

Order of Service for October 11, 2020 8:30 AM

A video of the service will “go live” at **8:45 AM** (note change in time) Sunday morning on Memorial’s YouTube page here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqritUPMNz38pvRJ04-17Kw> and on Memorial’s Facebook page here: <https://www.facebook.com/mlcomes/>

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “Listen, God is Calling”- Hymn #833

Confessing Our Sins and Receiving God’s Forgiveness: (based on Matthew 22:1-14)

P: Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast,

C: but they would not come.”

P: Often in our lives, Lord, we show that we don’t want to come.

C: Homework, soccer games, dance lessons, time in front of a screen, keeping up with friends, keeping up with the neighbors, just keeping busy—we have all kinds of excuses.

P: “The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.”

C: So, too, we deserve nothing but punishment for putting everything in front of You.

P: “Then the king said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’”

C: Lord God, help us to hear Your call to all for mercy.

P: Because of the sacrifice of our Lord, Jesus Christ, on the cross, God looks not on our sin, but at the blood of Jesus which covers our sins. By the command of our Lord, Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Entrance Psalm:

P: I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

C: I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

P: I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;

C: my soul shall exult in my God,



P: for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation;

C: He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,

P: as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,

C: and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: I will praise the LORD as long as I live;

C: I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

Hymn of Praise: “This Is the Feast”- page 155

Prayer of the Day:

P: Almighty God, You invite us to trust in You for our salvation. Deal with us not in the severity of Your judgment but by the greatness of Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Old Testament Lesson – Isaiah 25:6-9

R: On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. And He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson – Philippians 4:4-13

R: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived

your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse: page 156-7

Holy Gospel – Matthew 22:1-14

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the twenty-second chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord. (sung)

P: And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ. (sung)

Sermon Hymn: "*Spread the Reign of God the Lord*" - **Hymn #830**

Sermon: "*Uninvited*" - **Matthew 22:1-14**

Over the last few months, we've been uninvited to many things. Jamie Pollard originally wanted 25000 fans at the first Iowa State home football game, but had to settle for none, and only 15000 last weekend. Admissions policies and numbers for the winter sports are still being developed, but it sounds like only 1500 fans will be allowed in Hilton Coliseum for basketball games.

As in the parable we hear today, people were uninvited to weddings. As groups of over 10 were discouraged as the pandemic began, many people had to decide what to do with their weddings. Some delayed their weddings until later, hoping for a future time when large gatherings were safe and allowed again. Others went ahead with very small weddings.

In today's parable, though, we have two groups of people who were uninvited from the wedding. The first group is made up of those who had been invited, had accepted the invitation, and then decided to not attend at the last minute. The second group is the guy who makes it into the reception hall, but isn't wearing the right clothes, and gets tossed out.

Placed where it is in the story of Matthew 22, of Jesus teaching in Jerusalem during Holy Week, talking to the chief priests and Pharisees, following the previous parables, it's easy for us to read this parable a bit self-righteously. The guests who reject the invitation are the Pharisees and the chief priests, those who have heard the invitation of God through prophets like Isaiah to join in a wedding feast, in a great celebration. The servants that were sent were all the prophets of the Old Testament sent to invite sinful, stubborn people to a celebration of love held by the God who chose them. The destruction that comes upon them in the parable is just Jesus predicting the destruction of Jerusalem that will come forty years or so after Jesus tells this parable. The people that respond to the second round of invitations are those of you who, like you and I, are not of Jewish descent, but are from the Gentiles, those who the message of Jesus went to after he was rejected by those who had been set apart to be God's people in the first place. But that isn't all there is to the story. God doesn't stop inviting, and the world is still full of sinful, stubborn people who reject a gracious God's invitation.

And so we look at those who reject the invitation after accepting it, and see how the busyness of the world can get to us. Even before the pandemic, those who work with church metrics were saying to count people as regular attendees if they attended 2 or 3 times a month, because so much fewer people are attending church every week. After a large uptick in livestream church views at the beginning of the pandemic, over one third of church goers had stopped even watching those! We wonder how you could reject an invitation from a king, but people do it all the time.

And that brings us to the man who gets uninvited after making into the reception in the first place. The one who gets unmasked as an imposter. The wedding reception is fit for a king, or at least a prince, yet is full of people who'd never seen the inside of a castle. They don't know what fork to use, they don't know how to properly appreciate a good glass of wine, and they don't even know the host! They were all back-up guests. And when you're a back-up guest, when you know you weren't good enough or popular enough to get invited the first time that makes it even harder. Because you know you don't belong. You know that you weren't the first choice, or even the second choice. When you know you only got invited because the hosts had paid for the food already and they didn't want it to go to waste.

The group of back-up guests must have spent a lot of time looking at one another, wondering how they ended up where they were, and wondering when they'd be found out as impostors. Surely someone would discover that they didn't belong!

So when someone is discovered who doesn't belong, someone who's wearing the wrong clothes, you have to imagine that the tone of the feast would change. Instead of rejoicing, there would be fear. One impostor was found out. All of the party guests would have wondered if they would be next. If one back-up guest is rejected, why not all of them?

When I was in college, my friends and I would often suffer from what one of our professors called "impostor syndrome." Even though we'd all gotten into a well-respected university, were part of the honors program, and had strong GPA's, we all kept waiting to be found out as impostors. We waited for someone to figure out that we really weren't smart enough to be doing what we were doing. We kept waiting for someone to figure out that we didn't belong. We kept waiting to find out we were back-up choices, that we only got in because other more qualified students chose to ignore the invitation.

No one who came to the wedding feast was worthy of being there. They were all back-up guests. No one would have had the right clothes, invited as they were from the highways and byways, with little notice to prepare. Those who you'd think would be worthy rejected the invitation. Those who were there had not only been given the gracious gift of an invitation in the first place, but they were given celebratory wedding clothes so that they could fit in, so that they could enjoy the party without worries. It was a huge gift. What else could they do but rejoice?

We too, have been given the gracious invitation to the great wedding feast, the celebration of God's grace. We, too, come in, wondering if we are worthy, wondering if we'll fit in, wondering if we will get uninvited. And we try so hard to make sure that we can fit in, that we do fit in, that we miss the joy of the celebration. The hardest thing to do is not to give grace, but to receive grace. We'd rather convince ourselves that somehow we receive grace because of some worth in ourselves, because of something that we've done. We want this so strongly that we will even make faith itself a work, something that we do and choose for ourselves. And when we do that, we end up like that unfortunate, ill-dressed wedding guest.

The parable is not about a grumpy king who can't stand what young people are wearing these days, or to make sure that no one's wearing holey jeans or open-toed sandals. It's about our reception of God's gracious gifts. As Paul wrote to the Galatians, "All of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:27). Clothed in Christ, dressed as sharply as the groom at a wedding, or a prince at a feast. Not because of anything we did, but because of what Christ did for us.

Paul gives us a great list of virtues in today's epistle lesson from Philippians. But in his letter to the Colossians, he doesn't just tell them to think on these things. He tells them to put them on, as they put on clothes. "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must

forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Colossians 3:12-15).

Put them on. Clothe yourselves with them. Wear them proudly. Put on kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love. Living not in fear of being found out as impostors, but knowing that you have been called, that you have a place at the feast with your name on it, and a brand new set of dress clothes waiting. And may the peace of Christ which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Apostle’s Creed: page 159

Hymn of Praise: *“Today Your Mercy Calls Us”* - **Hymn #915**

Prayer of the Church:

P: Lord, in Your mercy. . .

C: Hear our prayer.

Lord’s Prayer:

Closing Prayer:

P: Almighty God, the source of every blessing, Your generous goodness comes to us anew every day. By the work of Your Holy Spirit lead us to acknowledge Your goodness, give thanks for Your benefits, and serve You in willing obedience; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: *“Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer”* - **Hymn #918**

Postlude