

The Second Sunday after Trinity Sunday
St. Luke 14:16-24
June 10th, 2018
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

Come, For All Things Are Now Ready

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

When our Lord + Jesus Christ ascended into Heaven, He went to prepare a place for us in Heaven. He has ascended into Heaven to prepare a great wedding feast for us. To this wedding feast He has invited the whole world. Nobody is excluded from the invitation. He has invited the whole world through His earthly servant—the Church. The Church has sent out into the world Apostles, and Prophets, and Evangelists, and Pastors and Teachers, to invite to the great feast all who would hear the Gospel and believe on the Lord + Jesus Christ for salvation. Through the preaching of these men, the Holy Ghost has worked to create faith in all of you here, and many throughout the entire world.

Sadly though, there are many who hear the message of an eternal reward in Heaven and react like the invitees in the Gospel reading from the Evangelist St. Luke. They react with a “Ho-hum. I have better things to do.” The invitees in the Gospel had their minds fixed on earthly things. They could not see the great gifts that are given when our focus is on spiritual things—the gifts of Heaven.

This is evidenced to us by how few of us are gathered here today. This is not anything that we are doing wrong. The servant in the Gospel was given the task of inviting people to the feast. He did not do it incorrectly, or inefficiently. The people he invited just did not want to come. This is the challenge for us today as Christians in an increasingly godless society; to keep on inviting people to the wedding feast of our Lord—the Lamb of God—and His Bride—the Church without worrying about who actually heeds the invitation. This was not the servant’s obligation and realm. He was simply called to invite. The provider of the great supper was the one who was to be concerned with who came and who did not.

So too, is our task today, as the Church on Earth in this location, to continue to preach the Word of God in its truth and purity and administer the Blessed Sacraments according to Christ’s institution. That is all we as the congregation in this place have been given to do. We are not to worry about who listens and who does not. Just like the servant in the Gospel preached the invitation to all who had been invited.

Do you know what the great thing about the giver of the feast is? When the people invited have rejected his offer, he does not go into his bedroom and cry and feel sorry for himself. What does he do? He extends the offer to even more people. Such is the grace and mercy of our Lord and Savior +

Jesus Christ. When this world refuses to give thanks and receive salvation and forgiveness through the works and merits of the Lord Christ, He extends the invitation to even other people who will listen. The Jews at the time of our Lord and the time of the Apostles, as we are reading in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles at this time of the year according to *The Lutheran Hymnal*, also rejected the Messiah—our Lord + Jesus Christ. What did the Apostles do? They started inviting the Gentiles. This is why we today have this Gospel of our Lord + Jesus Christ, because the invitation was extended to people beyond the nation of Israel.

The same is true for us today. When the people we invite reject the offer. We invite yet more others. Those through whom the Holy Ghost will work will join us; they will put their mind off of earthly things and look to the spiritual gifts of God.

Furthermore, the rejection of the invited guests should also serve as a warning to us, as well. They rejected the offer because they were focused on earthly things. Just like the rich man from last week's Gospel, when we are consumed with the worries and benefits of this temporary life, we fall prey to losing out on the eternal gifts that our Lord + Jesus would have us enjoy. It would be better for us to lose earthly lands and abundant harvests and all our comforting, earthly companions than lose the eternal gifts of Heaven; to lose our seat at the heavenly banquet for all eternity. This is why Lazarus from last weeks Gospel was so blessed, because even though He appeared to have nothing, through faith, he had every possible good gift.

This is why we need to keep our focus on the eternal gifts of Heaven. We need to keep our eyes on the eternal reward waiting for us, especially when our road becomes dark, and we are beset with the trials and tribulations of this life. When our sins plague us; when the consequences of sin in this world cause us great grief, we must firmly fix our ears to the message of the servant who desires to invite us to the eternal feast in Heaven. This is where our comfort lies; in the promise of relief from the burden of our sins through the death and merits of our Lord Christ; in the hope of an unending joyful life in Heaven with all our loved ones who have died in the faith.

This life will end. That is certain. How blessed we will be when our Lord calls us at last to the eternal feast which He has prepared for us in Heaven. He ascended into Heaven to prepare Heaven for us. And then He sent to us His Holy Ghost to enlighten our hearts and fix our hearts on our Lord + Jesus and our ears on the message of what He has done for us and continues to do for us. My dear friends, let us never stop hearing the Word of God in its truth and purity and let us never stop receiving the Blessed Sacraments according to our Lord's institution. For we have been invited by the Church working through these means to the great eternal feast in Heaven.

And knowing what a great gift that is for us, let us also never stop inviting all who would hear to join with us in celebrating the invitation to Heaven. Our task is not to worry about who listens and who does not, but just to keep on inviting. For the joy that we have in knowing that our sins are forgiven by God, and that we have an eternal Kingdom, and an eternal feast, with all the angels and archangels and all the saints and company of Heaven is a joy that deserves to be passed onto all those who suffer with sin in this life.

"The poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind." This is who we are to invite. All those beaten down by sin and the consequences of sin in this life. And what do we tell them? How do we invite them to the heavenly feast? With the same words that provider of the great supper gave to his servant, "*Come, for all things are now ready.*" The Lamb of God has been sacrificed for us and the whole world. Our sins have been paid for by His blood. He has fulfilled the Law perfectly for us. He has opened our graves up in His resurrection. And, He has opened to us, and all believers in Christ, the gates of Heaven.

As the Prophet Isaiah wrote, *“He will swallow up death forever, and the Word of the Lord will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the Earth; for the Lord has spoken.”* On the mountain outside of Jerusalem, our Lord + Jesus prepared an eternal feast for us by offering up His life in our place. And the gates of Heaven that He opened up, He opened up for all of us who receive the invitation in faith. There is room in Heaven for us poor, miserable sinners here today. Thanks be to God! But, there is still even more room in Heaven. So then, let us continue to carry out our task given to us by God, and continue to invite all those who would hear to enjoy the eternal supper with us. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!