

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“The Lord is righteous in all he has done to us, for we have not obeyed his commandments. Glorify your name, O Lord; and deal with us according to your great mercy.”

The Gospel reading today warns you, teaches you, and comforts you. All of that is done as you hear Jesus preach this parable about the parable of the wedding feast. Really, though, it's not that complicated when you just listen to what Jesus is saying. Listen again to what your Lord said, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.”

Now, don't over think it. Let the words stand as they are here in this reading. A feast is thrown, and people don't want to come to it. Why? Why don't the people want to come to this feast? Is there a cost? No, there is no cost. Is it because it's not something important? No, this is none other than the king throwing a wedding feast for his son. He wants his people to be a part of this celebration. Maybe the food wasn't great, I mean why go to a party if the food is eh or how about a potluck, those have a way of creeping up on you and then when you show up empty handed, it gets a bit awkward? “Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’” So why didn't the people show up? It sounds like this is great and almost too good to be true.

“But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.” When you just pause and think about this, it all sounds absurd. For every to be invited to a feast the king throws for his son is out of the ordinary in the first place. Kings don't do that, and if they did, it's earth shattering. Then add even one more layer of the absurd, the people who are invited to this ignore the invitation and go off using their time for other things. If it sounds ridiculous, it should.

God “desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” This is what he tells you in 1 Timothy 2. It's also true at the end of the Gospel reading when Jesus says, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” God is generous and merciful and has sent his son to redeem the world and it is finished. Yet what was the response of the people and even to this day? They didn't receive him.

You are warned today, don't reject and ignore your Lord. How this happens is when his word is ignored and disregarded. Jesus teaches on numerous occasions the connection between hearing his word and believing in and loving him. In John 5 Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” Again, in John 14 Jesus said, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.” Ignore and reject the word of God, the Holy Scriptures and you reject Christ himself. This is the greatest sin that is seen here and is so much a part of everyday life that we have become accustomed to just seeing it around us as no big deal or even, if the devil has the upper hand, to think it's nothing serious or not even sinful itself. Those lies lead straight into hell.

The Jews who were hearing the word spoken by Jesus rejected the Lord himself who came to them and was the promised Messiah. Everything was ready and they ignored and rejected him. The day came when God, the King, sent people to burn and destroy their city in 70 AD when Jerusalem was laid waste. The Gospel was sent out to all nations and God brings into his church people from all over, wherever his word is preached, which included you.

In your sin, and your sinful nature, you are tempted to ignore and reject the Lord and his word. You are tempted to live as those in the parable. That's what your old sinful man wants. He doesn't want to go to feast. He would rather busy himself with the things of this world. And you remember how absurd the parable sounds? It's no less absurd and

ridiculous today either. God's Kingdom is eternal, and you have a place in it. The things of this world, which have their place and time, however, are not eternal.

You are taught then, what is to be your life as a Christian. Listen to what God teaches you is your new life in Christ, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ."

So, then, where is the comfort? In the Old Testament reading, Isaiah prophesied, "Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, that your soul may live; and I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David."

God's mercy is toward his people, it's toward you in Christ. Salvation is free, without cost, and is everlasting. The Kingdom of God which Christ gives is an everlasting kingdom just as it was promised to David that his heir would reign over this everlasting Kingdom. The feast is full and lavish beyond compare and is none other than the bread of Life. God's call goes out to you.

You see all this comes to a head with the man at the end of the parable and what is the result of ignoring and rejecting the word of God. Listen closely to what happens, "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

Outside of Christ there is no salvation. The man without the garment has his tongue stopped. He is silenced and stands bare before God and what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living of God without being clothed. Wanting to go through life apart from God and his word is a naked life. It's a life of unbelief. The man didn't believe the word of God. Whatever station he may have had in life it didn't matter one iota because he lacked the righteousness of God. He lacked faith in Christ. The day will come, however, when you do see the King and stand before him. Stripped bare in your sin you don't have the required garment, you don't have Christ and his righteousness which is won for you, found in him himself, and given free to you.

So how, then is this comforting? Think about Adam and Eve after the fall. They were naked and ashamed and hid themselves. In their sin they were not clothed to stand in the presence of God. But what did God do? First they tried to make their own clothes out of fig leaves and that was ridiculous. They tried to cover themselves by their own efforts. Then what happened, though, after God promised to send the Savior from the seed of the woman who would crush the head of serpent? "And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them." God provided the sacrifice to clothe his people even after they disobeyed him.

The great comfort that you have today dear people of God is none other than the Lord himself. In Galatians 3, St. Paul says by divine inspiration, "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

You have the wedding garment. You have Christ and his righteousness. You have been clothed with him in the waters of holy baptism. God has clothed you, which is to say, your sin is forgiven, you have been rescued from death and the devil, and given eternal salvation as the words and promises of God declare. You can and do stand before the king as

20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity—October 13, 2024

one who in your sin has nothing to wear by filthy rags and God has placed those on his sin to atone for them and given you in return a wedding garment far more radiant and splendid than anything man can make. You are clothed with Christ and his righteousness.

That's the joy and comfort you have today and everyday as a saint of God. Your King has done all things well for you and provides a feast of salvation here and now and promises you the day is coming when you will be with him and all of God's saints face to face. You have Christ and a place at the eternal wedding feast. That is a wonderful thing to have which is freely given to you today. Your sin is forgiven, and you are clothed with Christ. "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near." Here he is now in his means of grace. "Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!"

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.