

Trinity XX

Ephesians 5: 15-21 & Matthew 22: 1-14

When I read today's gospel, the Parable of the Wedding Feast, I remembered a Parable we read on the Second Sunday after Trinity, the Parable of the Great Supper (Luke 14:16f.). In both lessons there is a man who makes a feast and invites people. In both lessons the invited guests refuse to come; in both the invited guests end up being disinvited, and the host invites other people to replace them.

The Parable of the Great Supper stresses evangelism regarding the newly invited—“Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in” (Luke 14:23). The Parable of the Wedding Feast points out the idea of judgment—“Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” It is important to note that the Church places these two great lessons about the invitation to the feast at the two ends of Trinity season. The Parable of the Great Supper comes as the beginning, proclaiming that we are all freely invited to come. The Parable of the Wedding Feast comes towards the end, reminding us that if we come, we must come fully.

This highlights two aspects of being called by Christ. On the one hand, “Come to me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). On the other hand, he who “does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). We see this present in the Holy Communion. We are attracted by the grace of the Sacrament. But, as we come to Christ here, we realize that we are being offered on the altar along with Christ. Our coming to him requires the sacrifice of self, soul, and body.

Our lessons today remind us that we must take this all seriously. We are not merely “going to church,” and the purpose of being here is not merely to make ourselves feel good. Rather, the kingdom of God is already present in and among us through the Spirit. Here the Spirit speaks to us through the ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Spirit calls and requires us to respond to the invitation to repent and change. It is our vocation, as baptized Christians, to always listen to what God says to us, day by day and week by week and allow God's grace to change us into new people who live in a new way.

Our epistle exhorts us to “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.” And the Lord's Day points us forward to the Day of the Lord. Now our sinful bodies are made clean and our souls washed through a gradual process. Then we will be changed in a moment, “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians

15:52), when we see Christ in person. Therefore, let us be faithful in the life of prayer, in putting off the old and putting on the new so that we may be properly dressed when the king arrives.

The gospel invitation is sent to everyone, because it is not the Father's will that a single person be excluded from His kingdom and perish in the outer darkness of hell ([2 Pet. 3:9](#)). But not everyone wants God, and many who claim to want Him do not want Him on His terms.

A church filled with people is not necessarily a church filled with godly people.

It is not because I go to church every day, that I am a child of God every day. I am truly and fully a child of God when I become what he created me to be, which is to listen and always place myself under his authority.

Today, Jesus is calling every one of us to practice what we preach and what we confess. If we claim Christ as our Savior and Lord, we too are called to regularly examine our hearts and our lives.

Do we take Christ as our only reference and conform our lives to his gospel? Do our attitudes in our relationships with family and friends honor the baptism commitment we have made to our Lord?

I encourage us to take advantage daily of the love and forgiveness God offers to us. Then, we too will be ready for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Prayer

G RANT, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our out- ward ears, may, through thy grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring