

Sunday, October 11, 2020
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost
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At first read, there is no easy comforting take away from this parable.

As we have been reading along in the lectionary, Jesus is telling stories, giving images, asking questions to the people so that they might know and understand who he is, what the kingdom is and how to live in that kingdom.

We come to this king and the wedding feast he throws and we want to at times shout out, wait a second... but the parable keeps us going, right to the end, with twists and turns, trying to make out what our response might be when we are invited into the feast.

We start first with the setting of the scene. The king has invited the guests, the table is set, the musicians are ready, and no one comes. And this was THE event. So much the event that people were sent out to remind them to come when it was all ready.

And not one person does. Empty seats around the table. No one dancing. No one eating. No one celebrating the king's son.

So the people are sent again. And not only are they ignored, but they are made light of. Laughed at. Joked about. Back to work for the invited guests. Home to the kids. And even worse, some even mistreat the messengers.

And the king is over the top angry. He turns violent against the people.

But even while this is happening, the party still goes on, and others are invited... anyone in the streets. The good, the bad, the poor, the ordinary. Grab their dancing shoes and party clothes and come to the feast.

And the party finally happens.

The celebrating, the joy, the happiness.

Well, for a bit.

Until someone is spotted who showed up in the wrong frock. This person came, but not dressed for a celebration. And when he has no answer for his behavior, he is tossed out, into the outer darkness... weeping and gnashing of teeth. Where does this allegory go for us, as followers of Christ? We have so many places to enter into this story.

Have we experienced times when the call to celebrate the Good News has been taken too lightly?

When it has been ignored so that one could return to the daily routine of life?

Have we been those who have ignored or even mocked the messengers of joy around us?

Or perhaps we have been the uninvited.

Perhaps this story reminds us that the invitation comes, even at unexpected times. Even when it seems too late. And the joy is still great, and the celebration of our presence just as real.

Or, are we the ones who show up, but not ready to join in.

I think at times this person who showed up without the wedding robe is much like the child who is so willing to respond yes to any chore they are asked to accomplish.

Take out the trash please. Yes ma'am!

Feed the dog! Yes ma'am!

But when it comes to actually doing the chore... well the trash is still in the can and the dog is quite hungry.

Sometimes we are quick to say yes, but unable or unwilling to commit our whole selves to the invitation.

Regardless of our response, of the timing of our invitation, or our desire to hold back a little from time to time, and not quite commit to celebration, we are all called to participate fully in the kingdom.

We are called to come in, to celebrate the Son, to clothe ourselves in joy, and be held accountable for putting our whole selves in to the relationship.

And when we do, may we find that the depth and mystery of this story is more than confusing kingly behavior and lessons on what not to wear, but instead, it is an ever extended, inclusive invitation, reaching across boundaries, and dressing our whole lives in grace. AMEN.