Sermon Oct. 14th & 15th, 2023

Texts: Ps. 23, Isa. 25:6-9, Matt. 22:1-14

Title: “Come to the Feast!”

Prayer

Salutation

**Bridge**

 **I read some news the other day that a KFC in Ohio was offering a free meal once a day to our men in blue. Yes, the police in that town could just walk in and order a free meal. All because the proprietor supported the efforts and lives of the men that protected the city from harm. I wondered on what side of town this establishment was located, in that if it was a rough part of the city, that by having officers there on a regular basis, offered the establishment a bit of free security that way? One never knows the ulterior motives of people if something is gained. There really is nothing “free” is there? Or is there always a catch?**

**Law**

 **But when I hear about stories like this, I understand where the shop owner, his customers, the police and where we, yes, we, are coming from. It is a new nasty world out there. Even though we Americans have been the most blessed people on this earth since the end of WWII, we act just like the people invited for a free meal in the Gospel text for today. We don’t always respond the way we should. All even though it appears to be the best free meal anyone could ever be invited to.**

 **If you remember what Pastor Curt said last week, it’s related to what happens here, within these four walls that it is related to. Indeed, the King that invited these subjects of His to come to a feast does it from here. He sent out His servants to call all the people, everyone blessed to be in His kingdom, to a marriage feast for His Son. However, the servants were not heeded and in fact, some were killed. Why? And I said this in my message about the Cornerstone last week as well because that is what sinners ask- “Why?”. Because they were spoiled rotten. They couldn’t see their sin. They had lived in the abundance of the King for so long, another free buffet table meant nothing to them. And in effect, neither did their King. To totally disrespect Him the way they did was not only unsociable, but unconceivable. The people had rejected their King.**

 **Today we act the same way. An owner of A KFC shouldn’t have to worry that he would be robbed, or his establishment be torched, or that even a murder could happen therein. No. But that’s what happens these days. People only care for themselves. If they are hungry, they just take what they want. It happens all the time in California where people load their grocery carts full and just wheel it out to the car. No one can stop them and if the police are called, they will not even come if the transgression is less than a thousand dollars. My son has had his groceries stolen out of his car if he leaves it open between trips up the stairs when he unloads it! The law that God has given us is supposed to be a curb, guide, and mirror. But today, many people that live near or in the kingdom, know nothing of the law, and if they do, they ignore it. Being offered a free meal means nothing if you get free meals all of the time.**

**And what was the result when the King was spurned? His wrath and sure death where weeping and gnashing of teeth ensued. And if the law is followed today, that is the same result. So many people are called to come to the banquet feast. So many think they can just do it all themselves and in any way they wish. But that is not the Way of the King, nor the Father. That is the path to hell.**

**Gospel**

**But, at the end of the parable a silver lining is seen. It says, “For many are called, but few are chosen.” The Chosen. Who are they? Well, if I was offered an invitation to come to the finest marriage feast ever offered by God, I sure wouldn’t miss it! I love free food! But that’s not the point, is it? Here, in this sanctuary, wedged between the rock wall to the North and the world to the South of us, stands an invitation by Jesus to come and feast. Right here, right now. Here in this sanctuary from the world we offer a feast which God has invited all men to attend. And we help prepare them and be clothed with the robe of salvation in Christ.**

**The other night we went to dinner with some old friends. In our discussions the topic of dress came up. We commented that back in the old days, the 30’s, 40’s, 50’s, and even the 60’s so some of you younger folks might remember as well, people would dress up to go to a show, fly on a plane, and go to church, especially a wedding and the feast thereafter. It was considered proper and fun to some degree to do so, because it was out of the norm. Something special to do so. Indeed, it was. The text speaks of this dressing up before this feast today. The King expected the guests to be clad in proper attire. If they were not, the guests were cast out. For us, through Baptism, we are welcomed to the feast, for in that dunking, through water and Word, we are given the proper attire to be chosen. That white robe of salvation in Christ. And through the Word and the Feast of His body and blood at this banquet, we are righteous before God. The Chosen of the feast. What a wonderful free gift of God!**

**We, the Chosen, are offered something much more special than mere food, and we take it, feasting on Christ our King. Sounds absurd to the world. But they are invited to come to this feast every week. The sign out front even says it! We sinners are no better than they or anyone out there, but we, by grace through Faith, are the ones chosen to attend and gobble up life eternal. Now and forever. And God tells us that it is, “Tov”. The sweetest, the most delectable, the most satisfying meal of all time and space.**

**For in the words of Isaiah, God has promised us this feast and it is here – now. For on the cross God brought this feast of rich food to us, of well-aged wine, full of marrow and of aged wine. He did this and swallowed up death forever, that we might wipe from our eyes all of our tears brought on by the sin, the war, the injustice, the pain, and the suffering all around us. For it will be said on that day, “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.” It is here. Now and for eternity. And we have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord! For He has defeated death and the devil for us. And until He comes for us, we share what He has invited everyone to in this ship on the hill we sail within no matter what kinds of storms rage about us.**

**Conclusion**

**So, to answer my question from the beginning, “Is anything really free? Or is there always a catch?” The answer is this: Yes, my brothers and sisters! There is something that is free. There is no catch. And it doesn’t need you to add anything to it. It’s not even a potluck! It’s the best feast you will ever attend. Now or forever! Come to the marriage feast and see!**

**May the peace of God that surpasses all our understand keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.**