

The Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost (2017)

Matthew 22:1–14 Again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

In the Name of Jesus.

I was baptized—happy day! All my sins were washed away!
God looked down on me and smile; I became His own dear child!

Pow'rful hymn; pow'rful faith to cast out all weeping and gnashing of teeth to where they belong: outside the Kingdom that is God!

Therefore, my dear children of God: you are not only ALLOWED—y'all are COMMANDED, by royal mandate, to adorn yourself in everything y'all are NOT—GOD Himself!—and live and feast and rejoice and wipe away all tears with the Happy News that the Son has a Bride, the Church! And when teeth CLENCH—G-NASH!, whatever THAT means!—whether by the evil coming from others toward you, riling up your damnable hypocrisy—or if oyur teeth grind as you grimace at those who would parade and scare you with THEIR hypocrisy—

The FATHER of the Bridegroom has EV-ERY-THING well in hand; and HE INVITES: 'See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'

Who's left out, cast out? Who is unworthy of God and His reign?

Same as always, double-sided group. Those who want God's KINGDOM, but not GOD Himself: idolaters—that's those too busy to come to the feast. AND THOSE who can cast out and kill the prophets and apostles, cast aside their Word and silence the voices of those who call men to repentance and to faith: like the holy men who condemned Dr. Martin Luther, cast him out of the church and put a price on his head and branded him an outlaw.

That's the OTHER face of this group: the pretenders, the paraders, the actors, the hypocrites. That's about the only reason I watch the television shows or movies any more! To reassure myself that the most vile men and women our society can produce are STILL PREACHING to ME about MY morality!

What fun to get a lecture about greed from billionaires, a sermon about narcissism from sociopaths, and finger waving about respect for women from.....ugh!

One thing my therapist has helped me realize—whether he knows it or not; should tell him this week—is that a great anxiety in my life is the Word of the Lord! Your poor pastor is in a panic that what I WILL shovel at you is something far inferior to the Lamp unto your feet and the Light unto your path the Lord's Law and Gospel are indeed!

My friend, Jay, has helped me realize that it is O.K. to have the Word of the Lord make my feeble head spin!

Matthew Chapter 22 tells of a banquet from which a man is ejected for not having the correct EXTERIOR, OUTWARD GARMENT!

Matthew 23 is FILLED, first to last, with condemnation of HYPOCRISY! Which is, the dictionary tells me: a feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not :behavior that contradicts what one claims to believe or feel.

So are we SUPPOSED to cover ourselves with something we are NOT—or NOT?!

And your ign'ant pastor's head is overwhelmed and...THAT'S...O...K!

For you and I are NOT—praise the Lord!—just ONE MAN, about whom any final judgment will be made now by the Eternal Ruler and His reign!

No! Praise Jesus!—We are TWO!

We're the hypocrite AND we're the invited!

We are what WE say we are, pretend we are; and then we IS what our BAPTISM into Christ sez we IS! Happy Day!

YOU, dear Christian—YOU start your day under YOUR OWN power, with YOUR OWN agenda, things that need to be done—and, like this poor sinner, you get rolling on matters small AND large, without one second of prayer, guidance—ASKING from the GOD Who now, in Christ, has WRAPPED HIMSELF AROUND OUR LITTLE FINGERS!

GOD, dear ones, is NOTHING NOW, if NOT Our Dear Father above and below us, bigger than we can imagine and tinier too—in a word, in heaven! And because the Son, Christ, suffered what HE did not deserve on the cross, WE receive what WE do not

deserve! Whether or NOT we EVER get to a point of DESERVING IT!

That's who you are, my dear ones! Do not fear! Do not deny! Do not pretend you are NOT what you really ARE! A sinner who's a cut above and beyond ANYONE ELSE!

PRETEND...TO...BE...WHAT...YOU...REALLY...ARE ...NOT! Someone who loves God above all things and loves your neighbor as yourself.

You heard me RIGHT! We are to PRETEND—COUNT OURSELVES as those who have fulfilled every last demand of the LAW! Or good works will be totally beyond our reach!

But if we go with what GOD says about us—our Baptism into Christ!—then the next poor man has a treasure in us that he cannot imagine!

Our world can ONLY trample on the Law of God, and then USE the Law of God to trample other men in a desperate struggle to find life in this world, this kingdom! This is indeed the realm of the prince of darkness.

A place that has no place for our King, our Christ, our Savior, our Brother, the Anointed of God, our Jesus, Who saves His people from their sins.

As He found no lasting place here, nor will you, dear ones!
Happy Day!

And as He went around doing good, attached to the ungodly though godly himself, so are you! And when you are as weak or worse than the next man: remember that you and I and all the Church—WE are the Bride and HE is the Bridegroom. And as I was telling the young men and women in Laura's kindergarten class this week, the ONLY reason there are MEN in this world is to care for the women around them. And the ONLY reason for WOMEN to be in this world, is for men to serve them!

And the little princesses BEAMED their toothless smiles!

And the little princes held their heads in their hands!

Thank God that BOTH GROUPS have the same thing going for them! And it is NOT what THEY say ABOUT THEMSELVES!

It is the Good News of Jesus Christ: what God in His reign says about them, about you, about many!

In a word:

I was baptized; happy day in the Name of Jesus! Amen!