

There was a feast here last Sunday as you well know. Not a wedding feast as we see in our text. Yet, a scrumptious feast. And you spared no expense to make it so. What if no one came? How would you have felt if not even one person had come to the feast that you had prepared? Shocked? Upset? Confused? But that would not have happened, would it? It simply would not have been possible that no one would have come to that feast.

That's what the king thinks in Jesus' parable. Not possible! This isn't just a dinner he has prepared. It's a celebration! A wedding feast for the son of the king. The oxen and fat calves are slaughtered. Everything is ready. The only thing missing are the guests.

The king sends out his servants to call those who are invited, but they will not come. He sends more servants, but those who are invited pay no attention. One goes to work on his farm. Another to his business. And the rest seize the servants and treat them shamefully, even killing them.

The king may well be shocked and confused, but he is certainly very angry. So, does he cancel the feast? No. He sends his servants to the roads and inlets, and all whom they find are invited, and the wedding hall is filled with guests.

Heaven will be filled. That's what Jesus here tells us. But those who fill it are not necessarily the ones holding the invitation in their hands. "*They were not worthy!*" says the king in anger. Why not? They were invited. But they dishonored the king's son. They refused to come.

How many pigs gave their lives for the feast last Sunday? Twelve? Fourteen? Something like that? The Son of God gave His life for the wedding feast, so that anyone and everyone can enjoy that feast for all eternity. It's one thing to dishonor a pig. But to dishonor the Son of God is on a whole different level.

It is not just those who kill the servants who are not worthy. It's all of them. Even the ones who are just not interested in coming. It's the king's son for goodness sake! How can they have no interest in coming? It's the wedding feast, the feast of heaven. Who on earth would have no interest in such a sweet invitation?

But you hear it all the time. "I'm spiritual, just not religious." "I don't believe in organized religion." "I believe in Jesus. I just don't have any interest in His church."

But His Church is where the wedding feast begins at the baptismal font, and continues with the pulpit and the altar.

Last Sunday people had to physically come here to the basement to eat the dinner you prepared. It's the same with the feast the king prepares for his son. "*Come to the feast!*" his servants call out. "Physically come!"

"Come upstairs to the feast!" God's servants call out today, "Come here to where Jesus, the Son of God, gives His living words physically into your ears, and His very body and blood physically into your mouth."

But there is apathy everywhere. “I’m interested in heaven, just not in what goes on in this feast here on Sunday mornings.”

And yet the wedding hall of heaven will be filled. With who? With those who are worthy. And who are they? You, and your loved ones.

Here is sweet comfort for you. The servants in the parable go out and it says, they “*gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.*” They did not just gather the good. They invited, and gathered in, all they found, both bad and good.

You are not disqualified from the wedding feast of heaven if you have lived a bad, wicked life. Your loved one is not disqualified if your loved one is bad and not a good person. Being bad or good has nothing to do with being invited to the feast of heaven. Jesus spilled His precious blood on the cross for both the bad and for the good. No sin you have done, therefore, can shut you out of the wedding hall. All your sins are forgiven. Jesus died for them all. Every sin is forgiven by His blood. Each and every one of you is forgiven. Your loved ones are forgiven. All of them.

And listen to this sweet comfort. To believe this is to be worthy.

Isn’t that why you are here this morning? You need the forgiveness of your sins, given freely in Word and Sacrament, and you believe, by God’s grace, that this forgiveness is for you.

You are worthy. Not because you are bad or good. Because the Son of God gave Himself for you on the cross, and gives Himself to you here at the feast, and this you believe.

“But my loved one,” you say. “My loved one is not here at the wedding feast.” Do not grieve as those who have no hope. Do you not pray for that loved one? Do you think your prayers count for nothing? Do you not witness to your loved one by faithfully coming to this feast? Do you think God is not able to use your faithful witness to gather your loved one into the wedding hall?

Think again. It’s because someone in your life, probably a loved one, was faithful that God gathered you in. And so, you continue to be faithful and to pray, and God will use you to be gracious to your loved one.

What about that man who had no wedding garment? He was cast out of the wedding hall. Should we worry that we might be him? Well, think of this. Since he was not wearing the wedding garment, what was he wearing? His own clothing, right? The meaning being this: he was wearing his own righteousness, not Jesus’ righteousness. He thought he was good enough to enter the wedding hall. But no one enters by being bad or by being good.

Listen to Jesus’ apostle in Galatians: “*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*” That’s the wedding garment. It’s Jesus. His righteousness. His innocence. His holiness. Which He gives you to wear in your baptism. You don’t clothe yourself. He clothes you. He covers you with His blood. He forgives you. He brings you into the wedding feast. And He is the wedding garment you wear.

It’s His wedding. And you are His guest. And so, enjoy the feast. The feast right here, right now. And it will continue forever in heaven. Amen.