

Sermon Outline on Mt. 22:1-14, Trinity XX

Theme: MANKIND'S REACTION TO THE LORD'S WEDDING INVITATION

Introduction: God wants to betroth lost mankind to Himself. That's why He sent His Son. The Gospel is the invitation to this great wedding feast. Since Abraham's time (2000 B.C.) God has been inviting mankind. But the majority of mankind reject the invitation. Jesus said: "Many are called but few are chosen." Where do we stand?

I-MANY ARE CALLED.

A-This invitation is the heart of the Old Testament.

For 2000 years in the OT, from Abraham to Christ, God sent Moses, the Prophets, the Psalmist to call His covenant people to the great wedding feast of the Gospel. At Ps. 19:4 David said: "Their sound has gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the World." Paul quotes this at Rom. 10:18 of the preaching of the Gospel. Vss. 3-7 of our text picture the Gospel call, the Covenant people, the Jews. Again and again He sent His messengers with the message: "Come because all things are ready. Come to the feast." God had done everything necessary for their salvation.

B-This invitation is the heart of the New Testament.

At vs. 8 we have the turning point. God's covenant people rejected His repeated invitation. Jesus said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those who were sent to you, how often I wanted to gather you together as a hen gathers her chicks! But you refused." Mt. 23:37. God's covenant people proved themselves unworthy. In vs. 9-10 Jesus pictures the preaching of the Gospel also to the Gentiles. At Acts 13:46 we read: "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you (Jews) first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles'." Since that time missionaries have gone to all continents gathering all, both good and bad, without distinction.

C-This invitation offers the individual the proper robe, the correct dress at the feast. This robe is mentioned in vs. 12. It is the robe of Christ's righteousness of which Paul speaks at Php. 3:7-11. We cannot enter the Kingdom of heaven without the forgiveness of sins which covers us sinners with Christ's righteousness.

II-BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN.

A-The majority of the Jews rejected the wedding invitation. They persecuted or killed God's messengers: Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, the twelve prophets. Vs. 5 pictures the disinterest of the people. The things of this life, the pleasures of this world meant more to them than the invitation into the Kingdom of heaven. Vs. 6 pictures how the people mistreated, insulted and killed God's messengers. This led the Lord to judge the people severely. In 707 B.C. the northern ten tribes of Israel were scattered over the earth. In 600 B.C. the southern two tribes were carried to Babylon and the temple was destroyed. Then came John the Baptist whom they killed. Then came the great Son of God whom they crucified.

B-Have the Gentiles fared better? By no means. Look about you. The majority of the people turn down the invitation with weak excuses. They have no time for God's Word. They are too busy with the things of this world. And they persecute God's messengers. It has been said that during the 1900s, the twentieth century, more people were persecuted and killed for Jesus' sake than during the nineteen centuries since Christ walked on the earth. Furthermore, many do not want the robe of Christ's righteousness. They lose heaven because they think they are good enough without confessing their sins and believing the Gospel. They will be thrown into outer darkness.

Conclusion: Let us examine ourselves. Where do we stand? The Lord is saying: "Come, for all things are now ready." Are we listening? It is very important. It's a matter of life and death.

Sermon Notes on Mt. 22:1-14, Trinity XX

1. The parable at Lk. 14:16-24, though similar to Mt. 22:1-10, is not the same parable as Mt. 22:1-14. The Lukan parable was spoken earlier in Perea in the house of a Pharisee. Mt. 22:1-14 was spoken during holy week (Tuesday). As any good teacher does, Jesus repeated Himself from time to time.
2. At Mt. 21:23 to 22:14 we have a series of three parables. They are a reply to the arrogant questions asked at Mt. 21:23. Christ is warning the Jews that, unless they cease their enmity, judgment will come upon them. Jesus' predictions have come true.
3. Vs. 2 speaks of the Kingdom of heaven. It pictures mankind being invited to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ Who was sent by the Father to die for their sins.
4. In vss. 3-7 Jesus pictures the Gospel call to the Jews, God's Covenant people since the days of Abraham, 2000 B.C. Again and again God sent His prophets and then His Apostles to invite His Covenant people to hear the call of Jesus Christ: "Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is here." The Gospel is pictured as a great marriage feast.
5. Vs. 5 pictures the ridiculous excuses which many people gave. They preferred the things of this world to the call of the Gospel. They had no time to hear Jesus and His messengers.
6. Vs. 6 pictures not only the crucifixion of Jesus but also the persecution of the Prophets and the Apostles. The book of Acts not only tells of the early preaching of Jesus' resurrection but also the persecution of Stephen and the Apostles. All of them died violent deaths, except the Apostle John.
7. Vs. 7 pictures the terrible destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. by the Romans, namely Vespasian, Titus and Domitian. This is described for us by Josephus the Jewish historian. At that time the Jews were scattered over the whole earth. The arch of Titus, erected in memory of this victory of Rome over Jerusalem, can still be seen in Rome.
8. Compare vs. 8 with Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said 'It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you (Jews) first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.'"
9. He who rejects the Gospel and mistreats the Lord's messengers makes himself unworthy of everlasting life. But he who hears the Word of God and observes it is worthy. He is not worthy by meritorious works but by the grace of God in Christ. The worthy person believes only in the grace of God in the Gospel message.
10. Vss. 9-10 picture the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles. At Acts 13:47 Paul and Barnabas quote the prophecy of Is. 49:6 where the preaching of the Word to the Gentiles is foretold. The expression "the good and the bad" in vs. 10 of our text is said from man's point of view. All have sinned and therefore are not approved by God. All are equally sinful. But among people some show this more than others. All are equally invited by the Lord.
11. In ancient times wedding guests were given proper robes to wear at the feast. In the parable this denotes the righteousness of Christ which a believer has by faith in Jesus. See Php. 3:7-11. But we know that there are hypocrites in the church, weeds among the wheat. Vss. 11-12 of our text are a stern warning for us. We must examine ourselves lest we fall short of the glory of God on judgment day. Vs. 13 pictures God's rejection of the hypocrite, the impenitent, the person who does not wear the robe of Christ's righteousness.
12. The last vs. reads: "Many are called but few are chosen." The majority of people will be lost. They will go to eternal destruction. Only a few, the penitent, the true believers, will be chosen.
13. The purpose of this text is that all people, both Jews and Gentiles, should examine themselves and say: "Am I truly a Christian?"

life →

Sermon Notes for Lk. 12:42-48, Trinity XX

1. This text reminds us that we are approaching the end of the church year. It speaks about our faithfulness or lack thereof until Christ's second coming. The text for the second last Sunday (Mt. 24:36-44) warns us to be faithful because we know not the day or hour of His second coming. The text for the last Sunday (Mt. 13:47-50) will speak about the final judgment on the last day.
2. Peter had just asked: "Lord, are you speaking this parable (vss. 35-40) to us (disciples) or to all?" Jesus does not answer that question. But He speaks another parable from which we can gather the answer. Jesus is speaking especially, but not exclusively, about the wise and faithful stewardship of leaders in the kingdom of God (pastors, elders, superintendents, Bible teachers). Vss. 46-48 speak of the final judgment which involves all people. See Mt. 25:32. Our text is for all of us.
3. A steward is a person who has been entrusted with a responsible position. He owns nothing but is responsible for everything. See the parable at Lk. 16:1-8. The wealthy master entrusted his entire business to his steward. At I Cor. 4:1-5 Paul speaks about the stewardship of the Lord's Apostles, pastors and teachers. They are servants of Christ. They are stewards of the mysteries of God. A mystery is a truth which is unknown until it is revealed. The mysteries are in the Word of God. When the Lord's servants faithfully preach and teach, they reveal God's mysteries to the people. Paul says that God requires just one thing of His servant: they must be faithful. Tit. 1:7 says: "For a pastor must be blameless as a steward of God." It does not say that he must be sinless. All of us are sinners. But no one should be able to accuse him of living in sin. He must prove this by his stewardship. I Pet. 4:10 reads: "As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." About these gifts see Rom. 12:6-8. All of us are stewards of God's gifts, some more, some less.
4. In answer to Peter's question, Jesus asks a counter question: "Who then is the faithful, the wise steward whom the Lord will put over His household, to give them their portion of food at just the right time?" In ancient times the word "household" included the family and all its servants. Family and business. The stewardship and responsibility is total.
5. In vss. 43, 45 and 47 this steward is called a slave, one owned by the Master. The word in Greek means "slave" not just "servant". God's stewards are His slaves. He owns them. He created and redeemed them. They have no will of their own. They say: "Thy will be done."
6. The Lord calls the faithful slave "blessed". This word occurs many, many times in the N.T. For example in the beatitudes in Mt. 5:3-11. Or Lk. 12:37. Or Lk. 1:45. Or Rev. 14:13. It speaks of the correct relationship between the Redeemer and the redeemed sinner.
7. Vs. 44 says: "Truly I say to you that He will set him over all His possessions." He is speaking of the blessings of eternal life in heaven. They are too wonderful for us to comprehend in this life. We shall experience them when we arrive there.
8. Vs. 45 pictures the unfaithful steward, one who lives in sloth and sin, one who misuses his stewardship for personal reasons, mistreating other people and lives to satisfy his own desires. An awful picture!!
9. Vs. 46 pictures the active tyranny of the unfaithful steward. His punishment will be the worst: dismemberment of the body with the damned.
10. Vs. 47 pictures the steward who knew his responsibility but did not carry it out. He will be beaten with many stripes. Vs. 48 pictures the steward who did not know his responsibility. He will be beaten with few stripes. In Adam all people sinned and died. All are responsible. No one has an excuse. He that believeth not shall be damned. Mk. 16:16. Ignorance is no excuse but such a person will be beaten with few stripes.
11. The second part of vs. 48 is paradoxical. It is both a warning and a comfort. Jesus asks each of us: "Are you a faithful, wise steward?"

Theme: WHO THEN IS THE FAITHFUL STEWARD, THE WISE ONE?

Introduction: We are approaching the end of the church year. Only four more Sundays remain after today. Our text speaks of faithfulness until Christ's second coming. The text for the last Sunday will speak about the final judgment.

I-WHAT IS A STEWARD?

- A-In ancient times the owner of a household (family and servants) would place a caretaker over his household whenever he would go on a journey. This caretaker owned nothing but was responsible to his master for the well-being of the entire household. This steward had to be ready at all times for his master's return. It was dangerous to say: "I can please myself because my master won't return soon." He had to be careful not to mistreat the members of the household or to spend his time in excessive eating and drinking. He was to give a good report when the master returned.
- B-The parable applied to our time. When the Lord Jesus ascended into heaven He turned over the stewardship of the church to the members of His church. He is speaking especially about the stewardship of the leaders of the church: superintendents, pastors, teachers, elders. They are stewards of the mysteries of God. I Cor. 4:1-5. They do not own the Word of God nor do they own the members of the church. But they are responsible to teach, preach, counsel, warn and comfort according to the Word of God. They are to fight the good fight of faith. They are only slaves whom the Lord redeemed. But Jesus is also speaking about all Christians. Look at the Table of Duties and Responsibilities in the Russian Catechism, pages 29-32. All Christians are stewards.

II-WHY THE STEWARDSHIP IS IMPORTANT

- A-Our sinful human nature wants us to be lazy and selfish. The second half of our text, vs. 45-48, shows what happens when the sinful flesh rules a steward. It pictures the irresponsible steward saying: "My master is not coming for a long time. I don't have to be ready yet. And then he begins to live for himself, not for his stewardship. Rather than distribute the food, he eats it. Rather than distribute the drink he spends his time drinking. The master will return at a time when the steward is not expecting him. The master cut the steward's body in pieces and place him among the other irresponsible stewards. Then the Lord adds that the steward who knew his master's will but did not do it, will be beaten with many stripes. On the other hand, the one who did not know the master's will, will be beaten with lesser stripes. All human beings are stewards, whether they are Christians or not. Those who have heard the Gospel know the Lord's will and much will be expected of them. Those who never heard the Gospel do not know the Lord's will but if they do not believe, nevertheless, they will be beaten with less stripes.
- B-The promises to the faithful steward are given in vs. 43, 44 and at the end of vs. 48. The steward who is faithful and wise is recognized as a blessed man. He is told that his relationship to his Lord is the correct one. He has the forgiveness of sins by faith in Christ. He is in Christ, a new creature. He lives his life by faith in the Son of God. He does his duty according to the Table of Duties. He will receive the wonderful promise of vs. 44. What that will be like, we cannot understand now, but we will experience when we arrive in heaven.

Conclusion: Look at the conclusion of the text. To whom much has been given of him much is expected. Are you a faithful and wise steward? All of us must answer that question now. We cannot wait until we die or until judgment day comes. Let us repent of our sins, believe in the Gospel promises of Christ and then be faithful unto death.