

28th Sunday A

Isaiah 25: 6-10; Philippians 4: 10-14, 19-20; Matthew 22: 1-14

Adjust, adjust and adjust. Making adjustments is part of our life. In recent months everyone has had to adjust to a “new normalcy” of living and following health-related guidelines.

Everywhere people are making adjustments on how and where to work, how to manage their family, social and physical life, where to educate their child and even which church or what Mass to attend.

The world is no longer the same. We want things to return back to normal but in reality, we realize perhaps it never will.

If we are to make the most of the situation, we're in we must adjust. It is as simple as that. “I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination,” Jimmy Dean, American country singer and actor once said.

Isn't that a large part of the message we are hearing in our Scripture for today?

St. Paul writes in his letter to the early Christians of Philippi, saying:

“I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need.”

Paul was a man who had to adjust to every circumstance in his life and knew he did not have what it takes to do it own his. It was only his ongoing, unconditional faith in Jesus Christ:

“I can do all things in him who strengthens me,” Paul said.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

Making the most of the situation facing us requires adjusting ourselves so we can properly deal with new situations that arise.

Life, as we know it, seldom goes on as always, business cannot be carried on forever as usual, changes happen outside of us; and if we wish to fit in, we must adjust.

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The man in today's Gospel parable was tied up and cast out of a wedding banquet hall into the street, not because of his lack of faith but apparently his unwillingness to adjust. This was something new for him and he could not deal with it. Or was it rather that he was not willing to try?

“My friend, how is it that you came in here without a wedding garment?” the King asked, **“But he was reduced to silence.”**

My guess is – the man thought he could participate in the celebration without anything being required of him. And yet, his unwillingness to make an adjustment, even do a small thing, meet a small expectation, kept him on the outside looking in. And that could be us.

On one level we can think of this story as being about the afterlife - our life in, with, and for God after our earthly lives have ended.

This is what has been won for us through Jesus' saving act -- a newness of life, a rebirth, a transformation that allows us a seat at the wedding feast this very day. The feast has started. And our loving God desperately wants us to attend, to participate, to experience joy of God's presence.

But God has some expectations. God wants us to adjust our priorities and make our lives purposeful.

To give - even when we have lost so much and really don't have much left.

To reach out to others, be encouraging and compassionate -- even when we'd rather simply withdraw to ourselves and be left alone.

To be hopeful -- even when times are tough as it is today, and when life doesn't go as we had anticipated.

To love and share -- even when we really don't feel like it.

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These are God's expectations. These are the ways we show God, and most importantly show ourselves, that we are truly accepting God's invitation and all that comes along with it.

And I'm not saying that we have to "earn" our way into the wedding banquet in heaven. That's not possible. No -- these God-like actions and attitudes are our "thank you" -- our ways of discipleship and willingness to conform ourselves to God's will, to adjust our lives to God's expectations.

Dear friends, God wants us at the banquet. And the joy is incredible -- beyond our wildest imaginations. And it starts today. Our presence here in church is the foreshadowing of our participation in the sumptuous feast in the Kingdom of God.

But showing up isn't quite enough. Remember the man who came but was not willing to put on proper wedding garment.

There are a few things that God expects of us -- a way of living and acting and seeing that leads us through the doorway to an unbelievable wedding feast -- a life in true communion with our God.

May we all be willing to adjust our lives so to embrace everything God is asking of us and calling us to. Any less would be a big disappointment. You see, God wants nothing but the best for us. God wants us at the feast, sumptuous, joy-filled and forever lasting. Amen.