

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

“A certain man gave a great supper and invited many...” The grace of God is evident in His Invitation. First, He invites. He invites without qualification. He invites freely. That’s how the Promises of God work. The Promise is one of grace. The Promise is powerful. The Promise elicits a response in the hearer, faith in the one invited.

The response of faith to God’s Promise is to believe, to accept, to come, to receive. That’s what faith does. Faith trusts in the Promise. Faith desires what is promised. Faith runs to receive what God gives. Faith puts aside the sensibilities and trappings of this perishable world to receive the eternal celestial Gifts that only God can give.

Land, oxen, a new wife. It is, of course, a parable. And then again, it isn’t. It isn’t about land, oxen or wives, and yet at the same time it is. In the same way, it wasn’t spoken to you, but is was spoken for you, indeed it is spoken about you. Faith knows that. So look for yourself in the Parable.

The Lord had entered the house of a ruler of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath. Anxious to catch Him doing something wrong, the Scripture says “they watched Him closely.” That’s what the Law does. It watches closely. It is inflexible, unyielding. It convicts. It cannot heal, it cannot free. The Law can only accuse. It can only condemn. So it watches you closely until there is an infraction, and it brings the weight of the judgment of God down upon the transgressor, the weight of the judgment of God down upon you.

As those confused enforcers of the Law watched Him closely, the Lord healed a man on the Sabbath. They objected to the miracle, because it seemed to them to be work, prohibited by their understanding of the Sabbath, the Day of Rest. He asked if it is legal to heal on the Sabbath, they, Israel’s teachers, could not give answer. Against love there is no Law.

Then the Lord told them a Parable, the Parable of the Wedding Feast. By His Words he taught against seeking the highest seat; and He exhorted that the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind be invited to the Feast, certainly a double offense to Pharisees. They loved to take the best seats. And the poor, maimed, lame, and blind they counted as condemned by God, unclean.

So it was then, while eating bread, after hearing the Parable of the Wedding Feast, that one of the Pharisees responded, “Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!” He certainly thought that he had answered well, authoritatively, perhaps even that his interjection would draw an “amen” and then silence from the Lord. It was that same man that the Lord corrected with Divine Wisdom. It was to him that the Lord said “A certain man gave a great supper and invited many...” He told the Parable you heard this morning.

He told of a man who made a gracious offer. The offer he makes is at no cost to the guests. It is simply a blessing to them. All the work is done, he offers them all the benefits, the feast.

“Come”, he bids through his servants, “for all things are now ready!”

“They”, the Scripture says, “with one accord began to make excuses.” Just as the Holy Church is One, so is there unity in unbelief. They refused the invitation “with one accord”. They placed

no value in what he offered. They despised his promise, and so scorned the one who made the promise.

Consider what God freely gives in this, His House, this day. He has done all the work. He humbled Himself. He took the lowest seat, making Himself poor. He took on Flesh. He kept the Law perfectly while being watched closely. He suffered, being maimed by scourge and fist, being lame by cruel spike, being blind as death closed His sinless eyes. All this He did, He suffered died, to pay the price for your sins. In the throws of death and the darkness of Golgotha He declared “It is finished!” Indeed, all things are ready.

To you, to all fallen men, the same risen God makes a gracious offer. He makes the offer at no cost to you, the invited. He simply desires that you receive the blessing. All the work is done, so faith loves the Law. He offers you all the benefits. “Come”, He bids through His Called and Ordained servant, “for all things are now ready!”

It is the Gospel Invitation, the Gospel Promise. Now look for yourself in the Parable. What has kept you away from the Lord’s Gifts? Job? Family? The big game? Too late a night on Saturday? Land, oxen or wife? What has kept you from your prayers, from your daily reading of Scripture, from Bible Class, from returning thanks to the Lord at each and every meal?

Has your cold-heartedness toward God and His gracious invitation shown Him that, like the men in the Parable, you have despised His Promise, which is to scorn the One who makes the Promise? What have you valued more than God’s grace? What has been more important to you than His forgiveness and reconciliation to Him? What has been of greater worth to you than and eternal life?

Confess then, that you have been like the Pharisees – making an outward show of religion while at the same time daily sinning against God – the invited who are not worthy to taste of the Supper. But do not despair. By His strong Word of Law what God has done is what the Master in the Parable orders: you are compelled to come to the Feast. Seeing your sin, you seek grace. And you find that grace in the God who extends to you His gracious Gospel Invitation.

So for you there is hope. For you there is the Promise. For you there is the Invitation of grace of a loving God. It is of you that the Master commands “Go quickly into the city and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.” Fill the Feast with the unworthy. Not because you merit admittance. Because God is a God of grace. Because God desires that His House be filled, filled with unworthy men declared to be worthy by the shedding of Christ’s Blood. He desires that you fill His House, that you enjoy His Feast.

The Wisdom of God is Christ. Wisdom has built His House, the Holy Church. He has hewn out the Seven Pillars, the Sevenfold Gifts of the Spirit, on which the Church stands. He has given Himself to be slaughtered, the Once For All Sacrifice. He has drunk of the Cup of God’s wrath, mixing His Wine by the Blood and Water that issued forth from His Holy, Riven Side.

He has furnished His Table, at which He is Master and Host and Meal. Indeed, “All things are ready”. And He invites you, you who believe in Him, you, O Redeemed of Christ, He bids you

“Come, eat of My Bread and drink of the Wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding.”

Land, oxen, a pious spouse, they are all good gifts of God. But today He bids you receive the best Gift given on earth – a taste of heaven. He bids you to eat Bread in the Kingdom of God. He bids you to eat Christ, to drink Christ, to partake of the Feast that unites heaven and earth, the Feast that opens heaven to you.

By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

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