

It was the custom for the host to send "his slaves" (v. 3) to invite the guests, and again to tell them when dinner was ready; preparing a banquet took many hours. To refuse to come, to refuse a king's command, is treason; to kill his slaves (v. 6) amounts to insurrection, so the king sends troops to put down the rebellion. After those whom the king had chosen refuse to come, he invites all people, "both good and bad" (v. 10). (In Jesus' day tax collectors were considered "bad".) One guest is ill-prepared for the banquet (v. 11); the king banishes him to torment.

We recognize the king as God. The first guests are those who are hostile to Jesus; the one without the wedding robe represents those who do not count the cost in becoming disciples. The judgement on anyone who does not prepare will be at least as severe as that on those who reject Christ. The final verse is the moral of the story – a generalization of Jesus' intent in telling the parable.

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~ Notices ~

Church services - Sadly due to Level 3 Covid restrictions in-church services are suspended for the next three Sundays ie 11th, 18th and 25th of October. Harvest will be kept on Sunday the 18th October. The online services on Sunday and so too the short meditations on Wednesday. You are prayed for everyday.

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

Virtual Camino - Thank you so much to everyone who gave so generously to my sponsored walk for the homeless charity Focus Ireland - together we raised €910!

Welcome video - I am looking to video a short piece that we could put up on our website and Facebook etc. It would include a number of people from the congregations saying hello and how welcome someone would be to join us - especially aimed at people new to the area or returning to church life after a break - You can use your own words, but we might have a suggested 'script' to get you started - we are probably only looking for a few seconds each as it will be a montage - would anyone like to be part of it? Please send me an email if you are willing to help - I shall also be tapping shoulders!

Website - Our website <https://clareanglicans.ie> has significantly developed, so please do scroll down the opening page to explore the new sections and information.

- Worship - a number of videos of services
- Pray - leaflets and resources on ways of praying
- Explore - videos of some inspiring speakers
- Think Question Believe - a parish podcast
- Viewpoint - videos on the basics of Christianity
- Rector's Blog - articles, thoughts, opinions

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

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18th Sunday after Trinity (Year A)

Collect

Almighty and everlasting God: Increase in us your gift of faith that, forsaking what lies behind, we may run the way of your commandments and win the crown of everlasting joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

- 1) Thy hand O God has guided
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=esJ7WWqG-dI>
- 2) Let us with a gladsome mind
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dG6kS1o5PpA>
- 3) Just as I am without one plea
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcFp0-4RZzc>
- 4) The King of Love my Shepherd is.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4-KQG2clso>

Isaiah 25:1-9

O Lord, you are my God;
I will exalt you, I will praise your name;
for you have done wonderful things,
plans formed of old, faithful and sure.
For you have made the city a heap,
the fortified city a ruin;
the palace of aliens is a city no more,
it will never be rebuilt.
Therefore strong peoples will glorify you;
cities of ruthless nations will fear you.
For you have been a refuge to the poor,
a refuge to the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat.
When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm,
the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place,
you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds;
the song of the ruthless was stilled.
On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all
peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines
strained clear.
And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;
he will swallow up death for ever.
Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all
the earth, for the Lord has spoken.
It will be said on that day,
Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he
might save us.
This is the Lord for whom we have waited;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Psalms 23

The Lord is my shepherd; ♦
therefore can I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦
and leads me beside still waters.
He shall refresh my soul ♦
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his
name's sake.
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; ♦

for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me; ♦
you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.
Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life, ♦
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Philippians 4: 1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry 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, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 22: 1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

Commentary

Isaiah 25:1-9

In accounts of the Last Supper, Jesus says that he will not drink wine again "until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God" (see Mark 14:25). Earthly language is inadequate for expressing heavenly notions. Chapters 24 to 27 of Isaiah are a prophecy about the end-times; our reading

is a description of the celestial banquet to which Jesus refers. (Other ancient Near East cultures also use a banquet as a description of the final happiness of the godly.)

Chapter 24 begins with the announcement of the destruction of the earth. There will be total upheaval of the social order (24:2). God will then destroy the earth. Most people will have broken the covenant with him, so he will cause them to "suffer for their guilt" (24:6) and die. Only a godly remnant will remain. The earth will be a gloomy place (24:7-13) but then the survivors will praise God's name (24:14-16a). "On that day" (24:21) God will imprison rebellious angels and the kings of the earth for a long time and then punish them (24:22). "... the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem ..." (24:23). As the seventy elders beheld God's glory at Sinai, so Israel's elders will again see him enthroned in his majesty.

Then "on this mountain" (25:6), at Jerusalem, God will provide a banquet "for all peoples", for the godly of all nations, with food and the wine of which Jesus speaks. The dead are pictured as being covered with a "shroud" (25:7) or "sheet"; this will be removed when God swallows up, does away with, "death forever". God's kingdom will be established. In eternal life, he will "wipe away" (25:8) one of the roots of all misery, our mortality, and he will remove the collective shame of breaking the covenant. The remnant, the godly, will acknowledge "our God" (25:9), for whom we have waited and who has saved us; let us "rejoice in his salvation".

Psalm 23

In the ancient Near East, the king was seen as shepherd (vv. 1-4) and as host (vv. 5-6). God faithfully provides for his sheep, and constantly cares for them. He revives our very lives ("soul", v. 3), and guides us in godly ways ("right paths"). Even when beset by evil ("darkest valley", v. 4), we have nothing to fear. God's "rod" (a defence against wolves and lions) protects us; his "staff" (v. 4, for rescuing sheep from thickets) guides us. The feast (v. 5) is even more impressive, for it is in the presence of his foes. Kings were plenteously anointed with oil (a symbol of power and dedication to a holy purpose). May God's "goodness and mercy" (v. 6, steadfast love) follow (or pursue) him (as do his enemies) throughout his life. He will continue to worship ("dwell ...") in the Temple as long as he lives.

Philippians 4:1-9

Paul began the conclusion to the letter back in 3:1a. After a digression – to warn against heresy and self-indulgence and to urge devotion to Christ – he tries to finish the letter, but certain concerns intrude. It seems that "Euodia" (v. 2) and "Syntyche", two workers for Christ at Philippi, differ in their understanding of what the way of Christ is, and that this is causing disunity in the community. We do not know to whom Paul refers as his "loyal companion" (v. 3); he is asked to be instrumental in achieving reconciliation. We read of "Clement" nowhere else. The idea that God keeps a "book of life", a roll of the faithful to be opened at the end of time, is also found in Exodus 32:32 and Psalm 69:28; in Luke 10:20, Jesus bids his disciples to "rejoice that ... [their] names are written in heaven". V. 4 is the conventional Greek salutation (like our goodbye) but here Paul means "rejoice" literally. He expects the Second Coming soon: "The Lord is near" (v. 5). Then v. 6: rather than worrying on their own, the Philippians should ask God to help them, through prayer, both of "supplication" (petition) and of "thanksgiving". God's peace will protect them against their own failings and external threats. The virtues Paul exhorts his followers to pursue in v. 8 are those for which any Greek was expected to strive: he urges moral uprightness to all who follow Christ.

Matthew 22:1-14

This is the third parable about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus' audience would naturally associate a festive meal with the celebration of God's people at the end of time. This story has

elements of harshness and tragedy; some responses seem disproportionate to the crime.