**Notes for Next Sunday**

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 25:6-9

**6﻿ On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine— the best of meats and the finest of wines. ﻿7﻿ On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; ﻿8﻿ he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. ﻿9﻿ In that day they will say, “Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.”**

Immediately before our text, Isaiah proclaims the inevitable judgment of the Lord on all the earth. It is a terrifying and inescapable thing. Sin and rebellion will be overcome. Even death itself will be vanquished, for they are the enemies of God and all that God desires for his people. For the sinner, there is no place of refuge from the Lord’s righteous judgment anywhere in the world (24:17–18). Sin will be vanquished; death will be swallowed up (25:8).

In the Hebrew text, God’s name comes first (v. 6). The text is about what the Lord is doing for all people. The mountain of Zion (v. 6) is vital because He has chosen it. The victory feast is beyond all expectations because He has prepared it. The Lord prepares a victory feast of the very best wines and meat, reminding us all that all good things flow from the one who created and redeemed us (Gen 1; Is 43:1–3). One is reminded of Jesus miraculously providing the finest wine at the wedding of Cana or even finer wine at the feast of the Lord’s Supper, where Jesus is the “delivered Lamb” who forgives the sins of the world.

The place where God dwells and dispenses His grace through His appointed means. On Mount Calvary, God dwelling in Christ, procured grace for us. In our present age Zion’ equivalent is the church, wherein the means of grace are found. Here the Lord will exhibit his victorious reign before His people.

In the ancient Near East, where starvation was a constant threat, fatty and rich foods were the most desirable. (In Job 21:24, “bones rich in marrow” described a prosperous, satisfied person.) This fine meal fully satisfies the members of God’s household, even amid our earthly sorrow and cares (cf also Ps. 36:8). The parallels to the Lord’s Supper are obvious. This banquet is the end-times meal Jesus promised after instituting the Lord’s Supper, when He will dine with us anew.

He will “swallow up . . . the covering that is cast over all peoples” (v. 7). Sin casts a “death pall” over the world. All the world’s solutions to the human condition end in despair. “Covering” and “veil” could signify suffering and despair, but it probably is even more futile. It probably means absolute blindness to the things of God.

His salvation may seem a long time in coming. It did for Israel as she awaited the Messiah. Our lives may be prolonged in suffering. But those who wait for the Lord will not be disappointed (v. 9).

GOSPEL – Matthew 22:1-14

**Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ﻿2﻿ “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ﻿3﻿ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. 4﻿ “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ ﻿5﻿ “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ﻿6﻿ The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ﻿7﻿ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ﻿8﻿ “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ﻿9﻿ Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ﻿10﻿ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. ﻿11﻿ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ﻿12﻿ ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless. ﻿13﻿ “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ﻿14﻿ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”**

Jesus graphically portrays God as reaching out to people, bar none, with His inviting grace. God is anything but a hidden, silent God. Proactively He not only prepares the finest feast but also invites. .  . and invites . . . and invites. Thus Jesus signals our accountability to the God who cares enough to search us out, and He welcomes our arrival in the Kingdom with celebration and whistling bells. We need to value these times of worship and celebration. Though our divine services here still bear the stigma of human limitation, they are true foretastes of the eternal banquet.

This parable repeats three important themes from the previous one (21:33-46), specifically Jesus’ divine Son-ship, Israel’s persistent rejection of its prophets, and the inclusion of Gentiles in God’s kingdom. (TLSB)

We can understand the king’s anger when his servants who carried the invitation were put to death, especially when the final Messenger was’ his own Son. But when the king sends a servant to the “streets and alleys . . . [to] bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame,” we know that God’s grace is truly nondiscriminatory.

In verse 5 both of these groups are sophisticated people of earthly means. The point is that they are sunken in mere material and earthly matters, materialists who care not about their own souls.

It was customary for the man who made a wedding feast, to provide wedding garments for those whom he invited (v. 11). If they would not come, or if they did come but would not put on the wedding garment, it was a great dishonor to the master of the feast. By this incident of the parable, our Lord shows that an outward acceptance of His gospel is not enough. We may join ourselves to the number of His visible followers; but if our souls have not the wedding garment of faith, love, and holiness, we shall be cast out.

The parable is now complete; the imagery is over. Jesus gives us the point: God’s grace is for everyone. The Jews who were on the original guest list and spurned the Son when He finally came, those who heard the invitation and yet insisted on coming in the rags of their own works and goodness, the good and the bad were all invited. But only those who receive God’s grace as it is, complete and unique, to be received by faith, will enjoy the eternal celebration.