

Order of Worship for October 15, 2023

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: “*Come to Calvary’s Holy Mountain*” – **Hymn #435**

Confession and Absolution p. 203

Service of the Word

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.

Kyrie (Lord, Have Mercy) p. 204

Hymn of Praise (*Gloria in Excelsis*) p. 204

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us pray.... 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 Reading: 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 Reading: 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 p. 205

Holy Gospel – Matthew 22:1-14

P: The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 22nd chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

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.

Sermon Hymn: *“The Savior Calls”*- **Hymn #350 LW**

Sermon: *“The Invitation”* - **Matthew 22**

We get a postcard in the mail which says, “Save the Date.” It shows a young couple who are announcing the date of their wedding a year from now. No details—just telling us it will happen. We smile because they look happy together and we are glad that they will be married. We might have a calendar for next year handy to mark the date or put it in our date on our cell phone or stick the card in a pile with others future events.

Later we receive an email reminder. It gives us a link on the web to check details. We find the location and exact time of the wedding. Again, we are happy for them, but think more about when and where it is going to take place and the excuses come to mind about not going. “It will be too hot or cold snow then” “It is a little too far away.” “It is a busy time for me.” “I guess they will expect me to buy a present even with my tight finances.” Then we go on to other things.

Then the day comes when we get the formal invitation. Now we really have to think about our decision. Included in the mailing is our RSVP with the date when it is expected. The excuses get stronger in our minds about not going, but so also does the guilt that tell us we should go. Yet, the temptation is to put it off, hoping that time will magically make the decision easier to make later on.

As we near that date for the RSVP we hear others talk about going to the wedding. It is a reminder that time has not made the decision any easier. What should we do?

Then a decision needs to be made. It is not that it is easier to make, it is just that the pressure of a deadline forces us to do it. Guilt wins over and we accept the invitation. But that doesn’t mean we have no reluctance about going.

We get to the week of the wedding. More and more thoughts come that tell us not to go. It will pretty much eat up one of our precious weekends. Who do we really know that will be there? Do we want to pay for a gift? Do we want to sit through a reception making small talk to people we don’t really know well? Even up to the time when we should leave for the wedding, the temptations come to stay put. It is so much more comfortable to just relax at home. The bottom line—we just don’t want to go.

Jesus uses that illustration about a king who invites people to the wedding of his son. They may feel an obligation to go, but they have all kinds of other diversions—their farms, their business. They just don't want to go. In the story Jesus tells it is so extreme that they kill the servants sent to invite them. Jesus adds this detail to illustrate how the king is God and He used the prophets to invite His people, but they rejected them. What helps is for us to understand that kings would have technical control of lands far from them, but not have a lot of impact on the daily lives of the people who controlled the land. They will kill those servants because they were interfering with the priorities of those local owners. They felt they that had better things to do.

It can seem that way with God and us. We go to work or school, work hard, pay our bills, purchase our food, and stay alive. We live like most other people, so many of us could care less about God. If we have debts to pay, then we get extra work to pay it off, consolidate our debt with help from a company, or get help from our family. If it is too hot or too cold, central AC and heat solve the problem. If we get hungry, we check the fridge. If we need information, we Google it. And there is always something on a screen that can keep our attention. Who needs God? Why would we want to accept His invitation?

Then we can think about death or something else that even our modern comforts cannot handle. Perhaps then Jesus could come in handy with His promise of eternal life. But there is more to just saying it is okay. To respond to Jesus' invitation means that we follow Him. That means more than just leaving the comfort of our beds on Sunday morning to go to church. Jesus told this story in Matthew's Gospel as part of a whole section of stories spoken in the temple on the Monday and Tuesday of Holy Week. By early Friday morning He would be arrested, then hung on a cross that day. His stories reputed any attempt on the part of His enemies to discredit Him. Either people would have to accept that he is the Son of God or reject Him. Either Jesus is Lord and Master of our lives, or we are saying to Jesus, "Who needs you?"

Jesus' invitation can seem a lot better to those who lack what we have. If you are homeless, an invitation to a free meal has a lot more pull that it does to people who have a full refrigerator or a student who has enough points on a university meal plan. An invitation to a new life sounds better if you hate the one in which you live. But if we are comfortable in our climate controlled houses or apartments with our electronic devices and lots of options for food, why would we want to risk losing that? No, Jesus doesn't call us to leave our jobs, houses, and college work to follow

Him. But He calls us to take risks to help other people, to give of our finances for charity, to lose our valuable time listen to others, to set aside some of our comforts to serve Him by serving others. Why would we want to accept that? That is what Jesus means by, “Many are called, but few are chosen.” He is not talking about numbers, but how unobvious it would be for people to accept God’s invitation, especially us with our “comfortable” lives.

In our Old Testament lesson God tells us through the prophet Isaiah: Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come; buy wine and milk without money and without cost.

How can you “buy” food without money? If you get it for no money, isn’t it free? What is offered is free to those who have no money, but it still comes with a cost. It still has to be paid for. Isaiah’s prophecy is made in the context of God’s Servant, the one who would suffer for the people. We know this Servant to be Jesus. He paid the price on the cross. God’s promise can sound too good to be true. Free stuff is often junk or something attached to future costs. But God’s promise is true because it cost the highest price which Jesus paid in full for us. That is exactly what it means when He said before He died, “It is finished.” In other words, “It is paid in full!”

It is in that context that we receive Jesus’ invitation. When we realize what He paid for it and see how it is our indifference to God and worship of the “things” in our lives that led to that, then we see His invitation in a new way. Then it trumps everything else. Then we become like the people in the streets that the king invited. Then we want to come!

Prayer of the Church

P: Lord in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Creed: Close of the Lord’s Prayer

Sharing Our Ministry

Offering and Voluntary

Service of the Sacrament

Preface p. 2-8

P:

Sanctus (*Holy, Holy, Holy*) p. 208

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P:

Lord's Prayer, The Words of Our Lord, Pax Domini (*Peace of the Lord*) p. 209

Agnus Dei (*Lamb of God*) p. 210

Distribution of Holy Communion

"Come, Let Us Eat" – **Hymn #626** (needs soloist)

"Soul, Adorn Yourself with Gladness" – **Hymn #636**

Nunc Dimittis (*Now Let Us Depart*) p. 211

Prayer After Communion:

P:

C: Amen.

Benedicamus and Benediction p. 212

Closing Hymn: *"Spread the
Reign of God the Lord"* –
Hymn #830

Postlude

