

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 22:1-14
October 30th, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

For Many Are Called, But Few Are Chosen

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, 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.

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

With the Twentieth Sunday after Trinity Sunday the Church begins to focus on the Last Day. This will continue for the next three weeks. So today we have a parable of our Lord describing a certain King Who gave a wedding feast for His Son. But those who were invited refused to come. As our Lord + Jesus says in the parable, this is a picture of the Kingdom of Heaven. The Kingdom of Heaven is a wedding feast where our Lord God invites all those who would hear to receive the benefits that come from His Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ's, marriage to His Bride, the Church. At this marriage feast of the Christ and the Church we are united in faith to our Lord through the means of grace. We are united to our Lord.

My friends, you will notice from the Gospel reading from the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew that the King sends out His servants twice to invite those who were invited. This represents both the Prophets and the Apostles—the Old Testament servants of the Lord and the New Testament servants of the Word—who were sent to invite the people of the Lord to the wedding feast. But as we read from history—both in the Old and New Testaments—many Jews rejected the invitation. They refused to come to the wedding feast.

Their fate is sealed when the King sends out His armies and destroys them. We have here a picture of the destruction of the Jews, both in the Old Testament when both kingdoms—Israel and Judah—were led off into exile, and in the New Testament when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple—the old symbol of the Lord's presence among His people. This presence of the Lord God among His people is now found in the Man Christ + Jesus, Who is the Son of God the Father. However, the invitation is extended a third time. This time the servants were to go out into the highways to invite all those who would come into the house of the Lord to feast on the meal at the Son's wedding to His Bride the Church. These who are invited last, are the Gentiles—all of us non-Jews here today.

Therefore, the beginning of this parable represents the Church on Earth. Wherein the Prophets, Apostles, and the New Testament Ministers of the Word call all those who would hear into the Church. This is the task that has been given to the Church: to preach the Word of God in its truth and purity,

and to administer the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. By doing this simple task, the invitation is extended to those who remain in the highways. It is the Church's task until the Last Day to carry out the task that has been given to her. The Church does not need any gimmicks, or tricks, to extend the invitation. The Holy Ghost has promised to work through the means that our Lord + Jesus Christ has given to us. We are to simply use the Word and the Sacraments, and the Holy Ghost will work when and where He wills to call all those who would hear into the Kingdom of Heaven located in the Church on Earth. As we confess in Article V of the Augsburg Confession.

That means the invitation has also been extended to us here today. We have heard the invitation and have entered into the wedding feast; we have come into the Church by faith. Here in the house of the Lord, we receive His gifts and promises. We receive Holy Baptism, and are reminded throughout the Liturgy of this reality with every reference to the Holy Trinity. Through Holy Baptism, we have put on Christ and His righteousness. When the heavenly Father looks at us, He sees His Son, our Lord + Jesus Christ. He does not see our faults, or our sins. He sees only the garment that has been given to us in Holy Baptism—the righteousness of Christ, which He won for us on the tree of the holy cross, and is given to us through faith in the promises bestowed upon us in Holy Baptism.

In this wedding hall of the Lord's House, here in this place, we also get to enjoy the wedding feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom to His Bride, the Church. We receive from this altar the Lord's Body and Blood given in bread and wine, for the remission of our sins. We are given food for our souls to sustain us from the onslaught of our enemies, the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh. This meal creates and strengthens our faith in our Lord + Jesus and His gifts. When we eat this meal, we grow in love toward our heavenly Father, and toward one another, just as we pray in the Post-Communion Collect when we pray the Lord to give us "faith toward Thee and fervent love toward one another."

At this wedding feast of our Lord, we also hear once again the invitation to enjoy the feast of the Son through the preaching of the Word. We are declared forgiven through the Absolution by the Pastor. We are given a garment of righteousness by the Holy Ghost through these means. Through the Word and the Sacraments, the Holy Ghost continues to create faith in us, and strengthen that faith that already exists through His previous work. This garment of righteousness will carry us through until the Last Day, when the Lord will invite us into our eternal home in Heaven, to live with Him and all the saints and angels for all eternity, where we will enjoy the eternal feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom—the eternal Liturgy of the Lamb—forever and ever. This is the promise of the Lord + Jesus Christ to all who wear His righteousness through His means of grace. The promise to us is that we have been both called and chosen by our Lord + Jesus through His precious means of grace.

But this Gospel also contains a warning for us. For, there is found in the wedding hall—in the Church on Earth—a man who has no wedding garment. This man represents those who are only members of the Church in name. They are Christians in Name Only. They live their lives as if Christ and His Word does not matter. They have no need, in their mind, to daily study the Word of God, or daily to pray, or even to daily study the Catechism of Martin Luther, which is a concise and complete summary of Holy Scripture. They do not even bother to teach their children to develop a love and habit to do these things. These false Christians only have time for the Word of God on Sundays, and in many cases are only coming out of obligation or family ties, or because for them Church has become one more social activity with which they find enjoyment. Even worse are those who consider themselves Christians because they show up to church on special occasions, like Christmas or Easter, and never come any other time.

Take heed, my dear friends, of the end of those who only live a Christian life for two hours on Sunday. What does our Lord + Jesus say is their end? *"Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"* Those of us who live our lives as if Christianity is only for Sundays, or whenever we feel the

need to pull it out of our hat, will be cast out of the Church on the Last Day. They will be thrown into the darkness—into Hell—the place where our Lord God’s presence is no longer giving respite from the daily attacks of Satan and his demons.

This is why we must ever remain faithful to the Lord and His Word. We must cling to Him in faith. We must cling to His gifts and His Word, make them a part of our daily life; make them a part of our family’s daily life—especially if we have care and love for our family. The devil roars around like a lion seeing who he can devour. The Word of God is our protection. These simple means: our Holy Baptism, preaching of the Gospel, the Absolution, the Lord’s Supper, and even the other Christians who are gathered here today with us, help us to fight off the attacks of the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh, if we do not resist the Holy Ghost to do His great work within us.

Let us therefore, my dear friends, gladly come to this wedding feast every Sunday, and let us daily remind ourselves of the invitation to attend the wedding feast through our daily study of God’s Word and our daily prayers to God. For, our heavenly Father desires that all of us, and indeed all of mankind, come to the wedding feast, to receive the meal that He has prepared for us to eat in the presence of our enemies. Our heavenly Father desires that all men, especially us, be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. So that, through our patient endurance from the assaults of this life from our enemies, we may bear our garments of the righteousness of Christ with us to the Last Day, and there on that Day obtain a crown of victory—a crown of everlasting life. May the Lord + Jesus preserve you in the one, true faith, through the work of the Holy Ghost until that Last Day for you have been called and elected by the Lord + Jesus. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the 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!