

In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul invites the new disciples to exult in joy in the Lord who is near at hand, and he thanks them for their most recent gift. They need have no anxiety because God's peace, which is beyond human understanding, will keep their hearts and thoughts in Jesus. They should fill their minds with all that is noble and loving, putting these things into practice as Paul has taught them to.

And now the reading from Philippians.

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

#### Matthew 22:1-14

Our gospel reading presents a parable about those who declined invitations to a marriage feast and others who were then invited, followed by the story of a guest who came without wedding clothes. As the evangelist presents the parable of the feast, it is an

allegory about the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of Gentiles into the kingdom. At another level, the story suggests that God's kingdom will become known whether people are prepared for it or not. It is a divine gift. Included will be all kinds of people, many of them not considered worthy by worldly standards. The second parable, originally a separate story, makes the point that one must be ready for the kingdom at all times; the invitation comes unexpectedly.

Hear now these words from the Gospel of Matthew.

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

"Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

"But they paid no attention and went off - one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless.

"Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"For many are invited, but few are chosen."

Liturgist: This is the gospel message of our Lord and Savior

**All: May the reading and the hearing of Your word inform our minds, comfort our souls, and guide our feet.**

