

Second Sunday after Trinity

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Date: 14 June 2026

Preacher: Seminarian Matthew Stuart

[0 : 00] In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen. In the verse just before our Gospel reading this morning, a man at the table with Jesus said, Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

It's a pious thing to say, and it's true, but the man says it as if his seat at the table were already secured. Our Lord responds with a parable, a warning to everyone who assumes the blessing belongs to him. A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, come, for all things are now ready. Now feasts typically follow this pattern. Invitations are sent out in advance, allowing those invited time to anticipate the event and prepare for it. When the food is ready, everyone is called together as the meal begins.

The invitation we hear in this parable is the second call. The feast is ready, the table is set, and now it's time for the guests to arrive. But they do not show up. They all with one accord began to make excuses. One has bought a field and must go see it. Another has bought five yoke of oxen and must go test them. A third has married a wife and therefore cannot come. The servant returns and reports it all to his master. Now notice what these excuses are. None of them is a bad thing. A man buys land and naturally he wants to walk it. Another to put his new oxen to work. The third has just married and doesn't want to leave his new wife. These are all good and ordinary things that fill a life well lived.

Even the law granted a newly married man an exemption from going to war so he could remain at home with his wife. There's nothing wicked in any of it. And that is precisely the point. The excuses themselves are not sins. They are all good things, but they have taken place of the feast. Each man considers his own interest more important than the master's table. And so each one with a perfectly reasonable explanation refuses the invitation. The men who refused were not wicked. They were ordinary men busy with good and lawful things, but they would not come when he called. The master is angry and says, go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind. These are the very ones the world overlooks. The people no host would even think of inviting to a great feast. Yet they are the ones brought in. Then when there is still room for more at the table, the master sends his servant out again, go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. The poor of the city are the outcasts of Israel.

People on the highways outside the town are the Gentiles brought in through the church's mission. The house will be filled. If the first invited guests do not arrive, the master will fill every seat with others who are willing. For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.

[4 : 13] The reserved seat will not remain open forever. Now he calls it supper because it's the last meal of the day. There is no meal that comes after it. This is the last call. The man who excuses himself when he is called may find when at the last he wishes to come, he is no longer able. God has prepared the feast of his kingdom and the invitation has gone out that all things are now ready. But the good things of this life can become the very excuses that keep us from his table and keep us refusing the invitation. When we do so, we risk finding the door shut.

Now, sometimes things beyond our control, like illness or serious emergencies, keep us from gathering around the Lord's table. That's not what this is about. The warning given to us in this parable is much more subtle and far more common.

It is when a good thing quietly takes place of the greatest thing. The feast is prepared for us week after week at this altar where Christ gives us his own body and blood, where he feeds us with himself.

The invitation still says, come for all things are now ready. And the Lord himself still calls. Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

And week after week, there are always some who are missing from the table because good things are given priority over the greatest thing. Every one of these excuses in the parable is a love for some good thing.

[6 : 17] The first man loves his land, the way we love a free day to tackle those projects we never seem to have time for. The next loves his pursuits, the way the big game on Sunday can take over the entire day.

The last loves his new wife, the way that we love family gatherings or a party that we do not want to miss. It's not wrong to love any of these things.

But the Christian life depends on keeping our loves in their right place. The love of a good thing can come before our obligation to God.

That doesn't make a thing evil. It only leaves its proper place. And a love out of order can easily pull us away from the greatest thing that was meant to hold our lesser loves together.

So the field and the oxen and the new marriage are not bad. And neither is the big game on a Sunday or a family gathering. What's bad is a heart that gives a good thing precedence over the greatest thing.

[7 : 28] When a good thing keeps us from the Lord's table, we have done exactly what the men in the parable did. We have set the things of this world, no matter how good, ahead of the one who made them and who calls us to feast on him.

The feast is for our benefit. It is the very thing that all other good things were meant to serve. The table where we are fed with the life of God himself.

To skip it for a lesser good is to refuse the banquet for the things of this life. The feast is prepared. The hour has come and all things are now ready.

Our Lord is calling us through his church, through his altar where he reveals himself to us in the breaking of the bread. Remember that a seat at this table is set for us and that no good thing we put in its place can feed us the way that he can.

Let that good thing wait an hour or two and come to the feast. The house will be filled. The only question the parable leaves us with is whether we will take our seat at the table when he calls.

[8 : 51] Or will we let a good thing take place of the greatest thing? Amen. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Amen. Amen.