

Last Thursday marked the last major anniversary of D-day Veterans. 80 years. Few veterans now, perhaps none will be alive soon, these young men, most 18, 20 yr. old boys, who landed on the beaches and airborne under heavy fire, the largest sea assault in the history of the world, men who knew what courage, duty, honor meant. Willingly, many sacrificed their lives; never got to enjoy the freedoms that they earned. If you ever talked with a WW2 Veteran they spoke of “us” and “we” in this fight together. The best of us never made it home, the heroes are the ones who never made it back home to their mothers, fathers, new brides. Our brave soldiers risked all that had for a cause and their faith in a cause worth dying for. The greatest generation of Americans who ever lived.

80 years ago, word of the D-day invasion started to spread back here in the states. Churches filled up in the early hours of the morning and in Philadelphia they rang the liberty bell. Something greater than themselves, something beyond themselves was unfolding. It was not hard to realize the significance of that day and time. Never should those people, those times ever be forgotten or diminished. Anne Frank in her dairy noted their spirits soars when they heard of the invasion, wrote “our friends were on the way”, but the Nazi find soon them. Tragic, not just the Frank family deaths but the Jewish people then with Jesus and to this day who reject His invitation.

But our hope and safety, our well-being does not rest in Kingdoms, empires of man or soldiers to rescue or even the next election or our economy, but in that which is eternal and is now. Today, in a different realm of even greater significance, the Kingdom of God is unfolding.

Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God. For this exclamation is made to Him who is the Bread of Life. The Kingdom of God is not some far away event in the past or distant future. It is now. Blessed is he who hears the Word of God –now. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven – now. Blessed is he who recognizes in Mary’s Son the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world –now. Blessed is he who eats bread in the Kingdom of God –now. For of such is the Kingdom of God that feasting and banquet, king and guests gather as we -now in Divine Service, in the feast from the King’s altar; the Kingdom and Lord’s Supper are always tied together.

And so a little parable about urgency and invitation. All things are ready, except the guests. They have lingering commitments and desires for themselves. He is ready. They are not. So, the excuses. They don’t come right out and say that they don’t want to come. They just don’t want to come now. We can clearly see the foolishness of such behavior. Lame excuses. Who buys and field or livestock without first viewing it. Whose wife would not let them come or not bring them along. Absurd excuses we can scoff at it but none of our excuses are any better. Why we don’t do more in the Kingdom, give more, serve more,

love more. Why we don't seem to have much time for Bible study, prayers. We always have excuses to not do our duty, to do the right thing. and we can always get to things, take care of things later. Certainly God understands our excuses Or does He? Repent. Or as St. John puts it. **Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.**

An urgency. An invitation. Make no excuses. We are pleased that the host invites the dregs of society, the poor, the lame, the maimed, and the blind, and that still there is room. We are glad for that means there is still room for us.

For this is a parable about urgency, about the desperate, current need we have. **Bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.** The likes of us. It applies to us all, if not physically as our bodies are broken, this is just as much true regarding our weak faith.

Poor, pathetic in eyes of the world, poor -robbed of our joy, our strength, in struggles against the devil and world. **Crippled** to take actions according to God's word. **Blind** to see the things of God by faith, blind to the needs of others. **Lame** to serve, lame in motivation for good works, do more for others. God help us.

An urgency and invitation. Make no excuses. Loved ones, family, friends, neighbors. Encourage them, prayer for them, don't give up on them, invite that they too may feast in this Kingdom for an end is coming.

Consider too how much of your time is wasted, so much of our sins, our failures to acts, even our frustrations of life and despair come from the view, that we see the kingdom of God as something future, or just here or just a part of our lives, instead of it encompassing our very reality and defining our very existence. Never should we, us, in this together, as your Lord calls us here, never forget or diminished this Kingdom -now. An urgency and invitation. Do not excuse the desperate need to eat bread in the Kingdom, to feast from this Altar the bread of immortality. And what comfort that no man or evil can take this Kingdom, this feasting from you.

Everything is ready. All is finished. All sins removed, all shame forgotten in the death He died once for all and in the resurrection. You are made holy. There is nothing left to do but to receive. Come. Be filled by Him. This Kingdom is worth dying for, for yours is a life that cannot die. Feast now, feast in eternity. Do not lose sight, or not realize the significance of this day and time. Blessed are you to have the Kingdom.