

The 20th Sunday after Pentecost
“You Must Come to Jesus’ Wedding Banquet!”
Matthew 22:1-3
October 11, 2026
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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 20th Sunday after Pentecost is from our Gospel reading, Matthew 22:1-3.

“And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.

So far our text:

On the previous two Sundays, we have heard Jesus speaking parables to the people on Tuesday of Holy Week, principally directed at the chief priests and elders. And today we hear a third parable which answers their arrogant question in chapter 21: **“By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?”**

Just a quick recap: We heard the parable of the two sons who were asked by the father to go work in his vineyard. One said he wouldn’t but later went. The other said yes but didn’t go. The son who said he wouldn’t go represents the repentant sinner who was despised by these very self-righteous, unbelieving teachers who are likened to the son who wouldn’t serve his father. Jesus doesn’t mince words at all with them as He said, **“Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.”** For John the Baptist pointed the world to Jesus the Lamb of God.

Then Jesus spoke another vineyard parable, even more pointed. God did everything out of love for His chosen people the Israelites, giving them a beautiful vineyard of His covenant to them. He cleared the land for the grapes, built a hedge around it, a wine press and a watch tower, but received wild grapes of unbelief instead of choice grapes of

faithful belief in the Messiah. In fact, the wicked vinedressers beat and killed the servants who were sent to them to receive the fruit of their harvest... over and over again, and even killed the master's son, thinking they could take over the vineyard and receive the inheritance by force. Of course, these words spoke to the Israelites mistreatment of the prophets God sent to them to repent, and finally their killing of the Son, Jesus, in a few short days.

What was the master's response? He would destroy those wicked servants and give His vineyard to others. Indeed, the parable foretells the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD and the coming of Pentecost, the evangelization of the world including especially the Gentiles.

Sometimes you may hear people being described as a glass half full or a glass half empty type person. What does that mean? If you are a glass half full person, then you are always trying to find the positive in a negative situation. If you are a glass half empty, then you can only see the negative things of life and live a very pessimistic life. How would you describe yourself?

How about Jesus? For sure He is very much aware of the evil of this world. For that very reason He came. He confronted evil head on. Spoke to the evil of the leaders of the unbelieving Jews. And then suffered that evil on the cross for the sins of the world. Why? Because Jesus see the world with eyes of love and mercy. His glass is more than half full! It's overflowing with salvation for all people.

And this is what we hear coming through loud and clear in these parables. Yes, the Jewish leaders rejected Jesus and crucified Him. Yes, Jerusalem was destroyed and the Old Testament covenant was taken away from them.

But, God the Father, the King, never gives up inviting the world to believe in His Son Jesus. Come to the wedding banquet! All is ready! Come one and all! Oh, Jesus is more than a glass half full person. He is God incarnate, faithfully, untiringly searching the world of lost sheep to repent and believe in Him. For His wedding banquet, the New Testament church has an open door to all people.

Though many reject the invitation, though many are called and few are chosen, God doesn't ever stop calling with His mercy to come! And you must come before it's too late and you are shut out of the eternal wedding banquet, heaven itself on the last day.

Indeed, a Christian who knows and cherishes God's love and forgiveness, having received God's invitation to believe in Jesus and repent of all sin, is a person with a more than a glass half full soul. It's full to the brim with Jesus' righteousness, His saving righteousness by faith. And that completely changes the life of the Christian from pessimism seeing the evil of this world, to optimism, seeing the saving work which God has done for all people through Jesus and continues to do by the power of the Holy Spirit!

It's no wonder that our epistle reading from Philippians 4, says these very words:

“4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

If you are a Christian, you are a glass full person, rejoicing always in the Lord. Again Paul says, rejoice. This is not feigned rejoicing, for it springs forth from the Holy Spirit's gift of faith to you.

For you are the one spoken of in Jesus parable who has received the invitation to the wedding banquet, though you lived far off on the highways and byways. God's Word of forgiveness has reached you! And this Word of God makes you worthy to enter the banquet.

What does that mean? Those who rejected God's invitation, though they were invited over and over again, even killing the messengers of the invitation to believe in the coming Messiah, Jesus, were unworthy because they based their worthiness on their own self-righteousness. That will never stand up to God's scrutiny on judgement day.

The person who doesn't have Jesus' robe of righteousness is thrown out into the darkness of hell where there is eternal weeping and gnashing of teeth. The time of repentance and grace has ended! What a warning to each of us to never take Jesus' word lightly. You must come to the wedding banquet wearing Jesus' robe of righteousness through faith in Him!

The Jewish leaders and all who followed them received God's judgement in time when the King sent His armies, destroyed those murders and burned up their city. Indeed, Jesus again foretells of the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD by Titus, whose arch can still be seen in Rome near the Colosseum.

We heard Paul reject this man made righteousness that he was so proud of last Sunday in Philippians 3.

"7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;"

If you base your life on your own righteousness, your glass is empty even though you think it is full. But God graciously gives you the righteousness you need through the gift of faith which saves your soul and makes you well. So we hear once again the beautiful words of Psalm 23 today.

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. 3 He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

And also we heard Psalm 146:2 in our Introit. **"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."**

Jesus' bride, His Holy Christian Church, are clothed with His righteousness that they have received in baptism. Your baptism has covered you with Jesus' righteousness! Rejoice always! Again, I say rejoice!

And as His redeemed servants, we too invite all people to come to the wedding banquet before it is too late. We have the Gospel of Jesus' love. Our cup is full with His Word of Truth. And though we see the evil of this world and the rejection of God's truth, we are called to faithfully tell others on the highways and byways of God's salvation in Jesus. Compel them to come, Jesus says in Luke 14. Invite anyone you can find! "You must

come to Jesus' wedding banquet for your soul's salvation." Come to hear His Word always! Come to be baptized and receive Christ's robe of righteousness. Come to the Lord's table after you examine your sinful heart and discern that the Jesus gives His very body and blood for you!

As Luther said: "He is truly worthy and well-prepared who has faith in these words 'Given and shed for the remission of sins'." Faith in the promises of God alone makes a man worthy. Rejoice always that God has made you worthy. Rejoice again and again for your cup is full to the brim with Jesus' love and salvation! Amen

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)