

Cooma Anglican 15 Oct 2023

Hymn Lord Jesus Christ

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

And also with you

Sentence

'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' Jesus said: 'This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

Sentence of the Day

This is our God for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Isaiah 25.9

Prayer of Preparation

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Saving and healing God, you have promised that those who have died with Christ shall live with him: grant us grace to be continually thankful for all you have done for us, and in that thankfulness to be eager to serve and live for others, so that we and all your children may rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Exodus 32:1-14

¹ When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

² Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." ³ So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the Lord." ⁶ So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

⁷ Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

⁹ "I have seen these people," the Lord said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

¹¹ But Moses sought the favor of the Lord his God. "Lord," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³ Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I

promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.”¹⁴ Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

Psalm 106:1-6,20-24

Praise the Lord! Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good: **and his mercy endures forever!**

² Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord: **or fully voice his praise?**

³ Blessed are they who act according to justice: **who at all times do the right.**

⁴ Remember me, O Lord, when you visit your people with your favour: **And come to me also with your salvation.**

⁵ that I may see the prosperity of your chosen: **that I may rejoice in the rejoicing of your people, And exalt with those who are your own.**

⁶ We have sinned like our ancestors: **we have acted perversely and have done wrong.**

²⁰ At Horeb they made themselves a calf: **and bowed down in worship to an image.**

²¹ And so they exchanged the glory of God: **for the likeness of an ox that eats hay.**

²² They forgot God who was their Savior: **that had done great things in Egypt.**

²³ who had worked his wonders in the land of Ham: **and his terrible deeds at the Red Sea.**

²⁴ Therefore he sought to destroy them: **had not Moses, his servant, stood before him in the breach to turn away his wrath from destroying them.**

Philippians 4:1-9

¹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! ² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. ⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 22:1-14

¹ Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. ⁴ “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵ “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. ⁶ The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸ “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. ⁹ So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

¹³ “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Sermon

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers

Let us pray for the world and the church.

Response Christ Jesus, intercede for us and in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

The Lord's Prayer

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Jesus said: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you. John 13.34

Prayer of Approach [Let us pray.]

We do not presume to come to your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies.

We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.

But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy.

Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy, welcoming sinners and inviting them to the Lord's table. Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, confident in God's forgiveness.

Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and in what we have failed to do: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves; we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.

Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith: pardon you and set you free from all your sins, strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Greeting of Peace

We are the body of Christ. **His Spirit is with us.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Offering

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have these gifts to share. Accept and use our offerings for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. **Blessed be God for ever.**

Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise. All glory and honour be yours always and everywhere, mighty Creator, everliving God. We give you thanks and praise for your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who by the power of your Spirit was born of Mary and lived as one of us. By his death on the cross, he offered the one true sacrifice for sin, and obtained an eternal deliverance for his people. Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we proclaim your great and glorious name, for ever praising you and saying:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might, Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Merciful God, we thank you for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine, and we pray that by your Word and Holy Spirit, we who eat and drink them may be partakers of Christ's body and blood.

On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread; and when he had given you thanks he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper, he took the cup, and again giving you thanks he gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded: proclaiming his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross, his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming again, we celebrate, with this bread and this cup, his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world.

Renew us by your Holy Spirit, unite us in the body of your Son and bring us with all your people into the joy of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom, and in whom, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, we worship you, Father, in songs of never-ending praise:

Blessing and honour and glory and power are yours for ever and ever. Amen.

As this broken bread was once many grains, which have been gathered together and made one bread: so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into your kingdom.

The Offering

The gifts of God for the people of God

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts with thanksgiving.

The Lord's Supper is open to all who love the Lord. Grape juice is available. Please come to the Communion Rail if you are able observing appropriate social distancing.

Prayer After Communion

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and love. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in love and obedience that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you for ever.

Father, we offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory.

Notices

Hymn

Blessing

The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Sermon

Have you seen young children putting on little plays for their parents and any other adults who happen to be in the vicinity at the time? Perhaps you remember doing them yourselves?

From my experience, they are preceded by at least half an hour of arguing who will be each character. Each will have a decided preference as to who they must be, and these usually overlap to the extent you could end up with the dwarf and the seven little red riding hoods.

This morning I am preaching on the parable of the wedding banquet that we read in our gospel reading. Like the parable in last week's gospel reading (the parable of the tenants), it is an allegorical parable, so all major characters and their actions can be understood as having symbolic significance (at least, that's what Google told me). In simple terms, this means that each character corresponds to a different type of person. As Jesus's parables are often directed against his listeners, normally at least one character represents them in each parable, but unlike the kids with their plays, I think the listeners argue more about why they aren't like the parable characters than which characters they are.

Today I want to look at the characters in this parable and see which ones we, the modern hearers are, and see what the parable is telling us.

There are actually quite a few characters in today's parable. The main characters are the king, his son, his slaves, those who were initially invited to the wedding banquet, but would not come, the guests who did come, and the man who came but wasn't wearing a wedding robe.

Let's look at each of them.



Firstly the **king**.

My guess is that none of the hearers, even then or now, would publicly admit that they thought we were the king, unless they happened to have been born into one peculiar family in Britain, or the few other kingdoms that still exist.

We recognise the King as representing God, the maker and ruler of heaven and earth, and no matter how much we might act like the world revolves around us, or that we are in control of the universe, we aren't, and acting like it only upsets the real God,

breaking our relationship and heading us towards eternal judgment. So no one should think they correspond to the king.



The second character is the **King's son**, for whom the feast has been prepared. The parable doesn't tell us much else about the son, but since he represents God's son, we know that he represents Jesus. We aren't told why no one wants to go to his wedding banquet, but I think it says something about the people's attitude to the king. Again, no hearers should think that they correspond to the king's son.



Then there is a group of characters, the group **who were first invited to the wedding banquet, but would not come**. They just didn't think it was worth the effort, so some made light of it, going away to their farms and business. Others really took offence at the king and seized, mistreated and killed the slaves, leading to his anger and the destruction of the murderers and their city.

Following on from the previous parable of the evil tenants, there is now doubt the Old Testament Jews, and particularly the Chief Priests and Pharisees correspond to this group. They had rejected God's invitations and killed the messengers, God's prophets.

But the question for us is whether we also correspond to them as well. Do we reject God's invitation and his prophets, or do we correspond to the next group? It's very important that we are clear about this.



The next group are **the guests who did come**, the ones gathered from the main streets, the good and the bad.

Again, this parable doesn't say a lot about these guests, except that the banquet hall was filled, and by implication from the way the guest who wasn't wearing a wedding robe was treated, even though these guests came from the streets, they at least understood the significance of the banquet, and made the effort to prepare themselves and dress properly.

The hearers would have understood the Jewish faithful to have corresponded to these - perhaps they would have thought of the priests in the temple and the Pharisees who were sticklers for keeping the minutiae of God's law. Many of them

would have thought that they themselves had accepted God's invitation, but others wouldn't have been sure whether they had been good enough to even get an invitation.

Again, we must ask ourselves if we correspond to this group. Have we accepted God's invitation to his Son's wedding feast, to the eternal kingdom of God? Even on Sunday in a church of this size there will be some who have accepted but may be some who have not. It is absolutely critical that we are sure, and if you aren't, please come a talk to me later.



This brings us to **the man who came but wasn't wearing a wedding robe**. This is a difficult one to understand. We know he showed up, but was ultimately thrown out because he wasn't dressed properly. I suspect that this one corresponds to someone who perhaps says they are a Christian, but in their hearts have not accepted the invitation, have not accepted Jesus's death and resurrection on their behalf. They might even come to church because their parents always came, or they like to be around the people there, or even because they think it is just the right thing to do, but their hearts are not in it, and Jesus is not in their hearts. Ultimately, these are no better off than those who rejected the invitation outright.

We also need to carefully consider whether this corresponds to us? Do I correspond to this man?

Now, as we come to the end of the parable, there is actually one group that I think I have missed. Can anyone tell me who this could be?

Do you notice that the King did not personally deliver the invitations - He gave this critically important job to his slaves.



These are the final group I want to consider today. **The slaves** who delivered the King's invitations to his Son's wedding banquet. As I mentioned earlier, Jesus's original hearers would have equated these to the Jewish prophets in the Old Testament.

But who do they correspond to today?

Do they exist at all?

Or, are they the professional clergy, chaplains, missionaries and evangelists who preach from pulpits like this one, inviting people to believe in Jesus?

Or should each of us - at least anyone who has their faith in Jesus' saving death and resurrection, correspond to the slaves, sharing God's invitation to his Son's wedding banquet, eternal life? That's who I think the slaves represent.

Do you correspond to this group?

You should. We should all be God's delivery men and women, delivering God's invitation to eternal life through the death and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ to all who will hear - our families, and friends, our neighbours, our work colleagues - everyone with whom we get the opportunity.

Do you see yourself in this role?

It would be great for us to chat to each other about who you can share God's invitation with, and how you can do it. Chat to me anytime, because that is what we are here for. I am looking forward to the banquet, and I want as many to be there as possible.

Amen.