

## Homily Notes for Sunday Oct 11<sup>th</sup> 2020, 28<sup>th</sup> Ordinary A

Readings: Isaiah 25:6-10a, Ps 23, Philippians 4:12-14, Gospel – Matt 22:1-14

### Why is it today that there are people who do not come to the feast?

**1. Summary:** After many weeks of formation as disciples with Jesus, we are getting close to the end. The Gospel readings now come from Jesus's last week in Jerusalem, after the "Palm Sunday" entry. During these weeks, conflict with the values of the world is high. We are invited to "intentional discipleship. We are also invited to examine why it is that so many who are called do not respond to Jesus. We are called to live an eternity driven life. This would be the life of an "intentional" disciple.

**From the very beginning, God has promised a reward, like a great feast, for his faithful.**

**2. The first reading:** The prophet Isaiah (742-687 B.C.) describes, under the image of a great banquet, the blessings and happiness that the messianic kingdom will bring. In today's reading, with this vision of the great banquet, we can see that the stewardship way of life, with its emphasis on the virtuous use of our Time, Talent and Treasure, allows us to embrace daily life and all its demands while keeping eternity clearly in our minds.

**3. How can we say "no" to such an enticing invitation?** Yet many do. We often prioritize the "immediate" over the "eternal".

**While God offers the feast, ours is the responsibility to be worthy of it.**

**4. Our responsibility.** In some ways, Isaiah's vision parallels Jesus' parable about the king's wedding banquet (Mt 22:1-14). Let us remember that heaven with its great banquet is ours for the receiving. God the Father intends it for us, God the Son has earned it for us, and God the Holy Spirit is ready at every moment of our lives to assist us to obtain it. But we must make the necessary preparations.

**5. Warning.** It would be, however, easy to misread these promises if only we read what has been selected for our reading today. Isaiah makes clear that much of humanity will be cursed because of its sin and refusal to respond to God. Read in Isaiah 6:9-13. Jesus also says, "Many are invited, but few are chosen."

**One way to be worthy of the feast is to be a good steward, content with what one has.**

**6. The second reading:** Here St. Paul shares his secret for an eternity-driven life. He says,

*"I know how to live in humble circumstances; I know also how to live with abundance. In every circumstance and in all things, I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need."*

St. Paul has learned to live the stewardship way of life. He has the confidence to say,

*"I can do all things in him who strengthens me." "My God in turn will supply your needs fully, in a way worthy of His magnificent riches in Christ Jesus."*

Here Paul is describing mature Christian "stewardship."

**7. Key concept: "Stewardship" is discipleship,** committing our whole selves to Jesus, represented by our *time, talent, and treasure*. Here St Paul emphasizes his freedom to serve, whether or not he has money and food. He knows the experience *"of living in abundance and of being in need."* Because of his faith, it makes no difference to Paul whether he lives *"in humble circumstances or in abundance."* It makes no difference whether he lives or dies. This is key for why he always has enough. His whole existence has been transformed by his being joined to Jesus in His death and resurrection. *"I have learned,"* he writes, *"the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry."* Paul reminds us of our need for a

complete and unquestioning trust in God, and for the firm conviction that He is regulating the affairs of our lives.

**These are the final parables of Jesus; final words have the greatest significance.**

**8. Gospel: The parable of the Wedding Feast: The context:** In Matthew 21 is recorded the Entry into Jerusalem. Jesus then cleanses the Temple and gives a series of final teachings. Then follow three parables which criticize the religious leadership of the Jews, the Scribes and the Pharisees. Our reading today is the third of these parables. The parable of the royal wedding feast is a parable about the Kingdom of God and about the people who will eventually belong to it. It is also the last of three parables that challenge the legitimacy of the Jewish leadership, three parables of judgment or "rejection parables." They all contrast the values and attitudes of the true Israel with the attitudes and lives of the Scribes and Pharisees. This parable was delivered by Jesus on his last visit to the Temple on the Tuesday of Holy Week and was part of his last confrontation with his enemies before his arrest.

**Basic Question. Why would guests refuse to come to the wedding feast of their own king's son?**

**9. Why would intelligent, successful people, knowing the power of the king, not come to the feast?** That would seem to be utter foolishness. He did indeed "send his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city."

**10. Why do we today refuse our invitation to the wedding feast of the Lamb, the Son of the Father?** Some reasons might be that people are discouraged, depressed, weighed down by guilt. Another principal reason is because people are ignorant of the promises. Perhaps, more important modern reason is that many do not believe that God the Father, Creator, exists. But it could also be that they don't know the purposes of their Church.

**11. Refer to the sheet on St. Boniface Mission and Parish Priorities (7/17/20).**

Education should lead on to formation.

Stewardship should lead the English speakers and Spanish speakers to work together for the benefit of all.

See 1 Pet 4:10 on stewardship is for the whole Church, not just the benefit of the individual.

We are working on a site plan and buildings that will help us achieve our mission.

God wants us to increase the number of adults and children that we bring to the faith.

"Where God is not present, everything is permitted."

**11. Do you think this is what God wants of us here and now?**

**12. Conclusion: We have been called to wedding feast of the Lamb.**

Let us respond by embracing a stewardship way of life.

Let us grow in our relation to Jesus Christ and His Word.

Let us develop our gifts, not just for ourselves, but in the service of others.

Let us be the best witnesses to God's plan for his people.

**13. Then we will be counted among those who responded to the call of God, with an eternal perspective which guides all our life here on earth. How blessed to be numbered amongst those at this banquet!**

**Supplement: Another reason for not responding to the call is we don't believe it is real!**

**1. When we teach in Catechism Class that we believe in God the Father, Creator, maker of heaven and earth,** that which our children learn now is attacked in 9<sup>th</sup> grade Biology class, where the godless, random, Darwinian evolution of life is almost taught as a religion.

**2. But we should have confidence in our faith, specifically in God the Father, Creator.** Lee Strobel, in his book, *The Case for a Creator*, cites many Nobel Prize winning scientists who argue that the evidence in the universe makes the case for “intelligent design”. If there exists “intelligent design”, then there must be an “intelligent designer” or God! Let me share a couple of citations:

The six feet of DNA coiled inside everyone of our body’s one hundred trillion cells contains a four-letter chemical alphabet that spells out precise assembly instruction for all the proteins from which our bodies are made. Cambridge-educated Stephen Meyer demonstrated that no hypothesis has come close to explaining how information got into biological matter by naturalistic means.

Concerning Darwin, Stroble realized that to accept Darwin’s hypothesis, he would have to believe that:

Nothing produces everything  
Non-life produces life  
Randomness produces fine-tuning  
Chaos produces information  
Unconsciousness produces consciousness  
Non-reason produces reason.

Biochemist Michael Behe’s argument that “irreducibly complex systems are strong evidence of a purposeful, intentional design by an intelligent agent.”

**3. Many other arguments in this book** demonstrate that we have very substantial reasons for believing in God. For another line of argument, see my sheet on “Evidences for the Supernatural.” We should never be so foolish to reject Jesus’s invitation to the eternal feast of the Lamb in heaven.

**4. Make a list of five reasons that you think cause us not to take seriously God’s promises and requirements. Share them with a friend, with your family members and Father Paul.**

**5. How is my stewardship of what God has given me? Have I given up all other attractions and demands in order to follow Him and serve Him?**

**6. We need to wear our wedding garment for the Eucharistic banquet. The parable means that when one freely accepts Christ as the Lord and Savior, one must dedicate his life to Jesus.** In other words, the Christian must be clothed in the spirit and teaching of Jesus. Grace is a gift and a grave responsibility. Hence, a Christian must be clothed in a new purity and a new holiness. This means we must come with both faith and works. In other words, while Jesus opens wide his arms to the sinner, he expects him to make some effort to repent. It is not enough for one simply to continue unabated in one’s sinful ways. Although Jesus accepted the tax collectors and prostitutes, he demanded that they abandon their evil ways. This is why the Sacrament of Reconciliation is so important to us. If we have not repented of our sins and put on the clothes of salvation, we will be shut out, even if we are attending Church.

**7. Warning:** The parable ends on a sobering note: *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* It is a sad fact that everyone is called to experience the love of God, relatively few will really try to follow His teachings, in spite of the fact that “God desires that all might be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4). According to St. Gregory, men and women who come to the wedding feast with hatred in their hearts do not wear the acceptable garment spoken of in the parable. Men and women whose faith and love are cold, who attend Church for social reasons, to show off their clothes and jewelry, or to visit with acquaintances are not dressed in a wedding garment pleasing to the King, Christ Jesus. Our wedding garment is made of our grace-assisted works of justice, charity generosity and holiness. Let us examine whether we have fully accepted God’s invitation to the messianic banquet and remember that banqueting implies friendship and intimacy, trust and reconciliation. May we be able to say, in the words of the Psalm Response, “I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.”

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