

The Second Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Luke 14:16-24  
June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2020  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
St. Michael and All Angels Evangelical Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Augusta, GA  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

### They All Began to Make Excuses

*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 give thanks unto Thee, that through Thy holy Word Thou hast called us to Thy Great Supper, and we beseech Thee: Quicken our hearts by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not hear Thy Word without fruit, but that we may prepare ourselves rightly for Thy Kingdom, and not suffer ourselves to be hindered by any worldly care, through Thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, 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.

Today's Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke is at the beginning of a long series of parables that our Lord + Jesus begins to tell to all who would listen. Some of these parables end up in the Church's year. We heard one last Sunday: the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Today, our Lord + Jesus tells the parable of the Great Supper. A certain man gave a great supper and invited many. Our Lord + Jesus is at a supper that He had been invited to when He tells this parable. He had just said that one should not pick the best seat for himself, but should take the lowest seat so that that person may be exalted in the eyes of the other guests. Then He said to the Pharisee who invited Him that He should not invite his friends, brothers, and relatives, nor his rich neighbors, but the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind, for they cannot repay the kind service.

This prompted the response of one of the guests to say, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." This man, who is not identified, believes just like we do. We see all of the good things that our Lord + Jesus does for us, and we think that nobody would want to refuse all of the good things that our Lord + Jesus offers to the world. But this is not the case. Our Lord + Jesus offers this parable from the Gospel of the Evangelist St. Luke as a response to that thinking. It offers a jolt of reality. It is a reminder that we live in a fallen, sinful world, that hates the Lord God, hates us and all Christians, and seeks our downfall constantly, because the world is ruled by the devil and their sinful flesh.

Our Lord Triune God, the certain man, through the Second Person of the Trinity—our Lord + Jesus, Who is both God and man—certainly does invite many to His Supper. He has invited all those who have heard His Word. The Word goes forth through the mouth of His ministers. The Holy Ghost works through the preached Word, to draw men into the Church. This process goes on around the world, every Lord's Day, and whenever the people of God gather together as brothers in Christ. Whenever we gather together the Word of God is going out—the invitation is being sent out—to come to the great supper. We do not need much more evidence than the size of our small gathering to confirm

what our Lord + Jesus preaches in His parable for today. Many are invited—*many* are called—but they *all* begin to make excuses.

This parable is similar in vein to last Sunday's parable, where the rich man was so consumed by the things of this life that he forgot the most important thing; he forgot the One Who provided him with all of his riches, and the reason that he was given those riches. He was not given them to fulfill his own sinful desires; to satisfy the whims of his sinful flesh, but to assist his fellowman. The rich man from last Sunday's Gospel reading was to use his riches to help the poor beggar named Lazarus. Because the rich man lacked faith in God; because he did not listen to Moses and Prophets, who taught love for one's fellowman, he did not help Lazarus. He chose to trust in his riches and earthly possessions and not the Lord God.

The same is true of the people in today's Gospel reading. Their earthly possessions take precedent over the things of the Lord God. One has bought a piece of ground. One has bought five yoke of oxen, and one has married a wife. All of these things are earthly in nature. This is how it is with the world, and if we are honest with ourselves, it is this way with us at times, too. The world has no use for spiritual things. If they consider them at all it is after some tragedy has befallen them or our society. But in good times, when there is no crisis, they ignore the invitation of the Lord God.

This should not surprise us, but it does, time and time again. We simply cannot believe that anyone would pass up on the great gifts that our Lord God desires to give to us, and all those who are invited, but they do. They *all* begin to make excuses. This is the way of the world. It should not surprise us when the world acts according to their own sinful nature. It should not surprise us when we act according to our own sinful nature, but we do and we continue to surprise ourselves with all of our evil thoughts, words, and deeds. It surprises us when we realized that we have not been considering spiritual things, but have only lived our lives for earthly things; when we have lived our lives as if God did not matter, and as if we and our own sinful will mattered most.

The enjoyment of earthly things can be put aside to enjoy spiritual things, which should never be laid aside. Consider the excuses that offered to pass up on the invitation to the great supper. The individual who bought a piece of ground could go and check out that property at any time. The land is not going anywhere. It is not going to suddenly disappear. The supper, however, has a fixed time and place, it does not last forever. We offer the Lord's Supper, the medicine for our souls, once a week at a set time in a set place, and invite all those who would come to take instruction and be examined by the minister, so that they too might enjoy the Lord's Supper in fellowship with us.

But people pass up this gift of the Lord God for a few brief moments of earthly pleasure. They pass on things eternal for things temporal. The same is true of the second excuse maker in the parable. He had just bought five yoke of oxen, and needed to test them. There are really two problems with this excuse. The first relates to the previous excuse. The oxen are going to be there when the supper is ended. They are not going anywhere. The second problem lies in this person's actions. Would it not make sense to test out the oxen *before* he bought them? This is just poor stewardship on this individual's part. We would not buy a house before checking it out. We would not buy a car without taking it for a test drive. We would not buy new clothes without trying them on. It only makes sense to make sure that which you are buying works the way you want it to before you buy it.

This just serves to show that the excuse has nothing to do with the five yoke of oxen and his testing of them. It has to do with this man's refusal to accept the invitation of the certain man to come to his supper. This individual did not want to come, and so he thinks up an excuse which satisfies his own mind, but it simply is not a valid excuse. We experience this all the time in our life and society. Many people are invited, but they all make lame excuses why they cannot be here. They show themselves to be unreliable. But these excuses are not just damaging to us, they are even more

damaging to those who make them. For, they are excluding themselves from the eternal spiritual things that have been prepared for them since before the foundation of the world. They also end up excluding all the people they profess to love.

This is shown us in the last excuse given in today's parable. He has just married a wife and cannot come. The question that always comes to my mind is, "Why can he not just bring her?" The certain man holding the great supper and already invited "many." Could he not have room for one more? This man not only excludes himself from the supper, but he also excludes his wife. He does damage not only to his own soul, but also to the soul of his wife. In placing his trust in earthly things, he has excluded himself from the joys of Heaven, and also all those who could join him in Heaven if he had brought them with him.

This is the reality of the world that we live in. Many are invited to the great supper, but all begin to make excuses why they cannot come. The good news for us is that our Lord + Jesus does not give up. He does not cancel the great supper. Instead he tells his servants to go and invite still others; to invite the poor and maimed and lame and the blind. All the ones who in the previous parable that our Lord + Jesus tells are unable to pay back the One Who invited them. We are the spiritually poor, maimed, lame and blind. We are the poor, miserable sinners that our Lord + Jesus invites to His Great Supper. Through the preached Word His ministers invite us to come and eat; to sit down at His table with Him and enjoy His very Body and very Blood in bread and wine. We are the ones that His ministers have found in the highways and hedges, wandering aimlessly with no place to go. He has invited us all to come and sit down for His feast.

My dear friends, we have been invited to come to the Great Supper—the eternal Supper of the Lamb in His Kingdom, which has no end. Rejoice that He has delighted in you to invite you to this place and receive His good gifts. He has delivered us from our enemies—sin, death and the devil—because He has delighted in us, His creation. He promises us spiritual and eternal things—forgiveness of our sins, eternal life and salvation. He delivers these things to us whenever we gather together in His Name. Through His Holy Ghost He gives to us faith to cling to His good gifts, and rejoice that we have been invited to His Great Feast. May the Lord God grant us perpetual fear and love of His holy Name to always give thanks that He has invited us poor sinners into His eternal grace. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### **Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty and Everlasting God, the Source of all life and joy, Who, by the glad sound of the Gospel, hast called us to have part in Thy Kingdom and glory: shine into our hearts, we beseech Thee, by Thy Word and Spirit, and draw us with the cords of Thy constraining grace, that we may heartily choose that good part which shall not be taken away from us, and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure; through 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!*