

- As I've said before, one of the biggest misconceptions preached these days is: *“Well...everyone will go to Heaven in the end.”*
- Those who say that must never have read today's Gospel... especially its last line: *“Many are invited, but few are chosen”*...as well as when Jesus tells us: *“... the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*
- The invitation is freely given...and the direction to the narrow gate is given to all. But it is up to us to accept it...to follow it.
- We accept the invitation...or not. We follow the direction...or not.
- So...in the end, if we do not attain salvation, we have no one to blame but ourselves.
- For God's love and mercy has been offered most generously to us...in the person of His crucified Son Jesus Christ.
- But if we reject God, we reject all that is good...all that is right... and without Him, what is there?

- And thus we come to today's parable.
- A king summons to a wedding feast...the ultimate joyous occasion.
- The feast is arranged...the invitations are out...closest friends are invited.
- But after pretending to be loyal subjects and friends, they ignore his invitation; they have other things to do.
- They essentially say: *“Don't bother us.”*...and refuse the king's goodness...so what is left but his justice?
- Of course, Jesus is using this image of rejection by close friends as a thinly-veiled rebuke of many hypocritical Pharisees and other religious leaders.
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- So the king in his benevolence sends servants to bring in new friends to his inner circle: the Gentiles. Us.
- Those servants (who represent the prophets and the apostles) gather in we riff-raff from the highways and byways...those who had no claim on the king's friendship whatsoever.

2014

- These could have never expected an invitation from the king... much less have deserved it.
 - It comes to them from nothing other than the king's generosity.
 - And so this parable affirms to us that God's invitation is not due to our own merits, but is based solely in His benevolence.
 - So...is there any reason for anything but gratitude for this invitation so generously bestowed upon us?
- But then...the king strolls among his guests, and find the one without the wedding garment.
- In Jesus' time, a king would have provided a wedding garment to those who did not have one.
- So when the king sees a man not properly attired, it is because he has rejected this gift of a wedding garment meant to make him presentable...insulting the king by refusing to wear it and preferring his own grimy, street-worn clothing.
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- Well...Christ has provided our wedding garment; He has paid dearly for the cleansing of our sins by his death on the cross.
- But by our free will, we can reject His gift by refusing to amend our lives and live according to His will and teaching...refuse to live for that goodness for which we were created.
- And yet with such short-sightedness, we insultingly reject the gift of the king...and, then, what is left but to be thrown back out into the street...out into that which we, by our actions, proclaim that we prefer.
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- The wise man does not forget what is truly important, what truly matters, as did those invited to the banquet did.
- There is always something vying for our attention: that visit you want to make...yet another game to watch...that lunch to prepare...that hunt to go on...the internet, the balloon festival, the concert, or whatever.

2014

□ The tragedy of life is that so often the inferior blocks out the superior...the lesser eclipses the greater...and we become so busy living this life that we fail to prepare for true and eternal life.

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□ And so...how easy it is to neglect God...to neglect the eternal for the temporary...to reject the wedding garment of grace which makes us presentable to the King in preference to the trifles and baubles this earthly life offers.

□ But that is always our choice.

□ If we neglect ANY relationship, that relationship eventually weakens and falls apart. Our relationship w/ God is no different.

□ As St. Augustine said: “*God created us without us, but He will not save us without us.*” He does not force us to come to Him.

□ The English painter William Hunt captured this theme in his painting called “The Light of the World”, which he painted in 1852 as expression of his personal conversion to Christ.

□ It shows the large wooden door of a darkened country cottage, located deep within a forest.

□ Around the door weeds have grown up...the cottage neglected...the landscape abandoned and hostile...and it is night.

□ And in the darkness, Christ stands at the door...the full moon forming a halo behind his head.

□ He holds a lantern in one hand, and with his other He knocks on the door.

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□ The cottage symbolizes the soul...the door, human freedom...and Christ is the light bringing hope and meaning to the darkness within.

□ It seems odd to have a stranger wandering the woods at night carrying a light. Normally light would come from inside the house, and the wanderer be seeking relief from the darkness outside.

- But, upon closer examination, one particular detail stands out: there is no doorknob or handle on the outside of the door; it can only be opened from within.
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- We are freely given the unmerited honor and privilege of the invitation to the banquet of the Father's mercy...not simply as His friends, but as His children.
- But this invitation is truly accepted, and we don our wedding garment...only by being faithful to Him through obedience to Christ and his teachings.
- ...loving God with whole heart, and our neighbors as ourselves... clothing ourselves in the white garment of penance and the sacraments...the garment of faith, the garment of reverence and love for Our Father and Our Savior....
- ...manifest by our fidelity to His will...and by feeding the hungry...clothing the naked...visiting the sick and the lonely... those things which are good in themselves.
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- Christ simply knocks...He invites...and then waits for us to open the door.

Reading 1

[Is 25:6-10a](#)

On this mountain the LORD of hosts
will provide for all peoples
a feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
On this mountain he will destroy
the veil that veils all peoples,
the web that is woven over all nations;
he will destroy death forever.
The Lord GOD will wipe away
the tears from every face;
the reproach of his people he will remove
from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.
On that day it will be said:
"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!
This is the LORD for whom we looked;
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6](#)

R. (6cd) I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
with your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Reading II

[Phil 4:12-14, 19-20](#)

Brothers and sisters:

I know how to live in humble circumstances;

I know also how to live with abundance.

In every circumstance and in all things

I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry,
of living in abundance and of being in need.

I can do all things in him who strengthens me.

Still, it was kind of you to share in my distress.

My God will fully supply whatever you need,
in accord with his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.
To our God and Father, glory forever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

[Mt 22:1-14 or 22:1-10](#)

Jesus again in reply spoke to the chief priests and elders of the people
in parables, saying,

"The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king
who gave a wedding feast for his son.

He dispatched his servants
to summon the invited guests to the feast,
but they refused to come.

A second time he sent other servants, saying,
'Tell those invited: "Behold, I have prepared my banquet,
my calves and fattened cattle are killed,
and everything is ready; come to the feast."'

Some ignored the invitation and went away,
one to his farm, another to his business.

The rest laid hold of his servants,
mistreated them, and killed them.

The king was enraged and sent his troops,
destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

Then he said to his servants, 'The feast is ready,
but those who were invited were not worthy to come.

Go out, therefore, into the main roads
and invite to the feast whomever you find.'

The servants went out into the streets
and gathered all they found, bad and good alike,

and the hall was filled with guests.
But when the king came in to meet the guests,
he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment.
The king said to him, 'My friend, how is it
that you came in here without a wedding garment?'
But he was reduced to silence.
Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet,
and cast him into the darkness outside,
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'
Many are invited, but few are chosen."

or

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