

Nineteenth Sunday After Pentecost, Proper 23

October 11, 2020

Year A RCL

Isaiah 25:1-9; Psalm 23; Matthew 22:1-14

“The Wedding is Ready.”

By: The Rev. Fr. Fabian Villalobos

Salvation is an open invitation that requires acceptance, participation and actions.

Jesus, in telling the parable of the banquet for the wedding of the king's son, is emphasizing the urgency to respond and take part in God's plan. The invitation comes from the king who wants to share with selected guests the special occasion of his son's wedding. To take part in a wedding means to become a witness of the love and commitment of two people sharing publicly. A wedding is a feast of love and alliances between families that become a larger family. The king wants his guests to participate in this singular moment and share the joy of the royal family.

The first invited guests decline the invitation twice disregarding the insistence of the king who sent his slaves to call them after preparing the banquet. Instead of accepting the invitation, the guests rejected, mistreated, and killed some of the messenger's slaves. This parable comes after last's week parable of the

wicked tenants, and shows also the hostility and rejection the religious leaders have with Jesus. This parable is presented in Matthew's gospel in the last chapters where we hear about the moment of judgment, the end of times, and the eschatological times, when God will call each person to be judged according to their deeds.

The invitation continues to be an open opportunity to enjoy the prepared banquet and become witnesses of the love the son is publicly declaring. When the king finds out that the first guests turn down his invitation, the invitation for special guests is extended now to all people, good and bad. The king sent his slaves to call and bring into the wedding hall all they encountered. The hospitality of the king is without limits because the wedding is going to happen. This massive recruiting to offer the banquet to everyone shows the inclusion and acceptance the king has for all people.

The new guests will receive all the attentions and benefits of the first guests, however, even if they were enlisted on the streets, they need to accept and be prepared to be in the wedding hall following the expected protocol of the king. If they take the opportunity in a light manner and without commitment, they will end up like the first guests.

I believe it is important to notice here that the invitation from God is for all the gentiles, it is for all people like you and me so we always have a place at God's banquet. The Kingdom of God has open doors, but we need to enter. The invitation needs to be received wearing the appropriate dress attire, a "wedding robe". There are different interpretations about the "wedding robe"; some talk about our baptismal attire while others mention that the "wedding robe" is to "put on" the teachings and example of Jesus, the Son of the King whose wedding is celebrated on the cross.

To be in the wedding hall is to accept the hospitality of the king. We will wear a wedding robe when we accept the mercy of the king and submit our own agenda thus placing God first. When we want to take part in the banquet with selfish behavior, the king will find out that we are not wearing the appropriate dress attire to participate in the wedding of his son. Even if this parable is a metaphor along with showing the rejection of some, it also shows the invitation and commitment that we all need to have when God calls us into his salvation.

For this reason, the parable ends saying that many are called, but few are chosen. Strive to be among those few, live life worthy of your baptismal robe, and be always ready to be called into the great wedding hall. Amen.