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18th Sunday after Pentecost – LWML
12 October 2014
Grace and Trinity Lutheran Churches, Wichita
Isaiah 25:6-9; Matthew 22:1-14

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?” (Lk 7:31)

They are like a man without home or family—
 who’s shoes are so worn his blackened toes are exposed,
 who’s face is emaciated with hunger, and who’s stench is palpable to anyone around—
 who meets a man that invites him to be a part of his family,
 and offers a warm shower and daily home-made food,
 but who says instead: *“Can’t you just give me \$5 for a pack of smokes?”*

“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?”

They’re like a beautiful woman, with three loving children—
 who’s husband adores her, and fills the house with freshly cut flowers just for her,
 who’s children write in their journals about her and pray to God for her—
 who comes home from work and is met with adoring eyes and is asked:
 “Mom, will you read me a story?”
 but who brushes the child aside, rushing in, hardly noticing,
 fixed on her phone, and looking forward to a night out on the town.

“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?”

They are like those invited to the wedding feast of the King’s Son—
 the feast of rich food, full of marrow,
 the feast of well-aged wine, well refined,
 where joy and gladness fill the halls,
 where sadness and sorrow are banished once and for all,
 but who’d rather watch the Chiefs game,
 or make sure the kids got to practice or the tournament,
 or who didn’t want to miss just a quiet morning by themselves,
 or who are worried the shop might go belly-up.

Our Lord’s parable today answers the question as to what this generation might be compared.
And in this way, the parable could be re-written for every generation,
 for every one of us who’d rather fix our eyes anywhere but on the cross of Christ,
 who’d rather set our minds on things below than on things above,
 who’d rather rush through McDonalds, than sink our teeth in the Lamb who was slain.

We’ve all got our excuses.

It’s not just that we haven’t been invited.
And it’s not that the service just wasn’t appealing enough,
 or that the pastor just wasn’t kind enough.

The fault isn't in the Master or the meal or the way it's being offered.
 The fault is in us.
 Repent.

And this call to repentance isn't just for those who aren't here today.
 The Lord never gives His Scripture *for someone else*, but always for us.
 The Law isn't just something those out there need to hear,
 it's for us in here, who make like the man in our parable without the wedding garments.

It's very easy to play his part.
 He acts as if he owns the place—
 chatting with the bar-keep, grabbing another *hors d'oeuvre*,
 cracking jokes while shaking hands with the pastor, and sitting on the church council.
 It's easy to fit in and look the part—
 but difficult to give up thinking we don't deserve it.

Rarely do we come to church for the Marriage feast of the Lamb.
 And rarely do we come thankful for such an undeserved gift.
 In fact, rarely do view coming to Church as a gift at all!

How often is it like pulling teeth to get out of bed in the morning?
 How often do we wonder if we're maybe not feeling quite well enough?
 How often does our mind wander; and how often do we pull out our phones?
 Repent.

And yet believe the Gospel!
 Believe that this feast was thrown *just for you*—
 indeed, for you with wandering minds and begrudging hearts!

“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?”

They are like a pure and spotless bride,
 who's robes have been washed white in the blood of the Lamb,
 and who's sin has been taken away!
 They are like those invited to the feast without merit or worthiness,
 and yet are not just guests, but brides and daughters of the Master Himself!

The Feast has been prepared.
 The Lord Jesus, the blessed Bride-groom has arisen.
 He enters His hall and calls you by name, from every street corner, the good and the bad.
 He promises on oath to you never to leave you, nor forsake you—
 for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, to love and to cherish,
 and not even in death shall you part.

Many are called, and in Christ, *you are chosen!*

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit