

Sunday's Readings

FIRST READING

Isaiah 25:6-10a

The Lord will prepare a feast and wipe away the tears from every face.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

On this mountain the LORD of hosts
will provide for all peoples
a feast of rich food and choice wines,
juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.
On this mountain he will destroy
the veil that veils all peoples,
the web that is woven over all nations;
he will destroy death forever.
The Lord GOD will wipe away
the tears from every face;
the reproach of his people he will remove
from the whole earth; for the LORD has spoken.
On that day it will be said:
"Behold our God, to whom we looked to save us!
This is the LORD for whom we looked;
let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain.



RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
In verdant pastures he gives me repose;
beside restful waters he leads me;
he refreshes my soul.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life

He guides me in right paths
for his name's sake.
Even though I walk in the dark valley
I fear no evil; for you are at my side
with your rod and your staff
that give me courage.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

You spread the table before me
in the sight of my foes;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Only goodness and kindness follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for years to come.

R. I shall live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

SECOND READING

Phil 4:12-14, 19-20

I can do all things in him who strengthens me.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Philippians

Brothers and sisters:

I know how to live in humble circumstances;
I know also how to live with abundance.
In every circumstance and in all things
I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry,
of living in abundance and of being in need.
I can do all things in him who strengthens me.
Still, it was kind of you to share in my distress.

My God will fully supply whatever you need,
in accord with his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.
To our God and Father, glory forever and ever. Amen.



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Ephesians 1:17-18

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

May the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ
enlighten the eyes of our hearts,
so that we may know what is the hope
that belongs to our call.

R. Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL

Matthew 22:1-14 or 22:1-10

Invite to the wedding feast whomever you find.



A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

Jesus again in reply spoke to the chief priests and elders of the people
in parables, saying,

“The kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king
who gave a wedding feast for his son.

He dispatched his servants
to summon the invited guests to the feast,
but they refused to come.

A second time he sent other servants, saying,
‘Tell those invited: “Behold, I have prepared my banquet,
my calves and fattened cattle are killed,
and everything is ready; come to the feast.”’

Some ignored the invitation and went away,
one to his farm, another to his business.

The rest laid hold of his servants,
mistreated them, and killed them.

The king was enraged and sent his troops,
destroyed those murderers, and burned their city.

Then he said to his servants, ‘The feast is ready,
but those who were invited were not worthy to come.

Go out, therefore, into the main roads
and invite to the feast whomever you find.’

The servants went out into the streets
and gathered all they found, bad and good alike,

But when the king came in to meet the guests,
he saw a man there not dressed in a wedding garment.
The king said to him, 'My friend, how is it
that you came in here without a wedding garment?'
But he was reduced to silence.
Then the king said to his attendants, 'Bind his hands and feet,
and cast him into the darkness outside,
where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth.'
Many are invited, but few are chosen."

REFLECTION

Who chooses when it comes to this parable, and this feast? *We do*. We are all called, all invited to God's feast. That is the expanse of God's mercy, but His justice will also be at work, too. These are not in competition with each other, but merged perfectly in God Himself. The mercy of the invitation and the justice of allowing us to make our choice out of the gift of free will given to us by God are part of the same phenomenon. If we choose to ignore Him, He does not force himself upon us to make us slaves. If we choose sin and degradation, He does not remove that choice from us. But those choices have consequences, and Jesus makes that clear at the end of this parable.

That is, in the end, *our* choice. God gives us the free will to choose whether we wish to attend His Son's wedding feast. Only in that feast, we are not just guests, but part of the Church that will be the Bride of Christ throughout all eternity. We will live in the Trinitarian divine life, where as Isaiah says all tears will have been wiped from every face. But it is *our* choice to prepare for that, and it will be our choice that determines whether we have clothed ourselves properly for the feast.

So in what manner should we prepare ourselves for that occasion, described so beautifully in Revelation and paralleled in this parable from Jesus? The same way *any* bride prepares for a wedding — with joy, anticipation, and care. One rarely sees a bride walking down an aisle with hair unbrushed, in an old stained tee shirt, torn sweat pants, and flip-flops walking toward a groom in a suit or tuxedo. I've been to a number of weddings and have yet to see a bride *grudgingly* wear a gown and put on make-up for the occasion. Most of them have insisted that everything she wore was perfect for the occasion, and extended that to everyone else within her sight, too.

That is how we should prepare for Jesus Christ, too, or at least the enthusiasm with which we prepare for the feast. No one wears sackcloth and ashes to a wedding, so why should we do so when living lives of Christian faith and *caritas* in preparation for the call? Rejoice and be glad. The wailing and grinding of teeth belong to those who choose it.

Ed Morrissey