

Sermon  
6/13/2021

**Sermon on Luke 14:15–24**  
**Second Sunday after Trinity**  
**June 13, 2021**

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

Our Gospel text today is Jesus' parable of the Great Banquet in which a man put on a big dinner and called his invited guests to come, but they would not. So the man ended up compelling all sorts of other people to come to the banquet.

This parable is a little different than Jesus' parable of the wedding feast. Both are very similar but in the wedding feast parable it is a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son, and those invited who did not come ended up getting destroyed by the king's army.

The gist of our Gospel text today—the parable of the great banquet—is that most people reject the Gospel and the riches of God's grace in Christ. The banquet in our text symbolizes the Gospel, and you have all these folks rejecting the invitation to it. It is very sad.

And the admonition is that we would be careful to listen to the faithful preacher, who is represented in the parable by the servant who is calling people to the banquet.

Alright, let's get into our text and go through it part by part.

And let's listen carefully and learn to accept the Gospel invitation to repent and believe; and not do what those in our text did who had all sorts better things to do than heed the invitation to the banquet.

Jesus began the parable with these words, *“A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. 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’”*

Once again, the man here represents God the Father, and the banquet represents the riches of God’s grace to us in the Gospel.

So in the words of the parable, the *“Come, for everything is ready”* refers to the fact that Jesus had already suffered and died, rose again, and ascended into heaven, and the Holy Spirit was being offered as well.

In other words, all things pertaining to the Gospel of Christ and the kingdom of God were completed and ready to be enjoyed!

Who then do the invited guests represent? Who was asked to come to the feast prepared? It refers to the Jews.

The Jews were the ones who had been given the Law, who had the temple and the priesthood and the sacrifices. But here is how we should understand all of these Jewish things, they were all simply appetizers to the great feast that would come when Christ arrived and would die for our sins.

Now, notice in the parable the man sent out his servant to do the inviting. It is interesting that there is only one servant that was sent out. In the parable of the wedding feast there are several servants sent out to do the inviting.

Here is how we ought to understand the servant or servants in either parable. They represent the apostles who called on the Jews to repent and believe in Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins.

Why there is only one servant in our parable today should be taken to mean that the apostles were of one mind and heart.

Their message was the same whether it came from Paul or Peter or James or John, it was all the same: *Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became a man and suffered and died for you and the whole world, and in him, through faith in him you have peace with God and a place in heaven. Repent then and believe!*

This is the message of the whole New Testament, and it is the message of the faithful preacher today. And so we see just how much this parable applies to us today. God's house and the feast of the Gospel remain open right now, and the faithful preacher invites you inside when he calls on you to repent and enjoy the forgiveness of sins won by Christ for you and for the whole world.

Moving on, how did the invited guests respond to the man's gracious invitation through his servant to come and enjoy the feast?

Jesus said, *"They all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'"*

Now notice that the people all had seemingly good excuses: they were busy with work and family! How can we argue against that? Are we not supposed to work and support our families?

Ahh, friends.

What Jesus means by this is that all things, even when they are of themselves good things like work and family have to take a backseat to the Gospel and the Word of God.

And you must be willing to part with your wife and your kids and your work and your property and your career and your friends and your reputation and all the things of this earthly life should the Gospel demand it.

Jesus preaches this elsewhere, hear his words from Matthew's Gospel and take them to heart, *"Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."*

Oh the death and destruction that we bring upon our souls and our loved ones when we cling to the things of this life rather than God's holy word.

Oh the harm that we bring upon ourselves when we find a hundred things to do, which of themselves are fine things, but that distract us and keep us from hearing God's Word and taking His sacrament and learning to grow in knowledge.

Oh the damage we do to ourselves when we are unwilling to be poor and suffer for the sake of Christ!

And here young families are especially vulnerable. Because it is easy for them to get caught up in the pursuit of wealth and the busyness of family-life, and before you know it preaching and faith matters go by the wayside and they make a shipwreck of their faith and the faith of their kids.

Now notice how offensive the Gospel is to all of us, because it demands so much of us.

Even though the Gospel of Christ crucified offers eternal riches, everyone is easily offended that we have to be willing to forego and give up earthly riches to partake of the eternal riches.

But God calls on us today to repent of loving earthly riches to the neglect of His Word and sacrament.

Just last week I asked you to consider Job who lost family and riches and was willing to part with them rather than deny God.

But consider this, what has Jesus promised for those who have had to leave earthly riches for the kingdom of God?

This is what He has said in Matthew's Gospel, *"Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life"*

All you financial types, the cost analysis here is easy. You give up house, family, land, property, even your own life for the sake of Christ—you get eternal life. It is worth it! It is worth it! There is no comparison.

"Sorry wife, sorry kids, sorry boss, sorry community; what you are asking me to do is too much. I will not forsake my Lord and His word, because I want to save my soul. And you should want me to pursue Christ and dwell on his word and partake of his sacrament, because then I am a true Christian and am a better husband and father and worker."

So like Paul, let us learn to say *"I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ"*

Now, indeed, friends, this is a difficult thing to learn. And recognize that you cannot learn it all in a day. God uses the preacher and life experience to teach us to take up our cross and consider the Gospel above all things.

Alright, let's get back to the parable.

We pick it up after the invited guests made all their excuses to the servant not to come to the great banquet, *"So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry 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.'"*

I take the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame here to be those Gentiles who were neither rich with good works, nor rich with a history like the Jews. The Gentiles never had the privilege of access to the temple and the sacrifices and so on, and they were starved of preaching.

So the Jews of Jesus' day made themselves unworthy of the Gospel. It is one the great ironies of church history that the people of God rejected the very Savior that their Scriptures foretold.

As John put it in his Gospel, *"Jesus came to his own, and his own did not receive him"*

But it has meant riches for the rest of us. Here in our parable our Lord teaches us that the kingdom of heaven and the riches of God's grace and eternal life are open to all people, Jew and Gentile, who heed the Gospel invitation to repent and believe in the Son.

And our epistle lesson in Ephesians today speaks of the wonderful unity and peace there is between Jew and Gentile and anybody who receives the Christ.

In our parable, the servant reports back to the man that the poor and crippled have been invited and many have come but that there was still room in the party hall for more guests.

At this point the master says, *"Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled"*

I take Jesus' words here to mean that the church ought to busy itself with preaching the Gospel here, there, and everywhere even to the very corners of the earth. And people are compelled by to come into the master's house, that is, the kingdom of God when Law and Gospel are preached.

Consider the effective preacher who preaches Law and Gospel. When the Law is preached properly then people are alerted to their sins and how they have offended God and deserve his wrath.

And this is good thing to sorrow and have terror over your sins, because then the Gospel of Christ crucified for the forgiveness of sins is so very compelling and inviting and people rush into the house knowing that here is a feast and riches that last forever.

Now, let me end with this.

We do not get to enjoy the feast of the Gospel in its fullness until Christ returns. Only then shall we be translated into the new heavens and earth with new incorruptible bodies where there is no more tears, and we enjoy eternal bliss with God and with all the saints.

But we get a foretaste of that full and complete feast here in Divine Service.

Here we have the preached Word. Here we have the sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here you are comforted that your sins are forgiven. So here we have a veritable feast indeed!

Enjoy it and take heart in it. It is Christ for you!

This is enough for today, consider carefully our text and learn from the sin of the Jews who rejected the invitation to believe in the Christ and enjoy the feast of paradise. Amen.