

Second Sunday after Trinity, Sunday, June 18, 2023

Readings: Proverbs 9:1–10, 1 John 3:13-18, Luke 14:15–24

The Gospel Call Goes Out to All

Wisdom has issued an invitation to the divine feast: *“Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Leave your simple ways, and live, and walk in the way of insight”* (Prov. 9:5–6). This is the call of the Spirit of Christ to believe the Gospel and to receive His saving gifts in the Holy Supper. Many make excuses and reject this invitation, even as the Jews did in the days of Jesus, yet the Master’s house will be filled. The Gospel call therefore goes out to the lowly and despised, into the highways, even to all the Gentiles (Luke 14:15–24). For *“you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ”* (Eph. 2:13–22). In Christ, believing Jews and Gentiles are no longer strangers but fellow members of the household of God. The enmity of class and race is put to death through the cross. Having been reconciled in the one Body of Christ, we are enabled to love one another (1 John 3:13–18) as we await the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which will have no end.

Sermon Transcript

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

We have this familiar parable of Jesus, about coming to this banquet. This great man has provided a banquet, has invited all the people to come. And what do the people do? They make silly, stupid, arrogant excuses as to why they cannot come. If you look at these excuses, they're just plain ridiculous and foolish, and quite frankly, a little bit arrogant. The first guy says, "I bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused." Now, anybody in their right mind would know exactly what the land looked like that they bought before they bought it. There used to be a thing, "I've got some swamp land in Florida to sell to you." Okay now, admittedly, they're doing that now, but the whole idea was you didn't buy something unless you knew what it was. Okay, I'm not going to go to this rich banquet with sumptuous food that this powerful man has provided because I got to go inspect some land that I bought. Really?

And then the next one, "I bought five yolk of oxen, and I have to go examine them. I can't come." Any farmer knows that you look at the teeth and everything else of an animal before you buy it, because you're not going to buy something that's old and decrepit and isn't going to be able to do the job. You look at the animal first, and then you decide to buy. There's no reason to go look at it now, after you've bought it. You're stuck with it. Good or bad, it's yours. So it doesn't really matter.

And then the final one, I pity this poor man. Seriously, he's married to a young bride, and I'm sure she would love to go out in all of her finery to a nice fancy meal that this man has prepared. And I'm saying, "Oh, I'm so I can't take my wife because I just got married." Like I said, I pity the fool because this boy is not going to have a happy marriage. He's just not. He doesn't understand. What wife would not want to come and have this wonderful meal and banquet? And it's no cost to him. He gets a date, and it doesn't even cost him an arm and a leg. It's wonderful. And yet, "I'm sorry. I can't come. I just got married." What kind of arrogance and stupidity do these people have that they refuse the feast?

And so God, well, this man, invites the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame, and everybody else and compels them to come. He wants them to be in the banquet. But here's the problem. What Jesus is talking about is those of us humans, all of us who find some excuse for not wanting to hear the Word of God, for not wanting, and to reject God's Word.

The passage in Proverbs emphasizes it even a little bit more. It might give us an understanding of perhaps why some reject. So wisdom, which is a personification of the attribute of God, God is the ultimate wisdom. Jesus

Christ is the wisdom of God. The Word of God is His wisdom. You could read this and see Jesus Christ. And Jesus is calling us. The wisdom of God is calling us to come and join Him in this feast. It literally talks about bread and wine.

So you can see, inviting them to receive the Lord's supper, receive the grace of God, but here's how she calls them. "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here. To him who lacks sense, she says, "Come and eat of my bread and drink of my wine. Leave your simple ways and live.'" All right. So what does that mean? It means that if we truly have the wisdom of God, we recognize that we are simple and that we lack sense. I don't know about you, but I don't quite like to admit that. I like to think that I'm fairly knowledgeable and fairly wise.

But when it comes to the things of God, all of us have to admit that we are fools, that we don't know anything, and that we bring nothing to the table, that we are poor, miserable sinners. And because we are sinners, we lack sense. Just look at the first people on earth, Adam and Eve. They had everything given to them, without any work. All they had to do was don't eat of that fruit of the tree. And what's the first thing we read them doing? Eating the fruit of that tree, because they listened to the wrong message. They listened to the wrong word. They wanted to be like God. They wanted to elevate themselves to equality with God. They wanted to determine what is right and wrong by their own standards.

Now, that's true, as much true for Adam and Eve as it is for us today. And we look around at our society. Well, everybody's trying to make their own rules about what is right and what is wrong. Nobody wants to hear the truth. We recognize the passage of John that says, "The world will hate us." It's very clear that the world is trying to denigrate Christians and Christianity. And it's also clear that if you correct a scoffer, you'll get abuse. If you reprove a wicked man, you'll incur injury. We see that now. Nobody wants to hear the message of God. In fact, they even call the Scriptures evil sometimes. They don't want to hear it.

We recognize that this is the case, and let's admit it. It's hard to admit that we have nothing to offer. And yet, if we truly understand who God is and what He has done for us, then we have to freely admit we know nothing.

A couple weeks ago we had Trinity Sunday, where we read the Athanasian Creed, which is the best explanation of what the Trinity is. And yet, we can't explain it or understand how it works. All we can do is describe it. This is what the Word of God says: Trinity and unity, and unity and Trinity, neither dividing the persons or confusing the substance.

Okay, I've studied that for 22 years or more, and I'm still struggling with what that means. But it's what the Bible says God is. He is Trinity. So I don't understand God. I don't understand how one Man can be both God and man, and how that Man can die on the cross for me and forgive all of my sins and your sins, including the sins that I haven't even thought about committing yet. Those have already been forgiven in Christ. That's just crazy. Nor can I explain how a little bit of water and a couple of words can bring somebody from the kingdom, from sin to salvation. And yet it does, because God's Word does what He says it will do. Or as I like to say, God's Word does stuff. It does what He says it's going to do.

And when He says, "This baptism saves," it saves. When He says, "This is My body, this is My blood," it is. When He says, "Your sins are forgiven," they are. When it says that you have passed beyond death into life, that you have eternal life, you do. And when He says, "God loves you and has given you faith. And you are forgiven, and you are free," that is true as well.

And so we, in order to really fully understand the wisdom of God, we have to recognize that we don't bring anything to the table, that it's all God, that He gets all the glory, all the praise, all the recognition. And that's difficult to do because we'd like to claim just even a little bit for ourselves. "Yeah, I did that." But we can't. To truly understand God's wisdom, we recognize that He has done it all for us.

So, now that we recognize that, what are we called to do? You see, we're not called to live in this world just completely satisfied that God has saved us. "Oh, I'm saved. I'm good. I don't need to worry about anything else or think about anything else."

But He's called us to a purpose. He's called us to serve, to act as His messengers, to reach out to the blind and the lame and the crippled and the poor, and to compel them into the Kingdom of God. So what does that mean? We got to find the blind and the lame people out there? Well, spiritually, yes.

See, we are called to bear witness to the love of God to everybody that we come in contact with. We are called to be steeped in the wisdom of God, to study the Word and allow it to grow within us so that we are ready, in season and out, to give witness to the hope that we have in Christ Jesus.

And what is that hope? It's not that I've done enough or I'm good enough to get into heaven. It's that I, a poor, miserable sinner, am forgiven by God. And you too, as a poor, miserable sinner, can be brought into the family of God, that we are called to bear witness to our loving Savior, to everybody that we come in contact with, because we know the great feast that is awaiting them. We know the comfort that comes from knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We know that in the pain and sorrow and heartache of this world, the only real hope, the only real comfort is in God, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

And so we share that with those around us, even though we know that some of them will hate us. Some of them will hear the message and despise us and scorn us and scoff us. But we're still called to bear witness, because some, some will hear, and some will believe.

In the meantime, as we continue to do that, we continue to seek after the wisdom of God. We continue to recognize that we are foolish, that we are simple-minded, and that only the Word of God can enliven us, enlighten us, and give us true wisdom.

As the passage here in Proverbs ends, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. To rightly understand the nature of God, that He is holy and just and therefore cannot stand sin, but that He is loving and gracious and merciful, and therefore has forgiven us our sin." This is wisdom. This is knowledge of the Holy One, and this is what gives us strength each and every day.

So as you're living your life, as you're looking forward to the coming of Christ, even so much so that we do not even fear death, then let us live in the knowledge that God loves us, and He has brought us from death to life through His Son, Jesus Christ.

And may His grace, His mercy, His peace, and His wisdom be and abide with you always, now and forevermore, unto life everlasting. Amen.