

A ROYAL WEDDING -- The Feast

Christ's death won forgiveness for all mankind -- Not all will go to the Wedding Feast.

Matthew 22:1-14

TEXT: *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. 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, both good and bad, 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. 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' 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."*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Advent is about the coming of our Lord Jesus. John the Baptist prepared people for the first advent of the Christ through the preaching of forgiveness of sins and the water of baptism. Jesus himself prepared people for his second advent, his coming on Judgment Day, the Groom coming to claim his Bride, the Holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints.

Again, both Old Testament prophets and New Testament Gospel writers, use the theme of A ROYAL WEDDING to speak of Christ and his Church. Today's focus is on "The Wedding Feast." Christ's death won forgiveness of sins for all mankind; but, Not all will go to the Wedding Feast.

To illustrate the Second Advent of the Christ Jesus used a parable of a great king who prepares what we call today, the Wedding Reception: *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. The king repeats the invitation: 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 parable then gave examples of some of their reasons for putting off the invitation to A ROYAL WEDDING. They paid no attention and went off to their various daily routines and to their businesses.

Then there were some who actually became violent: *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.* These illustrate the vile hatred that the godless have for Christ and his Church. That violent hatred still exists to this day as arrogant civil leaders use their powers to keep local citizens from displaying nativity scenes and college professors who do not allow Christian students from confessing their faith.

And yet the truth remains that the invitation to the Wedding Feast of the King stands before them! For Jesus died for the sins of all humanity! The debt of sin has been paid and it exists for all whether they believe it or not.

But if they do not believe it, they will go to hell even having had their sins forgiven! For Jesus declares: *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.* In 3 Sin is forgiven, but unbelief, no matter in what form that unbelief exists, cuts a soul off from that gift for eternity. Some may be think that they are already in good standing with God without repentance and faith. Some are too busy for God's Word and the blessed Sacraments. Others may simply despise preaching and God's Word. Whatever form the unbelief, the gift of forgiveness is lost to them, forever.

While the invitation is for all, not all will go to the feast. Jesus said: *For many are invited, but few are chosen.*

The king then sent his servants out into the world to invite anyone they could find. Jesus said: ***Then (the king) said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 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, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.*** The parable contrasts the Jews of Jesus' day who thought they were going to be saved by virtue of simply being Jews to the non-Jewish world, the Gentiles, who were considered outside of the kingdom by virtue of being non-Jews. You and I would fall under the category of non-Jews. The preaching of the blessed Gospel has gone out into the world since Jesus Ascension and the Holy Spirit has called, gathered, enlightened and sanctified the while Christian Church on earth through that preaching and by Baptism. We are part of this group to whom the Gospel invitation has come.

Yet there remains this warning for us: ... ***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. 'Friend,' he asked, 'how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' 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.'***

The wedding clothes that this man was not wearing are the robes that are washed in the blood of the Lamb. They are the blood and righteousness of Jesus that are ours through faith alone. They are passed out to us in the water of Holy Baptism, as Scripture says: ***You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*** Ga 3 And if you believe this, your Baptism also serves you as evidence from God himself that you are one who has been chosen. While the invitation goes out to all, you are among the few who have been chosen.

This we must believe and teach so that others will hear the invitation to be saved and will never be among those who, like that man in the parable, be found standing there speechless. He was found out and was thrown out into the depths of hell. We must teach our children to know that Jesus loves them "for the Bible tells me so..." And so they must know what it is that the Bible tells us about Jesus our Savior, that he died for the sins of the world and that he rose again from the dead for our justification. That is the blood and the righteousness that is our glorious dress.

Scripture teaches that Judgment Day has already come. It has already come in the sense that when the Lord told Satan that the Descendant of Eve would crush his head. It came when Jesus was born and then later shouted from the cross: ***It is finished!*** It comes to souls everywhere when they are baptized and declared forgiven for Jesus' sake. It has come to us because we know and believe that the verdict has already been revealed, that all who believe in Jesus are not condemned, and that God has revealed his pledge of "not guilty" to each of us at our baptism. And it is about to come at the end of the world when the Lord Jesus, the royal bridegroom will break through the heavens to gather his elect for the feast.

Now, inclosing, take this passage from Psalm 16 and think about it: ***You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*** Joy and pleasures forevermore! Think about it! Amen