

Sermon - 10/11/20
Ex 32:1-14; Ps 106:1-6, 19-23; Phil 4:1-9 Mt 22:1-14
Traitor? Or the Real Thing?

Why do the demons avoid nun's clothing?
They're repelled by the force of habit.

What a person wears is often a metaphor describing his/her inner spiritual condition or world-view, especially in the Bible. For example: *"Therefore, pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them."* Ps 73:6 – or *"His enemies I will clothe with shame, But, upon himself his crown shall shine."* Ps 132:18. (<https://bible.knowing-jesus.com>)

Paul told the church at Colossae: *"So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."* (Col 3:12-14)

Hold the thought as we approach the next parable Jesus told the church leaders gathered around Him. The conversation was ongoing from the day before. Pharisees and Scribes challenged Jesus. He told them they were wicked tenants in the vineyard of the Lord who killed every messenger of God's Word.

The previous story of the vineyard spoke of the past sins of Israel. This story of the wedding feast brings a prophecy about the future of those who hide wickedness in their hearts while showing loyalty and devotion to God outwardly.

Jesus says plainly that He is comparing the kingdom of heaven to a wedding invitation sent by the king. This is the calling upon the heart of God's chosen people. We have traced the progress of this growing nation from the beginning in the past months. Progress has been – slow, sometimes painful. There have been some moments when we cringe to see how poorly the Hebrews behave. You have to admit the Exodus scene down in the campsite was not their finest hour. Moses is on the mountain forty days. Later, Aaron tries to defend his sinful response to the people's demand for a god they could see. He claims he threw all the gold jewelry into the fire – and out popped the golden calf. Seriously?

God continues to call – now in our day – everyone who can hear His voice and understand who He is. Never in the history of humanity has the door of heaven been open so wide as it is in our place and time. The Good News of Life in God's presence began with Father Abraham and has spread – expanded – multiplied far beyond its first expression. You may not see white-hot devotion to the Lord in our country, but go to Africa, South America or Asia. There is the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon souls desperate for Jesus Christ. The seed of the Word has struck fertile soil!

Meanwhile, back at the ranch, the ones who were graciously commanded to attend the marriage feast ask to be excused. They won't come. All are too busy with the business of worldly things. The king is angered. He sends his messengers out into streets to gather up any and all who wish to partake of free food and drink. There was to be great music, dancing, perhaps storytelling and games. In they stream in from every place – the Pearl – the Rose Quarter – Burnside – Beaverton – Banks.

Jesus has a special word just for the religious leaders in the crowd. He saves the best word for last. Someone has come to the feast and has not troubled to wear/put on clothes appropriate to the great occasion. The garment representing the true state of the heart and soul, remember.

It is the very leaders of the temple – the rulers of the society in 1st c Palestine who bend the Word of God to suit their own ideas of what is right and wrong. They make a conspicuous show of their piety and their importance. Meanwhile, they make unjust decisions in the courts and they confiscate the property of the poor.

(Continued on next page.)

Jesus is telling ultimate truth – an apocalyptic truth – the truth of the end times. The one who pretends to belong at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb (for that is what Jesus is describing) will be expelled – not because she/he wore dirty work jeans to church – *no*, because that one's heart was not sincere in loving God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Lord sees into every heart and knows every motive. The insincere wedding guest was speechless. Bound hand and foot, this one is thrown into the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Many are called, but few are chosen.”

Paul begs the Philippians – and he begs us:

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies. (Phil 4:8-9 MSG)

An old-time preacher once said, “You are going to be surprised at who you see and who you don't see at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb.”

May Christ in you bring joy and praise and thanksgiving and truth every day of your life.

Amen.