

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 25:6-9

God Will Swallow Up Death Forever

6 On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined. 7 And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

8 He will swallow up death forever; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. 9 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.”

25:6-9 Immediately before our text, Isaiah proclaims the inevitable judgment of Yahweh on all the earth. It is a terrifying and inescapable thing. Sin and rebellion will be overcome. Even death itself will be vanquished, for they are the enemies of God and all that God desires for his people. For the sinner, there is no place of refuge from Yahweh’s righteous judgment anywhere in the world (24:17–18). Sin will be vanquished; death will be swallowed up (25:8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Yahweh’s judgment throughout Isaiah, though, is also a call to repentance (12:1–2). In the midst of his judgment, there is a place of hope, Mount Zion, the place of Yahweh’s work of salvation for all. All other kingdoms and hopes will be dashed. (See Heb 12:27–29.) Isaiah is sent to preach God’s wrath upon sin. He is sent to proclaim the end of all human kingdoms that have set their face against Zion, the end of the mountain of Moab (Is 15–16; 25:10), and all kingdoms like it, even mighty Babylon. But Isaiah is also called to proclaim hope to repentant sinners, to point to the only hope that they have, but a hope they *do* have, the King of Zion, who prepares a feast of victory, who swallows up sin and death forever, and who loves and forgives his people with a gracious, everlasting love. The proclamation of righteous judgment and undeserved grace is a call for all to trust in Yahweh, the one who says and does this (cf 12:1–2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

25:6–8† The eschatological feast prepared by God for the redeemed. (CSB)

25:6 *on this mountain* – The translations that emphasize this phrase by moving it to the beginning of the verse (e.g. KJV, NIV) may mislead us to focus on the place where God is acting rather than on the one who is acting. The actual sequence in the Hebrew is who – all peoples / where - on this mountain / and then what – banquet. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 2)

The place where God dwells and dispenses his grace through his appointed means. On Mount Calvary, God dwelling in Christ, procured grace for us. In our present age Zion’ equivalent is the church, wherein the means of grace are found. Here the Lord will exhibit his victorious reign before his people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Also notice the “*this mountain*” reference. Isaiah contrasts Mount Zion with Mount Moab (v 10). Zion is God’s appointed place to “receive the victory” because he has appointed it so and made it so. He makes the victory plain and accessible in contrast to all other human institutions and powers. He makes it plain so that all might be able to see it and receive it as his gift for them. God locates his promise for all people in the lowly line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, through the line of David, come to fruition in the manger, the cross, and the empty tomb of Jesus, the Christ. Look only to Zion fulfilled, Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

Lord of hosts will make - The Lord will prepare a rich feast for all people. Notice the position of “Yahweh, the Lord” in the Hebrew compared to the ESV translation. In the Hebrew text, God’s name comes first. The text is about what Yahweh is doing for all people. The mountain of Zion is vital because he has chosen it. The victory feast is beyond all expectations because he has prepared it. Yahweh prepares a victory feast of the very best wines and meat, reminding us all that all good things flow from the one who created and redeemed us (Gen 1; Is 43:1–3). One is reminded of Jesus miraculously providing the finest wine at the wedding of Cana or even finer wine at the feast of the Lord’s Supper, where Jesus is the “delivered Lamb” who forgives the sins of the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

feast. Associated with a coronation (1Ki 1:25) or wedding (Jdg 14:10); cf. the “wedding supper of the Lamb” (Rev 19:9). (CSB)

At Sinai, a similar feast was held, at which God’s people ate and drank with Him (Ex 24:9–11). Jesus speaks on several occasions about God’s feast for His people (e.g., Mt 8:11; 22:1–14; 25:10). (TLSB)

God’s people eat of this banquet of grace every time they hear the gospel or receive the sacraments. As God’s people read and study the Word, they eat from God’s banquet table and receive nourishment for their souls. (PBC)

rich food. Symbolic of great spiritual blessings (see 55:2). (CSB)

Delicacies. (TLSB)

In the ancient Near East, where starvation was a constant threat, fatty and rich foods were the most desirable. (In Job 21:24, “bones rich in marrow” described a prosperous, satisfied person.) This fine meal fully satisfies the members of God’s household, even amid our earthly sorrow and cares (cf also Ps. 36:8). The parallels to the Lord’s Supper are obvious. This banquet is the end-times meal Jesus promised after instituting the Lord’s Supper, when he will dine with us anew (Mt. 26:29; cf 1 Cor. 11:26) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Healthy and desirable. Descriptive terms refer to the absolute best that money could buy. This will be a feast like no other. (TLSB)

aged wine. The best wine—aged by being left on its dregs (see Jer 48:11; Zep 1:12). (CSB)

Left on its fermented sediment to improve strength and flavor. (TLSB)

Wines that have been left to stand on their lees (Sediment settling during fermentation, especially in wine dregs) have a richer flavor. (Concordia Bible)

The power of the gospel to bless men passes all human comprehension. It fills the heart that receives it with light and joy; makes every nation that obeys it prosperous and happy; it provides all believing families with harmony and blessedness. (Concordia Bible)

The banquet Isaiah described is one of the richest the ancient world could imagine. The language emphasizes that it is the best. The wine ages in order to increase its color and quality. The meat was the best that the ancient world could provide. It was fat and rich. In our day we taught to avoid fat, but in the ancient world fat was highly desired. The banquet is the banquet of God’s grace. The Savior-God – the Lord Almighty – has prepared the best His love could offer: rich compassion, wonderful forgiveness, and every satisfying food for the soul. (PBC)

The entire verse, in the Hebrew, is most poetical and musical song, full of praises for the richness of God's grace in the spiritual food prepared for His children in the Gospel. (Kretzmann)

full of marrow. Healthy and desirable. Descriptive terms refer to the absolute best that money could buy. This will be a feast like no other. (TLSB)

25:7 *covering...veil.* Or “covering ... veil,” with which faces were covered in mourning—in any event, the associations are with death. (CSB)

Symbol of death and mourning (cf 2Sm 15:30; Jer 14:3; 2Co 3:12–18). (TLSB)

The pall on a coffin represents the clothing of Christ's righteousness, given in Holy Baptism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Luther goes one step further and says that it means “death and all its evils.” The work done “on this mountain” to destroy the shroud is a work done by the Lord for all people. Understanding this, the work is clearly the work of Christ on the cross done on Mount Calvary. The feat's connection to the Lord's Supper is clear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

The veil of ignorance with its attendant sin and wretchedness. The covenant made with Abraham was from the beginning designed to bless all nations; and this design Christ will gloriously accomplish. He will make the light of His gospel shine from mount Zion into every land, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Concordia Bible)

25:8 Quoted in part in 1Co 15:54. (CSB)

swallow up death. Death, the great swallower, will be swallowed up. (CSB)

Now, death “swallows” life. On that day, death itself will die. (TLSB)

He will “swallow up . . . the covering that is cast over all peoples.” Sin casts a “death pall” over the world. All the world's solutions to the human condition end in despair. (See also Eccl 2:18–25.) “Covering” and “veil” could signify suffering and despair, but it probably is even more futile. It probably means absolute blindness to the things of God (2 Cor 3:12–18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

The death referred to here is the second death, as interpreted in 1 Corinthians 15:54, and Revelation 20:14 and 21:4. Another such passage is Hebrews 2:14. (Concordia Journal/January 2000)

The verb is found here in the perfect tense without a conjunction. “Having swallowed up, he..” may be better translation showing the connection in thought to the previous verse and its effects as reflected in what follows. The work is done and the victory is won in the cross. The shroud of death is destroyed on Calvary. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

Literally, “for ever.” The swallowing up of death is its abolition in the widest sense. The prophet's vision extends not only into, but beyond the NT period. He has a view of the final issue of Christ's redemption in this world and in eternity. (Concordia Bible)

In the kingdom of Christ all believers enjoy such unspeakable blessedness of pardon and peace that words cannot describe God's goodness; and this will be but an earnest of the perfect redemption of heaven,

where God will in the fullest sense of the words swallow up death for ever, and wipe away tears from off all faces. (Concordia Bible)

In Canaanite mythology, the gods destroyed death, but the enemy returned with the changing of the season. Here, the Lord demonstrates His kingly authority by swallowing up death forever. John quotes John 18:13 when he describes the marriage supper of the Lamb which will take place after “the former things have passed away (Rev. 19:9; 21:1-4). (TLSB)

LORD GOD. See 7:7; 28:16; 30:15; 40:10; 49:22; 52:4; 61:11; 65:13. (CSB)

wipe away tears – This is often applied to those who have lost loved ones. However the “tears” are our tears caused by the disgrace and sin committed against God for the Gospel is that despite all this He remains faithful toward us by removing our disgrace by His grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

He will “wipe away tears from all faces” and remove the “reproach of his people.” Yahweh’s concern is for the lives of all people. He not only wipes away the tears (the external sign) of one’s reproach, but he also destroys and eliminates the cause (cf 2 Cor 5:17–21). Israel has borne the public reproach of Yahweh as well. Not only the “nations” have felt the wrath of God, but even Israel, due to her rebellion and sin, has borne God’s chastening hand. To the remnant of Israel, who through it all trusted in the one who could alone save and redeem them, their “reprimand, public discipline” has come to an end. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

reproach...will take away. See 54:4. (CSB)

The accusation and the penalty for sin is destroyed. Luther: “Christ destroys death. As a plague consumes the body little by little, so Christ is the pestilence of our death and of our old Adam” (AE 16:197). (TLSB)

God removes his people’s disgrace caused by sin and death, as prophesied in Joel 2:19. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

the Lord has spoken – We note how Isaiah punctuates these promises by his familiar exclamation point, “The Lord has spoken.”

25:9 Another brief song of praise. (CSB)

Trusting God’s promises in life, His people now see them powerfully fulfilled. (TLSB)

we – This signified the church of all ages – the communion of saints – those who enjoy the richest feast and rejoice in the Lord’s salvation. His salvation may seem a long time in coming. It did for Israel as she awaited the Messiah. Our lives may be prolonged in suffering. But those who wait for the Lord will not be disappointed.

we have waited. Cf. Ps 22:4–5. (CSB)

It means “wait for, trust in.” His salvation may seem a long time in coming. It did for Israel as she awaited the Messiah. Our lives may be prolonged in suffering. But those who wait for the Lord will not be disappointed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 2)

“This is our God.” This is who Yahweh, the true God, is. This is who he has always been. We can trust him. We can “entrust” our lives to him. He is the source of forgiveness, life, and salvation, of never-ending joy and peace. TRUST IN HIM! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 2)

be glad and rejoice. Cf. 35:10; 51:11; 66:10. (CSB)

EPISTLE – Philippians 4:4-13

Exhortation, Encouragement, and Prayer

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. 9 What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

4:4 Rejoice in the Lord. See 3:1. (CSB)

Troubled people ought not be alone, for this is why God created the fellowship of the Church. Also, “To be gloomy before God is not pleasing to Him, although He would permit us to be depressed before the world” (AE 54:16). (TLSB)

chairo – Full of cheer. To be well off which brings about a calmness. In Paul it is bound up with his work as an apostle. It results from faith in Christ and is a fruit of the Spirit. Joy comes when Christ is proclaimed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

Paul would say “I will not tire of speaking to you about rejoicing. (Stoekhardt)

Habakkuk 3:17-18 “Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior.”

James 1:2 “Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,”

1 Peter 4:13 “But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.”

Joy is the basic temper and disposition of the Christian. Where this joy is found, there will follow what is stated in verse 5. (Stoekhardt)

always. Under all kinds of circumstances, including suffering (see Hab 3:17–18; Jas 1:2; 1Pe 4:13). (CSB)

Paul wrote this, you will remember, in prison. He knew that our outer circumstances do not need to affect our inner feelings. Paul’s joy came because he knew the Lord was with him no matter what happened.

His repetition of the exhortation to rejoice suggested he knew conditions at Philippi might make his exhortation seem a little unrealistic. While believers often have situations in which we cannot be happy, we can always rejoice and delight in the Lord and His impact on our lives. Paul was not calling for smiles to be “painted on our faces,” but for a genuine joy possible only in the Lord. (LifeLight)

4:5 *reasonableness*. Christlike consideration for others (cf. 2Co 10:1). It is especially essential in church leaders (see 1Ti 3:3; Tit 3:2, “considerate”). (CSB)

epieikes – Appropriate moderation. To be mild or patient. It is not weak sentimentality. It is the earthly counterpart of the heavenly glory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

The Apostle here does not speak of the Lord’s invisible or spiritual presence, but rather of His last visible return, which is close at hand. That Christians are to bear in mind all the time. When one is aware that he is on the way to the judge, he is more apt to exercise gentleness and forbearance towards others. (Stoeckhardt)

In difficult times, our joy is not always visible to others; yet acts of gentleness to others can be seen. Paul encourages the Philippians to be fair and charitable to others. Trusting the Lord to care for our life, we are able to show consideration and gentleness to others. We know the Lord is near, not just by His presence in our hearts; but also in His Second Coming. There is no need to protect our turf when we realize all the earthly things will soon pass away. (LifeLight)

The Greek word here is one that cannot really be reproduced by a single word in English. Expressions that come close to reflecting its meaning are “bigheartedness” and sweet reasonableness.” What Paul is saying here is that Christians ought to be people who would much rather suffer wrong than inflict it. Gentleness or sweet reasonableness is another of those distinguishing characteristics that ought to mark Christians as different, special people in this world, people who with a self-sacrificing attitude that imitates the humility of Christ. Where others loudly demand their rights, believers will gladly yield theirs. They will make the interests of the weak and helpless their concern and patiently yield to others, wherever such yielding does not violate their Christian principles. (PBC)

Titus 3:2 “to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.”

at hand. See Ro 13:11; cf. Jas 5:8–9; Rev 22:7, 12, 20. The next great event in God’s prophetic schedule is Christ’s return. The whole period from Christ’s first coming to the consummation of the kingdom is viewed in the NT as the last time (1Jn 2:18). From God’s vantage point, a thousand years are as a day. Thus there is a sense in which, for every generation, the Lord’s coming is near. (CSB)

The Lord is near to give you patience, wisdom, and help. The Lord is near in coming for you. This is life from a resurrection and eternal perspective. (TLSB)

Over 19 centuries have passed since Paul wrote, “The Lord is near.” By God’s way of reckoning, Christ is still near. For individual believers Christ’s summons from this life to eternity is near. It could come at any time. So could Christ’s return in glory. If we understand that, we shall want to live in the same eager, expectant spirit of rejoicing in which those early believers lived. How small a thing the sacrificing of some earthly rights becomes when we know that all wrongs will be righted when Christ appears. How meaningless the selfish lives of the unspiritual people around us appear. How significant lives of gentle joyfulness become. (PBC)

4:6 *anxious*. Self-centered, counterproductive worry, not legitimate cares and concerns for the spread of the gospel (see 2:28 and note; 2Co 11:28; see also Mt 6:25–31; 1Pe 5:7). (CSB)

merimnao – Full of care. Worry. This verse and 1 Peter 5:7 show that “to cast one’s care on God does not mean to think of Him as the One who guarantees one’s wishes, but to see in Him the One who knows what we need better than we do ourselves. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

Where there is joy, there is no anxious care. Joy expresses itself in confident prayer. All that a Christian desires and cares for, especially such things that cause him anxiety and uneasiness, he brings before God in prayer. So his joy cannot be crowded out and affects his whole life. Of course, a Christian is not capable of acquiring and maintaining such a happy mind and disposition of himself. How he comes to be so fortunate the next verse will show. (Stoeckhardt)

The stress of a hostile world gives rise to anxiety and fears about the future. Yet Paul challenges the Philippians and us to not be anxious “about anything!” We can take all our worries and bring them before the Lord in prayer. As St. Peter put it, “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7). We can remember His loving care and let it supplant our worry. (LifeLight)

Matthew 6:25-34 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? ²⁸“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

in everything, by prayer. Anxiety and prayer are two great opposing forces in Christian experience. (CSB)

The broad category of speaking to God at His invitation. (TLSB)

supplication. Specific request for help. (TLSB)

These exhortations to pray are thus designed to give absolute freedom from care as anxiety. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

In childlike trust, leave everything in the Lord’s loving hands. The Lord does not forbid us to make plans or to think ahead. He does not want us to regard prayer as a substitute for planning and working. He wants us to use forethought and common sense to meet the various challenges and problems He sets before us in life, but in all our working and planning and thinking ahead, we Christians dare never forget that the outcome depends completely on the Lord’ will and on His blessing. With childlike trust, therefore, we should commend ourselves and our concerns to the Lord in prayer. The Lord knows our

needs without our praying about them, but He lovingly invites and encourages us to bring them all to Him in prayer. (PBC)

thanksgiving. The antidote to worry (along with prayer and petition). (CSB)

Expressing before God all the things He has already done for you. (TLSB)

He's given us that we're thankful for. As we remember and recite all these blessings, this too, will vaporize our anxiety. (LifeLight)

requests. Made in the perspective of thanksgiving. (TLSB)

4:7 *peace of God.* Not merely a psychological state of mind, but an inner tranquility based on peace with God—the peaceful state of those whose sins are forgiven (cf. Jn 14:27; Ro 5:1). The opposite of anxiety, it is the tranquility that comes when the believer commits all his cares to God in prayer and worries about them no more. (CSB)

irahnay – A quietness that comes from being restored to oneness with others, especially God. (QV)

The Christian very well knows how unbecoming it is for him to fret and grieve over the current sorrows of life and that under all conditions he must cultivate a cheerful disposition, yet he cannot take hold of his bootstraps and lift himself over these obstacles. But the peace of God accomplishes what we are unable to do. The “peace of God” is the peace which He puts into our heart. This peace of God towers far above the reach of man’s understanding. When in the midst of the cares and casualties of life our rational thinking leads us to believe we are undone and so would pull down our soul the gloom of sorrow and despair, come this peace of God and lends us an inner peace, contentment, hope, and joy. While tears may yet be streaming down our cheeks, we can smile with inner assurance that all things must work together for our good. This peace keeps our hearts steadfast, so that it clings to Christ and resigns itself to whatever God ordains. It is this about which the Christian always should be confident. God has promised it: “The peace of God ... will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.” The future tense, “will keep,” expresses a divine assurance to Christians. (Stoeckhardt)

As the Philippians take Paul’s words to heart about worry, they will turn from worry to prayer and experience God’s peace. This is not a peace that comes from positive thinking, but from knowing that our sins are forgiven; that God is not our enemy, but our loving Father; that we have a Savior who loved us enough to died for us; that the Holy Spirit lives in our heart. With this peace guarding our hearts and minds we place our lives in God’s hands and accept God’s direction as being the best. Like a soldier on watch around our faith, God’s peace repels the attacks of the enemy and keeps us close to God and trusting in Him. As Christians, we can pray in the middle of a traffic jam, pray in the middle of personal crisis, and pray when the fear of the unknown hits us. In the midst of all circumstances, we can have God’s peace. (LifeLight)

When life makes no sense, God’s peace sustains and directs us. Peace, not readiness or zeal, acts like a guardian angel for our mental health. This peace resides in Jesus, our refuge. (TLSB)

John 14:27 “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we^a have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

surpasses all understanding. The full dimensions of God’s love and care are beyond human comprehension (see Eph 3:18–20). (CSB)

guard ... hearts ... minds. A military concept depicting a sentry standing guard. God’s “protective custody” of those who are in Christ Jesus extends to the core of their beings and to their deepest intentions (cf. 1Pe 1:5). (CSB)

The Philippians were used to the sight of Roman sentries standing guard. In that way, the apostle tells them, God’s peace stands guard at the door of the believers heart. God’s peace standing guard keeps believers steadfastly clinging to Christ. It prevents care from wearing on their hearts and keeps unworthy thoughts from disturbing them. By trust and prayer believers enter the impregnable fortress of God’s peace in the Lord Jesus Christ, a fortress from which nothing can dislodge them. (PBC)

4:8 *true ... honorable.* Paul understood the influence of one’s thoughts on one’s life. What a person allows to occupy his mind will sooner or later determine his speech and his action. Paul’s exhortation to “think about such things” is followed by a second exhortation, “put it into practice” (v. 9). The combination of virtues listed in vv. 8–9 is sure to produce a wholesome thought pattern, which in turn will result in a life of moral and spiritual excellence. (CSB)

whatever is true - dikaios – That which is equitable and innocent. This deals with social conduct. (QV)

The Christian progresses in sanctification as he practices what he knows to be good and right. (Stoekhardt)

whatever is honorable – arête – Something that has virtue or valor. (QV)

is commendable – epainos – Worthy of being lauded or to be commendable. This would refer to be true in the Christian community. (QV)

Stoekhardt summarizes it as follows: true – morally sound; honorable – of worthy character when men esteem with respect; just – agreeing with the law which tells us what we owe to another; pure – free from every fault, immaculate; lovely – what is valuable and dear in the heart of men; of good report – what is praised and esteemed among men; if there is anything that deserves praise – sums up the preceding. (Stoekhardt)

Paul commands that we continually keep these virtues, which are the fundamental ideals of life according to God’s design, in the forefront of our minds, in our very consciousness, so that they inspire and guide all we do. (TLSB)

think about these things - logizomai – Not just give some thought to, but to ponder on, take an inventory and then draw conclusions. (QV)

Christians should also be concerned about what is good and praiseworthy in the sight of the world and think about these things. (Stoeckhardt)

“[The Word] always awaken new understanding, pleasure, devoutness and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts” (LC I 101). (TLSB)

4:9 *seen in me.* See note on 3:17. (CSB)

Paul’s entire life bears witness and demonstrates how to live for Christ. He is not only a teacher in Word but also a mentor in life. Church workers today have the same calling. (TLSB)

God of peace. See note on 1Th 5:23; cf. the “peace of God” (v. 7). (CSB)

When Christians under all conditions strive to do what which is right, then the God of peace will abide with them and preserve them from all harm. (Stoeckhardt)

God is the One who grants genuine liberty to know fullness of life by regenerating us, setting wisdom before us, and inspiring us with His Word. God grants peace through the Gospel. (TLSB)

4:2–9 As Paul concludes this Letter, he uses imperative language to urge the reader to adopt practices of living that are in harmony with the Creator’s will. The strength and clarity of this exhortation reminds us that we often set our minds on those things that are contrary to God’s will. Paul’s exhortations are always followed by promises of God’s blessing on our behalf. • Blessed be the Lord God, who has not left us to suffer in our own folly, but has called and enlightened us to live according to His mercy in Christ. Amen. (TLSB)

God’s Provision

10 I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. 11 Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. 12 I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. 13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me. 14 Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble.

4:10 *revived your concern.* Shown by the arrival of Epaphroditus bearing their gift (cf v 18). (TLSB)

at length ... no opportunity. The delay in sending gifts to Paul was not the fault of the Philippians, nor was it because they were lacking in concern for him (cf. 2Co 11:9). Perhaps Paul’s uncertain itinerary prior to his arrival at Rome or the lack of an available messenger had prevented the Philippians from showing their concern. (CSB)

The Apostle here expresses his gratitude for the gift of love received from the Philippians. Their token of love has caused him great joy. Whatever proceeds from the Christian faith has great worth and value, even if it is no more than a material gift. Earlier already the Philippians had thought of sending Paul a present, but probably lacked a way of getting it to him. But when finally their present came though, the Apostle rejoiced over it very much. (Stoeckhardt)

For a time the Philippians were unable to carry out their resolve. Something had hindered them. Perhaps the grinding poverty that had affected the entire region some years earlier (see 2 Cor. 8:12) was still

making life economically difficult for the Philippians, or perhaps no messenger was immediately available to make the long journey to Rome. At any rate, the obstacles that had previously prevented the Philippians from expressing their generosity had now been removed, and Epaphroditus has brought a generous gift to the apostle on the Philippians behalf. He was now returning to Philippi with this letter and with the apostle's warm thanks. (PBC)

4:11 *whatever situation I am content.* Paul genuinely appreciates the gifts from Philippi (see vv. 14, 18) but he is not ultimately dependent on them (cf. 1Ti 6:6–8). (CSB)

Gk *autarkes*, “self-sufficient” and thereby content. (TLSB)

4:12 *I have learned the secret of facing plenty...hunger...need.* Prosperity, too, can be a source of discontent. (CSB)

Paul knows all things work together for good to those who love God (Rm. 8:28), our sinful human nature is our own worst enemy (Rm. 5:10), and disciplining the body makes it possible to thrive spiritually (1 Cor. 9:27). (TLSB)

4:13 *all things.* Everything pleasing to God. (CSB)

God's wisdom in the Word and the work of His Spirit lets us welcome the experiences of life in ways that benefit us and others. Paul's time in the Philippian jail and his current imprisonment are perfect examples. (TLSB)

who strengthens me. Christ. Union with the living, exalted Christ is the secret of being content (v. 12) and the source of Paul's abiding strength (see especially 2Co 12:9–10; see also Jn 15:5; Eph 3:16–17; Col 1:11). (CSB)

The Apostle has not only a wonderful knowledge and understanding of what is proper in God's kingdom, but he has also the ability to conduct himself accordingly. However, in himself resides no such knowledge or ability. In all humility he confesses these have been bestowed upon him through Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

4:14 *share.* The Philippians' gifts are a means of involving them in Paul's troubles (cf. Heb 10:33). (CSB)

The Philippians have joined themselves together with Paul by sympathizing, praying for him, and sending what physical aid they could. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 22:1-14

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, 2 “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, 3 and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.” 5 But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. 7 The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, “The wedding feast is ready, but

those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ 10 And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. 12 And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Jesus graphically portrays God as reaching out to people, bar none, with his inviting grace. God is anything but the *deus absconditus*, a hidden, silent God. Proactively he not only prepares the finest feast but also invites . . . and invites . . . and invites. Thus Jesus signals our accountability to the God who cares enough to search us out, and he welcomes our arrival in the Kingdom with celebration and whistling bells. We need to value these times of worship and celebration. Though our divine services here still bear the stigma of human limitation, they are true foretastes of the eternal banquet. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 4)

All who choose to ignore our accountability to God cheapen God’s grace. In fact grace is supremely costly—it cost his Son! Bonhoeffer wrote: “Grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it cost a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life” (Quoted by Thomas F. Loftus in *Augsburg Sermons, Gospels, Series A*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1974, p244). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 4)

We can understand the king’s anger when his servants who carried the invitation were put to death, especially when the final Messenger was’ his own Son. But when the king sends a servant to the “streets and alleys . . . [to] bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame” (Luke’s parallel), we know that God’s grace is truly nondiscriminatory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 9, Part 4)

22:1 *them*. This parable is addressed to the religious leaders of Israel and primarily speaks a word of judgment and warning against them. (CC)

again in parables – Although the son was killed in the previous parable, here he is alive again. As Jesus tells these parables on Tuesday of Holy Week, He is saying that Good Friday will most certainly be followed by Easter Sunday. That point may have gone right over their heads at the time, but After Jesus’ resurrection, when His disciples had the benefit of hindsight, they were able to see things they had missed before. And that is one good reason why we should read the Scriptures over and over again. Nobody gets it all the first time. (PBC)

This parable repeats three important themes from the previous one (21:33-46), specifically Jesus’ divine Son-ship, Israel’s persistent rejection of its prophets, and the inclusion of Gentiles in God’s kingdom. (TLSB)

A vivid description of the elaborate preparations for an Oriental wedding-feast, to point a moral in the matter of the kingdom of God. For Christ always had a definite purpose in telling His parables, in most cases to teach the proper qualification for becoming a member of His great kingdom (Kretzmann)

22:2-7 Jesus is offering stern truths about the reign of God in Israel at the present time with his ministry underway, as some have followed him and some now are opposing and hating him. Here in Jerusalem, as Jesu moves toward the cross and the empty tomb, his enemies have come against him in open and unrepentant opposition. How should this rejection of God’s reign rightly be understood? The parable answers the question. (CC)

22:2 *kingdom of heaven – hōmoiōthē hē basileia tōn ouranōn*, “the kingdom of heaven may be compared to.” Only the third of the three consecutive parables of this discourse (also Mt 21:28–32, 33–44) begins with the familiar formula, but they are all descriptive of the kingdom that has come in Christ. Jesus presents a similar parable in Lk 14:16–24, but it is clearly a separate occasion and delivers a somewhat different message. The Luke parable is told on a Sabbath (14:1) and presumably earlier in Jesus’ ministry; this one is spoken in the middle of Holy Week, probably on Tuesday. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 4)

wedding feast – A wedding is a great cause for celebration and joining together of family and friends. When royalty is involved, the celebration becomes a national event because of the bond between the people and their head. As in the previous parable, the identity of the characters is scarcely veiled: God the Father is the king, and Jesus is the son. The Jewish hearers would have been quite familiar with the image of God as King (Ex 15:18; Is 40:10; Ps 24; 29:10; etc.) and prophecies of the Messiah/Christ as God’s Son (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 2:12). Just a day or two previously, during His triumphal entry on Palm Sunday, the crowds had acclaimed Jesus as “Son of David” (Mt 21:9), a title that combines the concept of a king (David) and his son – the Son, who is also David’s Lord (Ps 110). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 4)

The wedding feast of celebration might last 7 days (Jud 14:12) or even 14 days (Tobit 8:20). Certainly it was quite an honor to be invited, and the host would have made lavish and expensive preparations. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 4)

The provisions of God for the happiness of men are most abundant and free, and His invitations to them to come and receive according to their wants, are most urgent and sincere. (Concordia Bible)

Jesus’ ministry already now is manifesting the great messianic feast and even more remarkable, should be understood as an eschatological fulfillment of the OT theme of God as Israel’s Husband and Israel as Yahweh’s bride. The feast is a wedding feast. As was foreseen by perhaps no one in the Second Temple period until John the Baptizer, the presence of the Messiah is, at the same time, the presence of Israel’s God and Husband. Jesus, the Messiah, is already now the Bridegroom. Those who oppose Jesus, then, are also opposing and rejecting God’s invitation to his wedding banquet, that is, God’s invitation to be his bride, his people. (CC)

Isaiah 25:6-9 compares the messianic age to a great feast hosted by God. That imagery along with Jesus’ self-identification as the Bridegroom in Mt. 9:15, makes it plain in the parable the father represents God and Jesus is the Bridegroom. (TLSB)

22:3 *he sent other servants* – At the appointed time, servants were sent out to announce that fact to those that had received an invitation, probably the princes, the rich and powerful people of the kingdom. (Kretzmann)

who were invited – This second invitation seems in accord with Eastern custom (Esther 6:14). We are told that among the distinctions of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is mentioned that none of them went to a feast till the invitation had been given twice. The Apostles called those who had already been invited.

The invitation should not have been a surprise. Those to whom the slaves were sent had already been called; had they never read the Scriptures (cf. 21:42). (CC)

Those invited represent the people of Israel. Inexplicably, they refuse to come to the banquet prepared for them. (TLSB)

they would not come – Throughout the Old Covenant and especially when Christ came, God, in Christ, humbled himself deeply and treated the Jews most courteously in the Gospel. But, they refused to come.

On the level of the story, in refusing the king's invitation, they expressed a deadly insult. The sorts of reasons given in the parable (22:5) are no excuse, and the exaggerated and deadly response of the rest who had been invited (22:6) is an almost unthinkable act of shaming the king and his son. To repeat for emphasis: in all of this, the culpability of those who refuse the invitation consists in their dishonoring and insulting their king and his son. (CC)

22:4 *again* – Note that *palin* occurred in verse 1. It showed Jesus' great patience. Under ordinary circumstances a king would certainly not have extended another invitation after the first and second had been rejected.

Other servants – More Apostles, missionaries and evangelists.

I have prepared my dinner – Wholly God's doing. A meal like this was the consummation of the spiritual marriage.

My oxen and fat calves – Compare the sumptuous fare laid out at this feast with the fare prophesied in Is 25. (TLSB)

He sent other servants with a more urgent message for the invited guests. They are given the very words to commend the feast, to stimulate desire for its offering. The attention of the invited guests should be called to the fact that the midday meal, with which the festivities began, was even now fully ready for them. The oxen and the fatted rams had been slaughtered and cooked, nothing of the usual delights of the table was missing. The wealth of the king had overlooked nothing in the endeavor to honor both himself and his guests. (Kretzmann)

22:5-6 Some of those invited to the feast ignore the second invitation. Others greet these messengers with violence. Such refusals represent Israel's reaction toward the prophets sent to them. The cause for this contempt for the Word is not God's foreknowledge, but the perverse human will. The human will rejects or perverts the means and instrument of the Holy Spirit, which God offers it through the call. It resists the Holy Spirit, who wants to be effective, and who works through the Word. (TLSB)

22:5 *paid no attention* – Showed a total lack of interest.

Here was a case of studied insolence and insult. They were indifferent to the urgent call, they paid absolutely no attention to it, in the majority of cases. (Kretzmann)

farm...business – Both of these groups are sophisticated people of earthly means. The point is that they are sunken in mere material and earthly matters, materialists who care not about their own souls.

The fault is not with the king, but with the inexplicably unwilling guests! They greet the invitation with apathy: *ameleo*, "to neglect, be unconcerned, disregard," a word used elsewhere for people spurning salvation (Heb 2:3) or failing to use their spiritual gift (1 Tim 4:14).

22:6 *rest seized his servants* – This group is not just indifferent but hostile. We think of John the Baptist, Stephen and James. The book of Acts is not only an account of the Apostles preaching justification by faith but also an account of how the people treated God's messengers with violence and death.

But a few of the invited guests were not satisfied with merely indicating their disapproval of the king and their contempt for the wedding-feast in this fashion. They vented their spite on the messengers. Having laid hold on them, they treated them with every mark of contempt, and finally killed them. These were acts of open rebellion, naturally followed by war. (Kretzmann)

killed – apekteinan, “killed.” In interpreting a parable, close attention should always be given to any element that does not seem to fit the story or illustration. It may be understandable that some invited guests would be indifferent to a gracious invitation, but it would appear absurd for them to kill the servants delivering the word. Therefore, Jesus’ inclusion of this misfit element is intentional and highly emphatic. In the previous parable, it was specifically the son who was murdered (21:37–39). Here again Jesus is warning the Jewish leaders in no uncertain terms to cease and desist from their murderous plans—which are indeed still aimed at the Son. (Another “misfit element” will occur in v 13.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 4)

22:7 To apply specific referents to characters and actions in this first part of the parable, we can work backward from this verse. In light of the temple incident in 21:12-17, Jesus’ lament over Jerusalem in 23:37-39, and the first half of the Eschatological Discourse (24:1-35), it is crystal clear that 22:7 in the parable predicts that Jerusalem will be destroyed; this coming destruction should be understood as divine judgment. This will come because the Jewish religious leaders have, by and large, rejected God’s Son and the reign of God present in his deeds and his words. (CC)

burned their city.† A common military practice. (CSB)

Anticipates the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 during the first Jewish revolt. (TLSB)

Though men have the power and the disposition, yet they have no right to reject the invitations of God, or to stay away from Him and perish. It is a great dishonor to Him, as well as a great wrong to themselves. (Concordia Bible)

22:8 *wedding feast is ready* – God did not abandon the marriage-feast of his Son. Man’s indifference toward the Gospel or even his destruction of God’s messengers in no way inhibits or stops the process of the Gospel. In fact it is the other way around. Think on that when you consider all your labor in vain.

Not worthy – Faith in the promises of God makes a man deserving. Rejection makes him unworthy.

Their steadfast refusal to accept the invitation disqualified them. (TLSB)

22:9 *go* – poreuesthe reminds us of Matthew 28:19. It is a present imperative referring to the whole NT era.

This expression of divinely extravagant grace must not be misinterpreted. Yes, the parable proclaims a gracious reign of God that will be offered to all the nations in the generations to come. (CC)

main roads – diedzsdous has received a variety of translations: Highways, main highways, where roads leave the city, street corners, thoroughfares, main streets, crossroad, main thoroughfares. All of these get at it in one way or another. It means “where people are congregations.”

Representing the offering of the gospel to the Gentiles and people of all descriptions. (Concordia Bible)

as many as you find – Time was pressing; great hurry was demanded. So they should go out on the highways, to the place where there is a crossing over of roads, either a crossroads from which the roads radiate in *every* direction, or a place near the gates where the roads from all directions *ran together*. (Kretzmann)

22:10 *servants went out* – The turning point came at the time of Pentecost. From that point on, no distinction between Jew and Gentile was to be made.

Good and bad – Parables in Mt repeatedly depict the Kingdom as including “bad people” or hypocrites (cf 13:24–30, 36–43, 47–50). In the end, however, there is always a separation of the true and false believers. (TLSB)

pantas . . . ponērous te kai agathous, “all . . . both bad and good.” The emphasis is on the gracious and universal invitation, rather than on anything—even the faith—of those who are invited. Some will prove to be without faith (vv 11–13). Compare those who are invited in Lk 14:21–23. There, the lowly and helpless quality of the invitees is indeed in view. In the Lukan passage, Jesus is specifically responding to the self-exaltation of the dinner guests who are hearing his parable (Lk 14:7, 12–14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 4)

All of the people who are invited to the king’s banquet are unworthy of His invitation. (PBC)

Every sinner who receives this invitation in penitent faith must confess together with Martin Luther, “I believe that I cannot by my own things or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him. But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel. (PBC)

wedding hall. Representation of the earthly Church. (TLSB)

22:11 *not wearing wedding clothes*. † It has been conjectured that it may have been the custom for the host to provide the guests with wedding garments. This would have been necessary for the guests at this banquet in particular, for they were brought in directly from the streets (vv. 9–10). The failure of the man in question to avail himself of a wedding garment was therefore an insult to the host, who had made the garments available. To come without the wedding garment is to despise the grace of the king, an act which invites judgment. (CSB)

Israelites expected invited guests to wear festive wedding garments, which the host could provide. Thus, this fellow’s failure to dress in appropriate clothing, which was freely given to him, offends the host. This garment signifies the righteousness of God, which covers our sin (cf Is 61:10; Gal 3:27). (TLSB)

This man was there deliberately dishonoring the king and his son. Like the initial group of those who had been invited, this man deemed the wedding feast only something to be treated lightly. (CC)

The garment is a gift from God. Is 61:10 uses wedding imagery and speaks of God clothing His people in garments of salvation. Eph 5:26-27 describes Christ washing His bride to make her holy and spotless, and in Baptism we are clothed with Christ (Gal 3:27). Rev. 19:8 says of Christ’s bride, “Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.” As in Jesus’ two previous parables, good works are the fruit of faith. Good works are made possible solely by the grace of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 3, Part 4)

It was customary for the man who made a wedding feast, to provide wedding garments for those whom he invited. If they would not come, or if they did come but would not put on the wedding garment, it was a great dishonor to the master of the feast. By this incident of the parable, our Lord shows that an outward

acceptance of His gospel is not enough. We may join ourselves to the number of His visible followers; but if our souls have not the wedding garment of faith, love, and holiness, we shall be cast out. (Concordia Bible)

The man who was not wearing wedding clothes calls to mind the traditional prayer of preparation for Holy Communion, Strip of from us the spotted garments of our flesh, and of our own righteousness, and adorn us with the garments of the righteousness that Thou hast purchased with Thy blood. (Notice how this imagery seems to be drawn from Revelation 7:13-14.) (PBC)

22:12 *get in here* – This does not mean that judgment will take place inside of heaven. In application Jesus is talking about a hypocrite. He seemed to accept the invitation but did not in reality.

Was speedless – Without imputed righteousness a man will be muzzled on Judgment Day.

He knew that he was inexcusable. (Concordia Bible)

A time is coming when God will examine into every man's character, and when those who have trusted to their own righteousness, without submission to or acceptance of the righteousness of Christ will, with hypocrites and the openly vicious, be cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. (Concordia Bible)

22:13 *bind him hand and foot* – This signifies the total loss of freedom, total helplessness, imprisonment, and the utter opposite of being a guest at a wedding-feast.

throw him outside, into the darkness . . . weeping . . . gnashing of teeth. † Expressions depicting severe punishment. Whereas the first part of the parable (vv. 2–7) spoke of God's rejection of national Israel (cf. 21:43–45), the latter part (vv. 11–13) deals with the response of the individual. The wedding garment no doubt speaks of the righteousness that God, the gracious host, provides for all who respond to his invitation. God issues an undeserved invitation to undeserving people, and in addition provides the righteousness the invitation demands. (CSB)

Jesus is not talking about an earthly party but about salvation. The exclusion and punishment is a description of hell. (TLSB)

dēsantes autou . . . eis to skotos to exōteron, “bind him . . . into the outer darkness.” As in v 6 earlier, Jesus steps out of the natural situation of the parable. A guest, even such a rude one, would not be bound “hand and foot,” and there is no “outer darkness” surrounding any ordinary wedding hall. Jesus abandons the illustration for, instead, a chilling return to reality. Hell is no parable! *ekei*, “there.” Not simply continuing the previous sentence with an adverbial subordinate clause (“ . . . where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth”). It begins a new sentence emphatically! “There! (In that place!) are unspeakable terrors!” An English translation could read, “*There* there will be weeping . . .” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 4)

The darkness without illuminated banquet hall. The banqueting hall represents heaven with its joys; the outer darkness, hell with its anguish. (Concordia Bible)

22:14 *many . . . invited . . . few . . . chosen.* † God's call, his invitation, goes out to all Israel (v. 3) and to others, good and bad (vv. 8–10); but his grace working through his Word achieves its goal only in the *few* whose response to God's invitation marks them as God's (CSB)

Not every seed that is sown springs up and bears fruit (13:3-9). “Few” here, in combination with and in contradistinction to “many,” probably does not have a numerical sense of “not very many.” Rather, “few” simply contrasts with “all.” Jesus is not teaching here that only an extremely small number of people will be finally saved. (CC)

polloi . . . eisin klētoi, oligoi . . . eklektoi, “many are called, . . . few are chosen.” Also crucial in understanding a parable is any commentary or interpretation Jesus himself gives. The parable is now complete; the imagery is over. Jesus gives us the point: God’s grace is for everyone—the Jews who were on the original guest list and spurned the Son when he finally came, those who heard the invitation and yet insisted on coming in the rags of their own works and goodness, the good and the bad. But only those who receive God’s grace as it is, complete and unique, to be received by faith, will enjoy the eternal celebration. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 18, Part 4)

chosen, his elect. (CSB)

There are many hypocrites in the visible Christian Church. Every hearer must examine himself.

None would accept the gracious invitations of the gospel, and be for ever blessed, if God had not from the beginning chosen them to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit and the belief of the truth. While those who reject Christ and are lost owe their destruction wholly to themselves, those who are saved are indebted for salvation to the riches of grace. (Concordia Bible)

Many of those called into God’s kingdom miss out because they refuse to respond to the invitation properly – in faith. This does not mean that God is unwilling to save everybody. But the reason some are not saved is as follows: They do not listen to God’s Word at all. (TLSB)

22:1–14 Though God earnestly invites all to His Son’s feast, some refuse to accept His invitation and so fail to enjoy its richness. Coming from a long line of believers does not guarantee anyone a place in God’s kingdom. Ingratitude and presumption ever threaten to lead us away. Though we in no way deserve mercy, the Gospel earnestly invites us to come and join the Lord in His eternal heavenly banquet. • Heavenly Father, thank You for preparing a table before us in the presence of our enemies and graciously calling us to dwell in Your house forever. Amen. (TLSB)