

The Second Sunday after Trinity  
21 June, Anno Domini 2020  
St. Luke 14:15-24  
Pr. Kurt Ulmer

In the Name of the Father, and of the +Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Who will eat bread in God's kingdom? Who will be seated at the heavenly banquet engaged in holy and joyous conversation with the rest of the saints? Certainly many will be invited. That's the beauty of the Gospel. The invitation is for everyone. God truly does desire that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, the knowledge of salvation through the Blood of Christ. God is deadly serious when He proclaims the good news of salvation and says "for you". He wants you to know and believe this. He wants you to stop wandering around looking for a way to save yourself, another way to get into the eternal feast. He wants you turn off the broad road of works righteousness and selfish pleasure that leads to destruction and instead turn in to His holy house. Here He wants you to feast on the salvation that Divine Wisdom has prepared by slaughtering the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Let us each heed the invitation every time it is given, because it will not last forever. Don't confuse hearing the Gospel with believing the Gospel. And having believed the Gospel at one point in time does not save you. The call to faith is a daily one. Those first men who were invited assumed there would be another opportunity. They slighted the invitation as insignificant and unimportant. And for that they were cast out of the kingdom and were destroyed under the master's wrath. They could not eat bread because they did not believe they needed the food of the master's table when the master invited them. Each day you must put the Old Adam to death, repenting of sin and believing the absolution of Christ. Each and every day a New Man born of water and the Word must arise, walking in the way of God's forgiveness.

Perhaps the man described by St. Luke seems impetuous and childish. After all, it was just a dinner invitation. Part of our struggle with this text is perhaps our own modern context wherein fellowship is not nearly as prized. But it is far more than that. St. Matthew adds necessary clarity to the gravity of the situation. The man was the king and the feast was the wedding of his son. To be invited by the king is to be welcomed into his favor. No one simply deserves this invitation. It is a gracious gift graciously bestowed. Isn't this all the more true when the king is God the Father and the occasion is our reconciliation to God through the flesh of Jesus?

Those who will eat bread in the kingdom of God, who will feast on the blessings of salvation, aren't those who are cold to their need or who are satisfied with their own righteousness or whose hearts are weighed down with the cares and worries of this life. Such people are the ones who turn down the invitation and exclude themselves from the kingdom. Such people hear the good news of salvation in Christ, they hear that in this Jesus all men now have access in the one Spirit to the Father, but they are unmoved. They have grown cold to their need because they do not listen to Law and feel its sting, cutting like a knife into their conscience and revealing their sin. They don't believe that they are sinners like the rest. They are content and comfortable. They are satisfied with their outward righteousness and don't want to be counted with the poor and crippled and blind and lame.

Repent. Each of us carries with us a self-righteous Pharisee who assumes favor with God because our life isn't too bad and we aren't as bad as others. Do you pray as you ought? Is the Word of God heard every day in your home? Do you give your full attention to reading and preaching of God's Word? Does your conscience hunger for the Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood? Do you give your offerings cheerfully and generously? Is your neighbor a nuisance to you or is he your opportunity to bestow upon another the mercy that has been shown to you? Do you make excuses why you cannot be bothered to come when the gifts of salvation are prepared and offered freely?

Of course, none of us can claim innocence in these things. That is the point. The first men invited had the exact same need as those who were brought from the highways and hedges. They just refused to believe it. That is why the invitation is so incredible! The holy God invites unholy sinners to His table for the purpose of saving them - He wants to forgive them their sins, He wants to rescue them from death. The Father has offered His Son to save you and offers you salvation as a pure gift. Everything is now ready. The price has been paid. The table has been set. There is nothing for you to do. Only believe that it has been done on your behalf and receive the gift. Come as a poor, unworthy beggar because poor unworthy beggars seeking mercy are those whom the Lord desires in His kingdom. To all such beggars, God gladly opens the doors of His house and sets a place at His table. It doesn't matter how badly you think sin has damaged you. It doesn't matter how weak and small you feel. Indeed, the more acutely aware you are of your sin you are, the better because you will know better your need. Blessed are you for the bread of God's kingdom, the bread of Christ's Body, is for you. To you, God says "Come, for everything is now ready."

In the Name of +Jesus.