

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

St. Luke tells us that the Lord was at the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees. He was there attending a supper, to eat bread on the Sabbath. It is in that context that the Lord speaks two Parables about being invited to a supper. The story of the great supper our Lord tells the Pharisees is a parable. It wasn't a factual event, but it reveals Divine Truths. The Parable of the Great Supper is the Lord's answer to a statement.

After the first Parable, the Parable regarding choosing the lowest place when invited to a feast, one seated at the table with the Lord exclaimed "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." The Lord answers "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many..." The parable is a response to the desire to eat bread in the Kingdom of God.

A gracious and powerful man gave a supper. The guests were notified that all was ready. All of the invited found other things that were more important – land, oxen, a wife. They forsook the gracious host and his invitation to see to their temporal affairs. Deemed unworthy to attend, the Lord finds others to take their places, others who were undesirable, that His house be filled.

God Himself gives land, belongings, and spouses. Each of them is a good and gracious gift of God. It is right to care for them. God charges the faithful to be good stewards of the things that He provides as daily bread. So to receive such gifts of God, land, belongings, a spouse, and to care for them, isn't wrong. In fact, it's quite right.

So to the Pharisees at that Sabbath meal it may have seemed that the invited guests in the Parable did the right thing. The problem, of course, is that the Pharisees were known to make the Word of God of no effect by honoring their traditions over God's Word. "And many such things", the Lord said to the Pharisees, "you do." Still it wasn't wrong to care for land, animals or wife.

But when the Certain Man who gave a Great Supper is God Himself, when the invitation is to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb in His Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, which has no end, when the Supper is the eternal heavenly banquet, then the Words "For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper" are the strongest Words of condemnation. They are God's proclamation of eternal condemnation. But the men are not condemned for being good stewards.

Consider the responses of the men to the Great Invitation. The Scripture says "they all with one accord began to make excuses". We're used to men making excuses. All men fall short. But the word used in the original is quite strong. It means "to refuse, to decline, to shun." They did more than politely ask to be excused. Although all things were ready, they refused the invitation, shunning the host and his grace.

Now consider their responses: "I have bought...", "I have bought...", and "I have married..." What God did, they refuse. What they did, they prefer. So it is with the fallen flesh. They felt no need for what God offered. It is not the rich that are hungry, it is the poor. So blessed are the poor in spirit, for they hunger for the Great Supper.

Men don't throw suppers simply to benefit the guests. The Host of the Supper desires fellowship. He desires to fill his house. He desires to bless others by his graciousness. He desires mere men to draw nigh unto His presence. He desires Communion with men.

But first He must change the very status of man. For man is unworthy. Man is sinful. Man is fallen. Man is indelibly stained. And if you're honest, you'll confess that you too have sinned. So God, to reconcile men to Himself, to reconcile you to Himself, that you may draw nigh unto God, He makes all things ready. So "Wisdom has built His House, He has hewn out his seven pillars; He has slaughtered His meat, He has mixed His wine, He has also furnished His table."

By those Words Solomon teaches us what it means that God has made all things ready – Christ, the Wisdom of God, has established His Church by giving Himself as a sacrifice for sins. He suffered to make all things ready. He was slaughtered on the cross and died as a Sacrifice to make all things ready. He rose to new life to make all things ready.

He ascended into heaven to make all things ready. He sent His Spirit into the world that His servants extend His gracious Gospel invitation to the unworthy, to the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind; to you, beloved of the Lord. For by this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.

And to those damaged by sin, to those unworthy to come into God's holy presence, to those for whom Christ died, to you who believe in Him, that Certain Man who gave a Great Supper says "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding."

For if you can hear it, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Believe, and you have already eaten. He who has ears to hear let him hear.

Those who put their trust in their own "I haves" will never taste of His Supper. Those who trust in temporal wealth, self-made men who put their trust in themselves, refuse the invitation. They shun the host. They have received their reward in full.

But you who put your trust in what God has done, you who are poor of spirit, you who know yourselves to be broken and imperfect, you who believe that your eternal wellbeing lies in God having made all things ready, you with baptismal faith, you whose bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, to you, dear Christian, through this servant, the Master extends His invitation, that you be invited, that you enter in, that you feast, and that His House be filled.

In Christ, all your sins are forgiven. Your soul maimed by sin has been restored. You who were lame, unable to walk in the Way of Salvation, are declared to be without sin, and you follow your Lord who is the Way. You who were blind in unbelief, to you God has given eyes of faith, that you see clearly that He has made all things ready, for you.

So come, kneel, take and eat, take and drink. For Wisdom Himself bids you Banquet on His Holy Body and His Precious Blood. His Wine is mixed, His table is furnished, and still there is

room. So come, that His House be filled. Come, that you who are hungry be filled – filled with Christ. By God’s grace it is you who are invited. So “Come, for all things are ready!”

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