ourselves into places where we can be noticed by themAll to elevate our status in this world int his area – yes, even in this church! |
| 12 | But Jesus says we’re seeking the recognition, attention and honor from the wrong sources.The recognition, attention, honor we need and should seek is from God! How do we get this?Through humility – by seeing needs in our world and setting out to meet them – * Without fanfare
* Without drawing attention to ourselves

R. Woodruff – Coke Tycoon – “There’s no limit what a man can do if he doesn’t care who gets the credit.” |
| 13 |  Remember FOR EVERYONE WHO EXALTS HIMSELF WILL BE HUMBLED, AND HE WHO HUMBLES HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED. Conclusion: Being first in line is the result of culture’s pressure to show yourself worthy – that usually makes us believe what we do and accomplish determines our value.  |
| 14 | **You are invited** to God’s Banquet – will you seek the best seat here…or will you seek blessings in heaven? |