

Trinity XX

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Preacher: Fr. Wade Miller

[0 : 00] In our gospel text this morning from Matthew chapter 22, we heard the story of a king hosting a wedding banquet for his son.

But in this banquet, he sees a man present, a stranger, who does not have the proper garment. So this king banishes this man for not having the proper wedding attire.

This man who crashed the wedding banquet is banished to a place described as being filled with outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Now such anger seems like the outburst of a despot. Now, the action of this king conjures up imagery of a Mussolini or some other kind of tyrant.

But before we jump to such a conclusion, we have to remember that this is a parable. A parable is an allegory by definition.

[1 : 09] So what is the meaning of this parable, this allegory? Well, we are given insight to what this story is about in the opening words where we read, The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding.

The language of a wedding banquet as it relates to the kingdom of God is nothing new. It's used throughout the New Testament.

As a matter of fact, Revelation chapter 19 uses this language multiple times and says in verse 9 of chapter 19, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

So the king in this story represents the Lord. And the servants that are sent out by the king to call people to come to this great banquet, these are the prophets and the apostles that our Lord had sent out.

But those who either ignore this call or those who beat and killed the prophets and the apostles, these represent the unbelieving Jewish leaders and people who rejected Jesus as the Christ.

[2 : 35] It also represents those who spurned the call of God's servants, his ministers to this very day. So the king then instructs his servants to go to the highways and to invite those who are on the fringe of society.

That's what it means. Go to the highways, to the fringe, the outcasts. Invite them to come into this banquet. In other words, the disciples are to seek out the poor, the forgotten ones, the weak, anyone, anyone who will respond to the call of God from his preachers to come and enter into the kingdom of God.

But the man who did not have the wedding garment, this man represents those who seek affiliation with the divine, with God, apart from the God who came in human flesh, Jesus the Christ.

You see, the garment is Christ. And we receive this garment in holy baptism. As a matter of fact, in Galatians chapter 3, verses 26 and 27, we read, You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for as many of you as were baptized into Christ have what?

Put on Christ. Put on Christ. Jesus is the Lamb of God. He is the one who covers us.

[4 : 20] He is the one that takes away the sins of the world. When we receive this Lamb, as we are incorporated into Jesus through the waters of holy baptism, this is how we put on Christ.

And that is why, even at our baptisms, we give the one being baptized a white cloth, representing this newly, this new life given, this new garment, which is signifying a new life in Jesus Christ.

But to set aside our baptismal faith, that is to set aside Christ, for the rags of this world is to be left exposed and helpless.

Furthermore, to fool ourselves into thinking we are heirs of the kingdom without communing at our Lord's banquet, is to deceive ourselves. There are many today who want spirituality on their own terms.

It's like an exercise program. Spirituality on their own terms. They want a form of self-help without the cross of Jesus Christ. They want hope apart from the resurrected King who conquered death and the grave by his physical, his bodily resurrection from the dead.

[5 : 52] They want a Savior for the afterlife without a Lord to submit to in this life. They want Christianity without the church, a personal relationship with Jesus independent from his body.

Beloved, we are to live in our baptismal grace, protected by our garments of holy baptism, remembering who we are in Christ Jesus, so that we can go forth covered in the blood of the Lamb in order to share our Lord's banquet and to invite others to this great feast.

this morning, therefore, is a call. It's a call for reflection. It's a call for action, so that we are being attentive to the call of God upon our lives.

Let us then, friends, seek to be ready, prepared for the coming of our bridegroom, our King, Jesus the Christ, by wearing the garment given to us in holy baptism, living out our gift that we received in Christ.

And may we then go out and call others, invite others into this holy communion where they will be clothed in Christ, clothed with the proper attire for the great banquet feast.

[7 : 36] Amen. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.