



Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity 11th October

Father God, help us to come to you this morning with open and thankful hearts. Fill us with the joy and peace that comes with knowing you. Be with us as we walk in your light, rejoice in your love and reflect your glory.

Amen

Hymn 450: Morning has broken

Welcome

The Lord be with you,
and also with you

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of Confession

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this: "Love your neighbour as yourself". There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen

Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in life eternal through Jesus Christ our lord. **Amen**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to that which is before, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken.

It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Hymn 446: May the peace

Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:1-14

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

Glory to you, O Lord

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon: Revd Petra Shakeshaft

When I was a little girl, my grandfather bought me an Easter Bonnet.

Grandad only ever entered a church building when he had to:

Weddings, Christenings and funerals.

The deep significance of the Easter Bonnet was undoubtedly lost on him and unknown then, to me.

But nevertheless, year after year, he continued participating, unwittingly, in this symbol of spiritual renewal and redemption.

New clothes at Easter and Sunday Best are part of a long-held tradition of being rightly clothed for an occasion;

an outward sign that we are fully participant in the occasion,

whether it's a cocktail party, a funeral, Communion on Easter Sunday or a Wedding Feast.

This parable of the ungrateful wedding guests

is similar to the parable of the tenants in the vineyard

and aimed at the same audience; the Chief Priests and the Pharisees.

This is *also* an allegory -

where the various characters represent real places and people present.

The Wedding Feast then, is the kingdom of heaven,
the King, God and his Son, Jesus.

Those invited are the Chief Priests and Pharisees.

The messengers sent to summon the guests are the Prophets; God's messengers.

The guests make their excuses, and some kill the messengers.

Furious, the king sends his armies to destroy the murderers and burn down their city.

The city is Jerusalem,

and in this poignant, painful allegory,

Matthew refers back to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple

to remind his listeners of the consequences of turning away from God;

Remember, Matthew is writing *after* the city is destroyed

and the Temple razed to the ground by the Roman army in 70AD.

This parable is prophetic, looking backwards in order to look forwards.

Past experience tells us that when work, leisure, pursuit of earthly gains,

power, influence and wealth become our idols,

we lose a grip on those things that are really important.

Remember the corrupt tenants of the vineyard

who tried to steal the inheritance from the legitimate heir

and the vineyard was taken from them.

For Matthew's readers, the temple has already gone

along with the positions of power and the corrupt administration.

And here, in the parable,

the places of the ungrateful guests are taken by those who *they*,

(the Chief Priests and Pharisees) might consider to be unworthy;

the tax collectors and sinners, the gentiles,

those on the margins of society, not part of the legitimate Jewish world.

This parable exposes the mixed reception of the Gospel in Israel;

On the one hand, those refusing to let go of the human constructed systems

that ensured their own position and power

and on the other, those who could and would acknowledge the need for the re-evaluation of
scripture

and their own need for a different kind of God from the one hidden behind the veil in the temple.

It explains the destruction of the Temple

in terms of God's overarching plan for humankind,

and accounts for the inclusion of gentiles and marginal people in God's kingdom.

Of course, we must be careful not to extend this thought so far

it becomes an indictment of the *whole* Jewish people

and a blanket condemnation for Jesus' death.

This is a parable aimed directly at the Chief Priests and Pharisees.

And so the guests are gathered from the wayside and come to the wedding.

But what of this guest, noticed and then humiliated by the host, the king?

I have some sympathy for this person.

There have been moments in my life when I have been either under or overdressed for the occasion

and I'm sure I'm not alone.

Perhaps you've seen the film *Legally Blonde*,

where the heroine, Elle Woods is invited to a party

and the nasty villainess, Vivien, tells her it's fancy dress.

Elle arrives at the house-full of smartly dressed people in her fancy dress costume ...

... a Bunny-girl outfit.

She's not thrown out, but then *she's* not the issue here,

Vivien however, does get her comeuppance.

In early Mediterranean culture there was a tradition

that guests would be given a wedding robe to wear as they arrived at the feast.

To not wear the robe would be an insult to the host, to the bride and groom.

It would suggest you're not fully participating in the feast,

or could even be interpreted as a sign of disdain.

So, as he does in his parables, Jesus uses an outward visible idea to suggest an inner attitude.

This is not about outer clothing, but inner clothing.

It's about being clothed in the righteousness of God.

This wedding, of course, is not just any wedding

(not that any wedding is just any wedding!)

This is the marriage between Christ and his Church;

the celebration of the New Covenant,

and being rightly clothed is vital.

But remember, the host provides the wedding robes.

The clothes we need for the wedding in the kingdom are provided by God himself.

If we accept his invitation, he will clothe us.

There's a line from that exquisite hymn by Bianco da Siena,

... Let Holy Charity mine outward vesture be

and lowliness become mine inner clothing.

and another *... reclothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives thy service find ...*

The man who is ejected from the wedding has refused the robe,

kept his own clothes, along with an attitude of self-sufficiency non-participation.

He's not prepared to allow himself to be re-dressed.

St Paul writes to the Colossians,

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,

clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, meekness and patience.

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

These are the clothes God chooses for us

and given to us through words of scripture, prayer, meeting together, serving one another, *sharing this meal, this wedding feast*;
meeting the Bridegroom in bread and wine.
These things clothe us and reclothe us in rightful minds, hearts and spirits.
So come on, get your glad rags on, we're going to a wedding!

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

The Peace

Take a moment and offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for each other and our church family church community. Maybe call or text someone who would enjoy sharing the peace with you.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, that you may be kept safe and blameless in spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

Hymn 573: Praise to the Lord

Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever.
Amen.**

Hymn 649: The King of love

Remembering the Lord's Supper

Take a moment to remember the final meal that Jesus shared with his disciples. As we think about this meal - with the washing of feet and bread and wine shared with friends - we remember Jesus' offering of himself on the cross. We rejoice in his resurrection from the dead and look forward to the coming of God's Kingdom. While we cannot receive Christ in the sacraments in the usual way, we can be the presence of Christ in our homes and communities and we can be a praying presence wherever we are.

Hymn 188: Forth in thy name

Closing Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for this time of worship; may your love and peace remain with us in the coming days. Be with us in all that we will think, say and do so that our lives may reflect your glory. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ. Amen

If you have any prayer or pastoral needs, please don't hesitate to contact
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