

**THE SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**

Text: St. Luke 14:15-24

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

*“For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.”*

These are chilling words, for the Man speaking in JESUS’ parable represents none other than God the FATHER Himself, and the Supper He speaks of is the eternal Wedding Feast given in everlasting celebration of His only-begotten SON, JESUS CHRIST.

The Feast is ready and God, the FATHER, has sent out His invitation by His HOLY SPIRIT. The Flesh of the Lamb has been roasted in the fire of God’s wrath and is now to be served up in a Banquet Feast that will never end. The Man’s Servant is sent forth with perhaps the most important Words uttered by man or God: *“It is finished.”* For God’s CHRIST has been crucified; He has destroyed sin and death with His death, He, Himself, rising from the dead. Therefore, the SPIRIT is sent forth to proclaim that the fullness of time is now upon us and all preparations complete. But sadly, the invited make excuses and refuse to come to the Feast.

Take notice that those who have refused the invitation are not those whom you would naturally expect to turn the Man down; they are not *outsiders* who do not know Him; they are not enemies who hate Him; they are His so-called friends who *claim* to love Him. They first received their invitations ages ago. Like children who await their mother’s call to supper, they are family who know they already have a seat reserved at the table, they simply await the call that all things are ready, that all has been prepared; they were simply waiting for the fullness of time when all things would be made ready.

Now that time has come, but though all things are now ready, those whom the Man has invited are not. They have found what to their minds, are better, more interesting, or more important things to do. They have no time for the Man, nor His Son, nor His feast, so they will spend an eternity in a place where time no longer exists, but instead, only unending despair and everlasting torment in the fires of hell. There, they will long for a drop of water to cool their cracked, sin-parched tongues, and eternally lament that they never availed themselves of God’s Feast nor even the crumbs that fell from their Master’s table.

Oftentimes, we hear or read the Word of God and our tendency is to remove ourselves from the context and message of the text. So, we smugly tell ourselves that we are somehow better than those about whom we read—those who opposed JESUS. We tell

ourselves that if we had been there we certainly would not have reacted in the same way. But please allow me to caution you; God's Words stand for all eternity. His sacred Word never changes in meaning and it never gives way to new cultural mores, trends, or values. God's Word is what it is, therefore, God's Word speaks to all people of all times and places, and today's text is speaking directly to you.

Yes, you naturally like to think that you are unlike those who opposed JESUS and you *know* that you are better than the sinners and unbelievers you see all around you in the world today. Yet, in reality, none of us are any different. Our desires and excuses for neglecting the holy things of God are no different from those of the people to whom we like to point and self-righteously wag our fingers.

This is a very terrifying thing. It is terrifying because we have fooled ourselves into believing we are doing a pretty good job at living the Christian life—whatever that may entail—when in fact, we too, neglect the holy things of God, and in neglecting the holy things of God, we reject God, we reject His SON, and we despise His HOLY SPIRIT.

Do you think me wrong? Then why is it that most people refuse God's gracious invitation to life and salvation in His SON? Why do most so-called Christians have little, if any, desire for the true preaching of CHRIST? Why do so many lament the preaching of God's Law as well as His Gospel? How is it that the pure truth of the Gospel repels so many, even those who call themselves Christian? Do you really believe JESUS when He says, *"Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand"*?

How do you feel when you hear those words? Are you so comfortable in your sin that they do not affect you? Do you believe that they are words reserved only for others? Are you quick to think that JESUS could not be speaking to you? How is it that some hear God's invitation, *"Come, for all things are now ready,"* regularly attending worship, but fail to come to CHRIST? Why is it that so few hearts are truly converted? Why do so many who say they love JESUS never let His Word become their daily bread?

Examine yourself. What do you see? This is important, for it is written: *"For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the SON of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the SPIRIT of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the LORD. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

So ask yourself: *“Do I make every effort to regularly attend worship and Bible study when offered, or do I offer weak excuses?” “Do I have to be begged before I will volunteer my precious time in service to this congregation, to God, and to my neighbor?” “Do I grudgingly give of my treasure, giving only leftovers to God instead of first fruits given with a cheerful heart?” “Do I find it hard to separate myself from the things of this world, whether, earthly goods, earthly desires, or earthly honors?” “Do I regard CHRIST JESUS and His Kingdom as worthy of the sacrifice of my whole life?” “Does this whole message make me angry with the Church, with Pastor, or with God, or has it broken my heart, making me see my need to repent?”* You see, God’s house will be filled, every seat at the Great Feast will be taken, and the banquet hall will be full, whether you are there or not. And if you are not there, you will not be missed.

So, will you be there? For that is where our FATHER in Heaven desires you to be. For this reason, He sent His one and only SON into this world, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. It is for this reason that JESUS gave His precious Body over to the fiery wrath of God to be roasted for your sins; for all your doubts, your self-centered selfishness, your hatred, your anger, your lust, your greed, your pride, your weakness, and yes, even for all the times you did not accept His gracious invitation.

For we have a loving God who desires you to be near Him. He loves you and all His creation, so much so, that He, by grace, through faith in CHRIST, sets aside your sins, remembering them no more, and lovingly invites you to eat from His Table and drink from His Cup. He calls you who were once *“strangers and foreigners,”* you who did not know Him and were even His enemies. He calls, imploring you to hear Him because His single, most fervent, desire is to see you seated with Him at His Table.

On His Table, you will find the very Body and Blood of JESUS given and shed for you. So come now, *“for all things are ready.”* God calls to you to taste His Supper. He calls you to feast on the very Flesh that saved you from eternal hell. He calls you to drink the very Blood He poured out for the forgiveness of your sins. He sends you an invitation that says, *“Whoever eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is food indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He who eats My Flesh and drinks My Blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living FATHER sent Me, and I live because of the FATHER, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the Bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this Bread will live forever.”*

God calls to you with His Word of Life. It is an engraved invitation. It is engraved with His Name written in Water and Blood; it is engraved in the wounds of His Flesh, and it is written, there, *“your forehead and upon your heart.”* You cannot see it

but it is there nonetheless, and it does not matter whether you can see it or not—God can and that is enough.

It was given to you and placed upon your forehead and your heart when God called you out of darkness into His marvelous light. It was given to you when His servants brought you to the font and another servant poured the Waters of Holy Baptism over you making a sinner, a saint. It was given to you and *“therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”*

So *“Come, for all things are now ready.”* The Feast is prepared. The Table is set. CHRIST’s Body and Blood are present here and now to strengthen and encourage you. The LORD is now in His Temple hosting this Banquet and serving you with peace and contentment that you cannot find anywhere else.

Come, hear our LORD’s invitation. Come, for the consoling Supper of the LORD is here for you; it is here for all, no matter what you have done, what you have been, how you have lived, what you have said, or what you fear, it is here for you no matter how many times you have refused His invitation before. For here is the LORD Himself, giving you His unflinching, unwavering, inexhaustible, and unending help, and comfort. Here He feeds you on Himself to give you faith, salvation, and everlasting life. So come, for all things are now ready. Take your seat at the Table of the LORD and hear the LORD Himself say, *“I forgive you all your sins.”*

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

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