

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity Sunday  
St. Matthew 22:1-14  
October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
St. Bartholomew Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC  
Fort Myers, FL  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Tell Those Who Were Invited

*In Nomine Iesu!*

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

**Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O holy and righteous God, who hast not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, and given us our allotted season of grace: we beseech Thee, because the days are evil, and through the weakness of our mortal nature we are easily misled, impart to us the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may redeem the time, accept Christ in His Word as our only Savior, walk soberly and circumspectly in this present world, give Thee praise and thanks always, and obtain at last the crown of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One 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.

In the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew there are two warnings that our Lord + Jesus gives in the parable of the Wedding Feast. The first warning is for those outside of the Christian faith. The second warning is for all those who publicly profess to be a part of the Christian faith. Like the reading from a couple of weeks ago, this reading also takes place during our Lord's final week before His crucifixion and death. After our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey to the shouts and acclamations of the crowds yelling, "Hosanna! Hosanna in the Highest! Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord!" our Lord + Jesus met daily in the temple to give His final teachings before offering up His life as a ransom for all upon the tree of the holy cross, so that all those who believe on Him might have forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and salvation.

Today's text from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew in part of a string of parables that the Lord is speaking against the chief priests and Pharisees, who thought that the Kingdom of Heaven belonged solely to their will and providence. These parables lead up to our Lord's discussion with the Apostles about the signs of the end times. We will soon hear those Gospel readings as the Church's year comes to a close and we enter the Advent season, where we will prepare for our Lord's coming to us.

This parable from St. Matthew's Gospel by our Lord + Jesus begins by describing a certain king who arranged a marriage feast for his son. Our Lord is clearly talking about His heavenly Father, Who arranged a marriage feast for His Son—our Lord + Jesus Christ—to His Bride, the Church. Our Lord God heavenly Father has arranged for his marriage feast since before the foundation of the world. Even before He created the world, and all things in the world including us, our heavenly Father arranged for this marriage feast between His Son + Jesus, and the Church, of which we are a part. The Son of the heavenly Father—the certain king from the parable—is made worthy to enter into this marriage with His Bride the Church, by His offering up of His life as a ransom on the tree of the holy cross.

The marriage is prepared by our Lord's death. The consummation of that marriage takes place

on the Last Day, when all those who cling in faith to the works and merits of the Lord + Jesus are united with Him and all the saints and angels in Heaven for all eternity. The invitation to this great and eternal wedding feast is being sent out every day until the Last Day. The heavenly Father sends out His servants daily to call all those who were invited, that is, the entire world, all those who are a part of His creation, to come to the great and eternal wedding feast of His Son + Jesus, and His Bride the Church in Heaven. This wedding feast is an eternal feast. Heaven, my dear friends, will be an eternal wedding banquet. We will be eternally united to our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ, because through faith we are a part of the Church.

Our heavenly Father has sent out His servants to invite all mankind to the wedding feast since the beginning of creation, and especially after the fall of mankind into sin. He has sent out His prophets, Apostles, and ministers into all the world to invite everyone to come to the eternal wedding feast of His Son, and His Bride. In every generation, however, there were those who refused the invitation to come to the eternal wedding feast.

Noah warned of the impending flood, and only eight were saved—Noah and his family. The patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, sojourned in the land of Canaan, and they refused to give up their false gods and false worship. Even after the Israelites returned from the bondage of slavery to enter in their promised land of Canaan, they too turned away from the Lord God and chose the false worship of the Canaanites. Our Lord in His mercy sent to them first the judges, and then He sent the prophets. Some ignored the judges and prophets, and just went about their own business. Others, however, treated the judges and prophets spitefully. Some of those who had been sent by the heavenly Father to invite all those invited to the wedding feast, were killed by the ones to whom they were sent to invite.

This is true too in the New Testament era. All but one of the Apostles was martyred for going into all nations and teaching them all that the heavenly Father commanded them, and baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The Apostles were spitefully killed by the unbelieving world, and many Christians in the Early Church were also martyred for their faith. Such was the unbelief of those who did not want to hear the invitation to come to the eternal wedding feast. Many, as it is to this day, cling to false gods and false worship, forsaking the only true Triune Lord God. Many go about their business, and ignore the invitation to receive eternal salvation from the One True religion and One True Triune Lord God.

The first warning that our Lord + Jesus would have us hear today is regarding these individuals; those who are outside the Christian faith. For, what does the parable teach that the king did to those who refused His invitation? He sent out His armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. They are murderers, because they send people to their eternal death in Hell by their continual preaching to cling to the lies of all the false religions. Their city that is destroyed is the self-righteous works that they have build up for themselves, and in which they trust; the good works to which they cling to instead of the true and only works of the Christ Himself. The warning for us Christians is that all those outside of the Christian faith will be destroyed by the heavenly Father on the Last Day. There will be much weeping and gnashing of teeth in the outer darkness as our Lord God withdraws all of His mercy that He has been bestowing upon all people, even the wicked, on that Last Day.

This is why this parish exists here today. For it was placed here by our Lord God to continue to invite all people to come to the eternal wedding feast in Heaven. This place of worship is here because of our Lord's mercy and grace. Just like in the parable where He sent out His servants into the highways to gather together all whom they found, both good and bad, we are here to invite all those who would heed the invitation to the eternal wedding feast. This invitation comes to us through the pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the Blessed Sacraments according to Christ's institution. Through these means the Holy Ghost opens our ears to hear the invitation to the wedding

feast, and to cling in faith that we are indeed a part of that eternal Church—a part of the Bride to be united to the Bridegroom, our Lord + Jesus Christ.

This invitation to come the wedding feast has been preached to us. The fact that we are here today is a testament that we have heard the invitation. It is proof that we desire to join that heavenly band and celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom. But our Lord + Jesus has a warning for us today, too. For in the parable there is found a man without a wedding garment on. This man represents all those who are Christians in name only. He pretends to be a part of the Church, but his heart is far from the Christ and the Lord God. This man affords us the opportunity to examine our hearts and minds to see if we are not Christians in name only.

There are many who go through the motions: they come to Church every Sunday; they attend Bible class. But their Christianity is only seen when they are at Church, or the pastor calls or stops in. The rest of the time they live their lives as if Church is something they have to do, not as something that is a deep and inseparable part of their lives. Just like a husband and wife are united into one flesh—two become one—so that when that union is divided because of death or some other reason, the one remaining is left with a pain that will not go away. So also, is our union with Christ such a union that to be apart from Christ and His Word is painful to us.

Just like those who killed the prophets were destroyed by the heavenly Father, so too are all those who are Christians in name only cast out into the outer darkness, where there is much weeping and gnashing of teeth. There will be no more mercy for those who would have no part of the eternal wedding feast. This is why we are to live daily in our Holy Baptism, that is, that we should daily by contrition over our sins, drown the Old Adam in us, and repent of all of our sins constantly. We should daily examine ourselves according to the Ten Commandments, and consider how little we keep them, and having done that turn in faith to the Christ. For in Him alone is salvation. He has kept the Commandments which we are unable to keep, and He endured our punishment on tree of the holy cross. He did this for us so that we might be united with Him for all eternity in Heaven. He has called all of us by His suffering and death to join Him in the eternal wedding feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom.

There in that Kingdom there will no longer be any weeping or gnashing of teeth. There will no longer be any darkness, for the Light of the Christ will fill the wedding banquet hall with His Light. There will no longer be any death or sin, for we will inherit new robes—new and glorious bodies—which we will wear with joy for all eternity. There at that great and eternal feast, we will eternally sing the eternal Liturgy, the same liturgy which we practice every Sunday as we prepare for that Day when we will be called out of this vale of tears to our eternal home in Heaven. Therefore, my dear friends, let us give thanks and praise to our heavenly Father, Who through His servants—His ministers—have called us out of darkness into His marvelous light, and has promised us a place at His eternal wedding banquet. Thanks be to the Lord God heavenly Father for all of His gifts. 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!*