

The Twentieth Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Matthew 22:1-14
October 22nd, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC
Augusta, GA
Pastor Jerald Dulas

I Have Made Ready My Dinner

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

“Again he sent forth other servants, saying, ‘Tell them that are bidden, ‘Behold, I have made ready my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come to the marriage feast.’””

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.

My dear friends, the heavenly Father has prepared for us a meal—a wedding supper—in which we get to eat that which has been slaughtered. Our heavenly Father has sent His only-Begotten and beloved Son to us to dwell with us and put upon Himself our flesh. He has offered up His life as a ransom for ours on the tree of the holy cross. He rose again on the third day so that all those who cling to Him in faith will have life everlasting with Him and the Father. He has invited us to participate in this wedding feast. The Lamb has been slaughtered. The meal is prepared. We have a golden invitation to come to the feast and sit down with our Lord and Savior. Therefore, let us come and enjoy this meal prepared for us so that we may receive the forgiveness of our sins.

The Lord God has invited the whole world. But sadly, many refuse the invitation. The Jews rejected the invitation. The holy Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, show time and again that the prophets who were sent to lead the people of Israel into repentance were mocked, ridiculed, ignored, and some were martyred for their preaching. When our Lord + Jesus came things were no different. They mocked, ridiculed, and eventually crucified Him on the tree of the cross, because they refused the invitation. He sent out the Apostles who, except for one, were all martyred for teaching that the Lord + Jesus was the incarnate Lord God come down from Heaven who suffered, died, and rose again on the third day. The Jews rejected the Gospel, and so the Apostles brought their preaching to the Gentiles.

Many of the Gentiles heard and believed and clung in faith to the Lord + Jesus. But there are still many in the world who refuse to receive the good news of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Many are

either consumed by their work, or their possessions, and there are many who are openly hostile the Word of God. The hatred for God and His Word—for His invitation—is growing more and more in this evil world. Our Lord shows in this parable that the Lord God will punish those who refuse to come. He punished the Jews in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. He will destroy all unbelievers in Hell when He comes again to judge the quick and the dead. Those without a wedding garment will be cast into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Our Lord has invited everyone to the wedding feast. Therefore, the wedding hall is full of those who have been invited. But our Lord warns in the parable of those who are only Christians in name only. They come to church, and go through the motions, but they live the rest of their daily lives as if the church does not exist. They do not carry their faith with them out into the world. No one would be able to tell they were Christians by the way they live. They do not pray daily, they do not read and study the Word of God, and they do not spend any time in enlightening themselves with the things of the Lord God. They are members of the church but are really wed to the world. On the Last Day they will be cast into outer darkness, for the Lord never knew them.

This serves as our warning too. To be diligent in things of the Lord God. For our Lord God does want us to enjoy the feast that He has prepared for us. He desires that we come to His Wedding Feast. The wedding of the Bridegroom, our Lord + Jesus, and His bride, the Church. In the Church we wear the white robes of the wedding feast. We wear the white robes of our Lord's righteousness. The righteousness that He won for us on the tree of the cross. All of us who were baptized, have put on the Christ. We wear His righteousness. This is received by the faith gifted to us by the Holy Ghost through the means of grace.

See how loving our heavenly Father is! He sends out the invitation, and He sends it out to everyone, even those who refuse it and mock it and the ones delivering the invitation. He wants us to be there. He wants us to be here receiving His good gifts. He wants to see us in the white robes of His Son's righteousness, for He desires to take us all to Heaven to live with Him there. Therefore, our loving heavenly Father will continue to send out His invitation through His servants sent by Him. He will continue to get this invitation into our ears so that we may know that He wants us to be here; that He wants us to be with Him.

For our heavenly Father has prepared a meal for all of those who are baptized, who wear the white robes of our Lord's righteousness. This meal is for all those who believe on the Lord + Jesus; all those who believe that we receive the true and substantial Body and Blood of our Lord in, with and under the bread and wine. This meal—this Lord's Supper—is for the special comfort and strength of those who believe on + Jesus Christ, and who hunger and thirst to be righteous. It is for those who reject the world, and cling in faith to the Bridegroom. We, the Church, are His bride. He desires that His bride be perfect and spotless.

We, who are poor, miserable sinners, cannot be perfect and spotless. Of our own selves, according to our own works we remain without a wedding garment. For we daily sin much. We deserve God's eternal wrath and displeasure. We deserve, according to our own works, to be cast into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

This is why He gives us the wedding garment. We received this garment at our baptism. Some have cast aside the wedding garment given to them at their baptism. They live as if they were never called by the Lord's name. They remain in their sins and trespasses. We who desire—who hunger and thirst for—righteousness, daily repent of our sins. We forsake ourselves and cling in faith to the works and merits of the Christ. For it is by His righteousness that we are saved. He is the only One Who was ever perfect and spotless—without sin. He gives us His righteousness in the waters of Holy Baptism. And He keeps that righteousness upon us, by continuing to bring us back to our Holy Baptism. Through

the words of the liturgy, and the preached word, we are reminded that we have been gifted by the Holy Ghost with the righteousness of our Lord and Savior, + Jesus, the Christ.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us heed the invitation that our heavenly Father sends to us. His meal is ready. The Lamb has been slaughtered. The Body and Blood of our Lord are given to us in bread and wine for the remission of our sins. Come all ye baptized, for you have been invited to the wedding feast. You have been invited to come and hear the preaching of our Lord + Jesus. We have been invited to remain steadfast in the faith until our Lord + Jesus calls us to our eternal home in Heaven. Let us not disdain the invitation, but rather let us come with all joy and holy desire to be with our Lord and Savior. For we are gathered here today for only a foretaste of the feast to come in Heaven. That eternal feast will be great and joyous. We will be there with all the saints and angels of Heaven, and we will sing the eternal liturgy—the eternal praise of our Lord God—for He will bestow on us abundantly for all eternity His good gifts. The same good gifts we receive today. Let us enjoy these gifts and give thanks to our heavenly Father for His invitation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the 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!