

2017

- As I tell you often, one of the biggest misconceptions these days is: *“Well...everyone goes to Heaven in the end.”*
- But that’s certainly not what Jesus indicates today in our Gospel, and in many other passages. We remember especially when He says: *“Many are invited, but few are chosen”*...and: *“... the gate is narrow and the way is hard, that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”*
- 
- What is universal is the invitation...given eagerly to all by God.
- He gives us the directions to the narrow gate, but it is up to us to follow them...or not. To live in accordance with God’s will...or not.
- Thus, in the end, if I do not attain salvation, I have no one to blame but ourselves.
- For God’s love and mercy has been offered most generously to us; after all, He came to earth...lived as a common workman...suffered and died on a cross...in order that we might live with Him forever.
- But if we reject God, we reject all that is good...all that is right...and without Him...without the Good, there is only absence of Good...which is the very definition of evil.
- 
- And thus our parable today.
- A king (God) summons to a wedding feast...the ultimate joyous occasion—that feast which is analogized in our first reading...but after pretending to be loyal subjects and friends, many ignore his invitation; they have better things to do. They refuse the king’s outstretched hand.
- They made their choice, and are responsible for that choice...as all of us are...as all of us will be.
- 
- So the king (God) in his benevolence and longing for a joyful celebration sends servants to find new friends to his inner circle.

- Those servants (who represent the prophets and the apostles) gather in we riff-raff from the highways and byways.
- These could have never expected an invitation from the king... much less have deserved it...stemming from nothing other than the king's own munificence
- And so this parable affirms to us that God's invitation is not due to our own merits, but is based solely in His loving benevolence... which ought to elicit our perpetual thanksgiving.

- 
- But then...the man without the wedding garment.
  - This may be confusing at first, but then we remember that in Jesus' time a king would have provided a wedding garment to one he invited but did not have one.
  - So when the man is not properly attired, it is because he has rejected the gift meant to make him presentable at the feast... preferring his own grimy, street-worn unworthy garment, which represents sin.
  - God has provided our wedding garment through the sacrifice of Jesus, who paid dearly for the cleansing of our sins by his death on the cross.
  - By our free will, we accept or reject His gift, and can choose to cast off our baptismal garment, refusing to amend our lives and live according to His will and teaching...refusing to live for that goodness for which we were created.
  - With such short-sightedness, we insultingly reject the gift of our king...and, then, what is left but to be thrown back out into the street...out into that which we, by our actions, show that we prefer...and lose what would have been our place at the eternal banquet of salvation.
- So...the wise man and woman does not lose perspective.

2017

- There is always something vying for our attention: that visit to make...that game to watch...that lunch to prepare...that hunt to go on...the internet, the balloon festival, the concert, or whatever.
- But don't let the inferior block out the superior...letting the lesser eclipse the greater...and become so busy living this life that we fail to prepare eternal life.
- 
- It is easy 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. To sleep rather than attend Mass...video games, sports and simple avoidance of an argument rather than bringing the kids to CCD to learn their faith...that they may maintain their own baptismal garment.
- It is always our choice.

- 
- The English painter William Hunt captured this theme in his painting called “The Light of the World”, which he painted to express his own 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...the cottage neglected...the landscape abandoned and hostile...and it is night.
  - And in the darkness, Christ stands at the door...holding a lantern and knocking on the door.
  - 
  - The cottage symbolizes the soul...the door, human freedom...and Christ is the light bringing hope and meaning to the inner darkness.
  - It might seem 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 a particular detail stands out: there is no doorknob or handle on the outside of the door; it can only be opened from within.

- 
- Let us not refuse, but rather rejoice in our invitation...donning the garment of reverence and love for Our Father and Our Savior.
  - We manifest our acceptance by our fidelity to His will...obeying His commandments, forgiving others, and helping those in need... those things which are good in themselves.
  - 
  - Jesus simply knocks...He invites...and 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**

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."