

TRINITY 2

June 25 2017

Old Test: Proverbs 9:1-10

Epistle: 1 John 3:13-18

Gospel: Luke 14:16-24

Standing...

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

This morning's sermon is based upon the Gospel text you just heard.

Let us pray. These are Your words Holy Father. Sanctify us in the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Sitting...

If you were here last Sunday,

you heard a good sermon about a rich man
who hosted great banquets every day.

And yet Lazarus—the beggar in plain view of the rich man's table,
was left to starve.

Well, today we have another rich man—

throwing a party of his own, going to heroic lengths
to fill his house with guests.

He invites everyone you'd expect him to invite;

But when the time comes, and everything is ready—
people start sending in their excuses.

Sir, they're not coming.

What? They had a Save the Date card.

They're not coming.

But they RSVP'd.

None of them. Are coming.

This parable should sound familiar.

Because, Jesus told it twice—if not more than that.

One telling of this parable is recorded in Luke. The other, in Matthew.

But the two parables differ somewhat.

Matthew's telling of it is more violent—with abuse, beatings and killings.
It's a parable about judgment.

Luke's telling isn't that way.

Luke's telling comes earlier in Jesus' ministry.

Matthew's telling comes later, during Holy Week.

The immediate context is, Jesus has been invited to—wait for it—
a dinner party, thrown by a leading member of the Pharisees.
He accepts. But this man, nor his guests are friends of Jesus.
And here, Jesus does a number of really bizarre things.

First, he heals a man—not unusual for Jesus.

The man has a need, so Jesus is there for Him.

But it's still the Sabbath.

The Sabbath extends from sundown to sundown.

If Jesus didn't want to cause a scene,

He could have easily waited until the Sabbath was over—
but He doesn't wait.

And as the dinner guests witness this,

it dawns on them,

"It's the Sabbath."

"It's the Sabbath."

"He can't do this on the Sabbath."

Yet, before anyone voices a complaint,

Jesus asks, "It is lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?"

Not waiting for an answer, Jesus asks a follow-up:

"Which of you, if his son or his ox falls into a pit,
will not pull him out on the sabbath day?"

(Can you imagine a father saying,

"Sorry son, just hang on, I'll come and get you tomorrow!")

That's ridiculous.

But Jesus is just getting started.

He then gives a lecture to the guests around the table (14:7),
and another lecture to the host who invited everyone (14:12).

To the guests—this crowd of snobs, Jesus criticizes them.

Doing so because,

they were more concerned about vying for the best seats.

Where you sat gave your place in the order of honor.

Jesus says, *"When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

These people are full of pride and selfishness—jealous where others are seated.
Jesus is showing them they are sinners who need saving.

Then turning to the host, Jesus essentially asks him—

Why did you invite these people anyway?

I mean look at them...they are a bunch of certified, solid-brass winners.

Upper crust, establishment types certain they have it altogether.

Jesus tells the host the next time he throws a party, don't invite these phony bologna people clawing their way to the top of the social heap.

Rather, He says, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they...they cannot repay you.

Sir, why did you invite them? Oh, because you're just like them!

Looking for pay back in this life.

Jesus is firing with both barrels...

So right after Jesus tells this to the host—that he needs to forget all about this tit-for-tat—Whoever scratches my back, I'll scratch yours—and invite the people who can never repay him. Since the host likes being repaid so much, Jesus adds, *"For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*

As this is sinking in, one of the guests, raising his glass in a toast says, *"Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God!"*

It's like he's saying,

"Whatever Jesus.

Criticize us all you like, but we are Israelites.

We're the ones who keep God's commandments;

the ones who'll be eating bread in the kingdom of God!"

To which everyone says, "Here-here!"
 And they go right back into their vapid chatter.
 "See that game the other day?"
 "How's the humus?"

They don't get it...

Sure—blessed are they who will eat bread in the kingdom of God, but none of the people sitting around Jesus at the dinner party will be there. They think they're all on the bus bound for the heavenly suburbs because they're Israelites, but that's not the case. So Jesus tells them the parable.

But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet and invited many.

1. Who's the man? It's God. God the Father Almighty...
2. What's the great banquet? It's home—eternal home with God.
3. Whom did He invite? The children of Israel, specifically, the very ones sitting at the table with Jesus. Ever since the days of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God has been telling the people of Israel about the coming of His Son to be their Redeemer, their Savior.
4. How did He invite them? Through the words He spoke to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He invited them through the words of Moses and of David and of all the Prophets, who all pointed ahead to the Messiah, the Christ, who all prophesied of Israel's unworthiness, but of God's rich grace in promising them the Savior.

Jesus continues,

And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

5. Who is this servant? It was John the Baptist; and Christ Himself who said, "Come, for all things are now ready!" "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

But oh, the Pharisees and priests, have more important things to do.

We've got to see fields...oxen...someone realizes, "I need to see my wife."

Too busy. Too much to do. Can't come.

Unbelief keeps them away.

So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry...there's a hint of the judgment we see more of when Jesus tells this same parable in Matthew.

And said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

The invitation now goes to the ones who know they're helpless. To public sinners in Israel, ones like Jewish tax-collectors, and prostitutes, simple folk like fishermen, women and children. They all accept the invitation—and show up.

²² *And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.'*

²³ *And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'*

And who might that be? That's the Gentiles. That's you. That's all of you.

You have heard the gracious invitation,
 made through the preaching ministry,
 to repent of your sins and to believe in Jesus.
 To be baptized in His Name and to gather in His house,
 the Holy Church, where He feeds you with His Word,
 with His body, and blood.

You heard that all of your sins have been paid for
 by the Sacrifice of Christ on the cross,
 and as a result God's wrath has been appeased.

Then Jesus adds,

²⁴ *For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet.'"*

None of the people who had a right to be at the party came,
 and all the people who came had no right whatsoever to be there.

Beloved, I close with this...

All are invited to God's great supper.
 The invitation is extended through the preached Word of God and through the
 life-giving Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 And even though the rich man has gone to great lengths
 to fill his house with guests,
 what do most people do when they hear the invitation?
 They despise it.
 They don't believe it, so they mask their unbelief with excuses.

Jesus Himself sat at a table looking eyeball to eyeball with people who heard the invitation. They received it directly from His lips and they didn't believe, making excuses as to why they didn't want the Supper He was offering.

The problem is never with the invitation.

It's always with man's stubborn unbelief.

Do people still despise the invitation today?

They sure do.

But you haven't.

8:15 ONLY—So come to the banquet set before you today,
to His risen Body and Blood hidden in bread and wine.
Come, all you weary souls to needed rest, to comfort, pardon, and peace.

11:00 ONLY—to which we all say, "Thanks be to God."

In the Name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, Amen.

Standing...

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sitting...