

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 22:1-14
November 3rd, 2019
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

A Certain King Who Arranged a Marriage

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father: We thank Thee, that of Thy great mercy Thou hast called us by Thy holy Word to the blessed Marriage-Feast of Thy Son, and through Him dost forgive us all our sins; but, being daily beset by temptation, offense, and danger, and being weak in ourselves and given to sin, we beseech Thee graciously to protect us by Thy Holy Spirit, that we fall not; and if we fall and defile our wedding-garment, with which Thy Son hath clothed us, graciously help us again and lead us to repentance, that we fall not forever; preserve in us a constant faith in Thy grace, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our dear heavenly Father has arranged a marriage feast for His Only-Begotten Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ. The heavenly Father's Son, as the Bridegroom, weds His dear Bride, the Christian Church. He marries the Church by laying aside His divine power, and putting on the flesh of mankind. The heavenly Father arranges this marriage for His Son, our Lord + Jesus, not because mankind is worthy of this honor, but because of His great love for mankind. We are His very own creation; made with His very hands from the dust of the Earth. He breathed into us, His creation, the very breath of life; He gave us life by breathing into our lifeless form a portion of His very own Spirit.

In His foreknowledge, the heavenly Father knew that mankind would be deceived by the serpent in the Garden of Eden, and would fall into sin and death, and be under the power of the devil. Knowing this horrible fate would befall His beloved creation—knowing that this horrible fate would befall us poor, miserable sinners—He elected—chose—to save us by arranging this wedding feast between His beloved Son and His Bride, the Church. He chose to save us by sending His dear Son into our flesh, to redeem us—to buy us back—from sin, death and the power of the devil. He did this not with gold or silver, but with His very own innocent and precious blood shed on the tree of the holy cross.

This is the good news that our heavenly Father wants us to hear and know; that He loves us so much that He made the arrangements for our salvation through His dear and beloved Only-Begotten Son. We are unable to save ourselves from our sins. As we prayed at the beginning of the sermon the prayer by Veit Dietrich, we are beset on all sides with “temptation, offense and danger.” We are also weak in ourselves to resist temptation, and fall into sin daily and often. We keep committing the same sins over and over again. So, it is clear to us that we cannot save ourselves through our own righteous living. This is why our beloved heavenly Father elects to save mankind through His own dear Son, the Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

Having prepared this wedding feast by sending His dear Son into our flesh, He sends out His servants—the prophets, Apostles and preachers—to invite all those who would hear that the marriage

feast is ready. The oxen and fatted cattle have been killed. His own dear Son, the Lord + Jesus, has been slaughtered on the tree of the holy cross, to provide us with His own precious, innocent Body and Blood given in bread and wine, as a food and medicine for our very own soul. His suffering and death bring us forgiveness, life and salvation. And in His holy Supper it is sealed and confirmed for us as we remember and give thanks for His once and for all time sacrifice on the cross for us poor, miserable sinners.

The prophets, Apostles and preachers proclaim to those invited—the Jews first, and then the Gentiles—that the wedding feast is ready to be enjoyed. The servants of the heavenly Father preach to all those who have been invited that the salvation of their souls can be found in the holy Christian Church; salvation is found in the Only-Begotten Son and in His Bride the Church. In the Church the sins of all those who believe in the works and merits of the Christ, are gifted with the wedding garments of His righteousness. We are gifted with His righteousness. Our sins, iniquities and transgressions are covered over by the righteousness of the Christ. Our unrighteousness is covered by our Lord's righteousness. We have a mediator between the heavenly Father and His wrath.

There are many who are called by the servants of the heavenly Father. In church buildings across this country and around the world today many preachers are inviting poor, miserable sinners to put aside the garments of unrighteousness, and through faith in the works and merits of the Christ, to put on the wedding garment of the heavenly Father's wedding of His Son and the Church.

Unfortunately, as in the parable of our Lord + Jesus from the Gospel of the Evangelist and Apostle St. Matthew, there are many who ignore the invitation of the heavenly Father's servants. This goes back all the way to the Old Testament when the prophets were sent by the heavenly Father to invite the Jews to the wedding feast of the Promised Coming One—the Messiah. The Jews in their sinfulness and false idolatry were not willing to come. So, what did the heavenly Father do? He sent more servants to invite more guests. The servants were charged with preaching, "See, I have prepared My dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding."

As it is today, those who were invited were not willing to come. They had better things to do. They made light of it, and went their own ways to their farms and businesses. They were too consumed with the things of this world and life to be concerned about the life after this world. There were also those who were not content to just be apathetic, and ignore the invitation, but there were others who actively sought to destroy the servants and the invitation to the wedding feast that they were preaching. They seized the servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. The men who had been sent to preach the good tidings of the coming Messiah, were ignored and killed. Therefore, our heavenly Father sent out the armies of the Assyrians and Babylonians to attack and kill those murderers, and lead them into exile away from their land, so that they might be led into repentance for their evil behavior.

This continued after our Lord + Jesus came down from Heaven and was incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost. When the Apostles and many New Testament preachers were martyred for their preaching an invitation to come to the wedding feast. Even today, there are many who shun and rebuke the preaching of the heavenly Father—who refuse to come to the wedding feast of the Son of God to His Bride, the Church. There are certainly those today who actively seek to destroy the Church and her preaching and preachers, but there are also many others who are just as apathetic towards the things of the heavenly Father as many Jews were in the time of the prophets. This should stand as a stark warning to us, to not ignore the invitation, but to come to this holy house to hear the Word of God—hear the invitation of the wedding feast—and rejoice that our heavenly Father loves us so much that He sends His Only-Begotten Son into our flesh to redeem us from sin, death and the power of the devil.

But there is also another stark warning for us in this Gospel reading today, for there is found in the wedding hall a man with no wedding garment. This man had heard the invitation. He had come to

the wedding feast. He came to church to attend upon the preaching of the heavenly Father, but he did not have on a wedding garment. He was therefore cast out into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He was cast into the eternal fire of Hell, because He did not have on a wedding garment. This is what happens when a person tries to save himself by his own works. The only wedding garment worthy of the wedding feast is the robe of righteousness won for us through the works and merits of the Christ on the tree of the holy cross. We put on, through faith, this robe of our Lord's righteousness. If we are not wearing His righteousness, we are unclean and unworthy to be in the wedding hall.

This is why our heavenly Father continues to show His love for us by continuing to send us His faithful servants to continue to preach that all things are now ready and that we should come to the wedding feast. The Son has been sacrificed on the altar of the cross. His Blood has been shed for us. His Body has been given to us as a peace offering between the heavenly Father and sinful mankind. Listen to the servants of the heavenly Father when they invite you to the wedding feast. Do not be apathetic and lazy. Do not be concerned with earthly things that will pass away. But through faith cling to the sacrifice of the heavenly Father's Son for you, and put on His righteousness—His works and merits—and rejoice that the heavenly Father knew that you would be a poor, miserable sinner, so He chose to prepare a wedding feast for you by sacrificing His Beloved Only-Begotten Son on the cross for you.

The wedding feast is ready. Come, for all has been prepared. The Son is sacrificed for you. You have been given a robe of our Lord's righteousness in Holy Baptism, and that robe is cleansed through our daily contrition and faith shown in the confession of our sins. Our loving heavenly Father sends you His servant to preach into your ears the good news of salvation found in the Christ alone. Let us willingly follow the Word of God, and having put on the garment of righteousness through faith, receive the eternal life won for us by the Son of the heavenly Father, and enjoy with all those chosen by God the eternal feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom without end. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Lord God, heavenly Father, we thank Thee that, all things being prepared for our salvation, Thou didst call us to the Marriage-Feast of Thy dear Son, the Bridegroom of our souls; and we beseech Thee, cleanse and direct our hearts, that we may not reject Thy gracious invitation, but willingly follow Thy Word and, being clothed by faith with the garment of righteousness, obtain eternal life with all Thy elect; through the same Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!