

*“Surely this is our God; we trusted in Him, and He saved us. This is the LORD, We trusted in Him; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.” **IJ’N, Amen.***

Possible Prayer of Church for 20th Sunday of Trinity October 18th 2026

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. [Possible] Brief silence

Receive, O LORD, our praise and thanks for every good gift of Your grace. Fill us with Your Spirit, that we might walk wisely and redeem the time You give us on this earth. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Merciful LORD, preserve the invitation of Your saving Gospel among us, that many may come into Your Son’s eternal wedding feast. Protect and vindicate Your servants who preach and teach Your Word. Guard their families from those who oppose their ministry and way of life. Open our ears to listen diligently to Your living and life-giving Word. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Gracious God, we give You thanks for the institution of holy marriage and the myriad blessings of family. Grant that these gifts would be cherished and honored in our society and especially in the Church. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Almighty God, graciously preserve our nation and cause our leaders to serve faithfully and wisely, making God-pleasing decisions and walking in integrity. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

O LORD, give us bread that satisfies and everything needful - not for our sakes, but graciously on account of Christ. Provide, we pray, for every need of body and soul *[especially for **Faith & Our Savior Prayers**] and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in [a moment of silent] prayer.* *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Heavenly Father, clothe all who appear before Your altar this day with the wedding garment of Your righteousness, that they may be worthy guests. Nourish them with Your Son’s body and blood, that their faith may be strengthened through the forgiveness, life and salvation You so freely bestow. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

O LORD, You received the praise of harp and psaltery in Your temple of old. Bless the efforts of our church musicians today to lead the praises of the ascended LORD among us to the edification of Your Church. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Giver of every good and perfect gift, we confess that no one living is righteous before You. Mercifully grant us grace, that we may stand before You on the Day of Judgment, clothed completely in the righteousness of Christ and giving You endless thanks and praise. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Hear us, Heavenly Father, for the sake of Christ Jesus, our LORD, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

TRINITY-20/P.21A Matthew 22:1-14 PLZ! COME TO THE FEAST 10.18.26 F.OS

“The Kingdom of Heaven may be compared to a King who gave a wedding feast for His Son.”

CULTURAL CONTEXT The Parable of the king’s son’s wedding clearly takes place in an entirely different cultural context. In Jesus’ day, weddings were run by the men, not the women. The [main] character at a wedding was not the bride but the groom. And you can tell that men were in charge because the most important thing about a wedding was lots of barbecued meat and wine to drink. *“Rich food full of marrow and aged wine well refined.”* [In my opinion] The only thing missing is shrimp wrapped bacon, but remember this is still Old Testament context. and Jesus’ hasn’t yet totally fulfilled the law of Moses.

HERE’S HOW IT GOES The story goes like this. A king throws a wedding party for his son. The kingdom’s A-list has received their invitations, but as the RSVPs come in, it becomes painfully clear that they have other plans. The king even sends his servants out to go door to door and say, “The steaks are on, the prime rib is smoking, the wine is poured, the feast is ready, come to the feast.” And you would think that the combination of an invitation and a personal reminder, not to mention lots of free food and drink would cause people to drop whatever they were doing and come running to the feast. But you would be wrong.

NO [THANK-YOU] They paid no attention, either to the invitation or to the servants. One went off to his farm to work, another to his business. Some actually seized the servants and beat them up and even killed them. **And these were the invited guests!** Remember now, they had a place the feast. The king had invited them; he was expecting them, he had prepared for them. And the only reason they wind up in Jouter darkness grinding their molars is they would not come to the feast. They would not. It’s not that the king would not have them or didn’t want them or never invited them. They wouldn’t go.

KNOW HOW IT FEELS I know how the king feels. I’m not much of a party person. Maybe I like **to think** I’m a party-person/pastor, maybe I **used to be** one, but [now] not really. My parents weren’t party people either. Other kids in school and their parents would organize **big** parties [at least what we thought big. They thought nothing of inviting 50 kids over for a party. That was unheard of in the Burmeister house. We didn’t even usually have Birthday parties with more than immediate family. Maybe we got to call the shots for dinner and pick our favorite cake. That was it. Happy birthday. I was always worried that if I threw a party and invited my friends, no one would show up. I go through the same anxiety every Sunday morning. I’m afraid no one will come.

IT’S A FREE PARTY Imagine how it is **from God’s perspective.** This **Divine Service is a “Divine Party,”** prepared by the king. The feast is

ready. The lamb is slain. The wine is poured. Come to the feast. And then all the invited guests have more important things to do: brunch, football, change the light bulbs, mow the lawn, wash the car. And when the king sends his servants out to track down the invited guests who are too busy and distracted to come, watch out. They can be a nasty bunch. And all of this of free food and drink, free forgiveness, life, salvation. You'd think this **was a colonoscopy appointment** or something.

DON'T GET ON BAD SIDE Turns out you don't want to get on the bad side of the king. He's nice and generous when it comes to wedding feasts, but not so kind when you blow him off and beat up his servants. So the king sends out his troops and destroys them and their city. Big warning.

A RUNNING THEME... You notice **a pattern in Jesus' Parables**. The unforgiving servant is condemned even though he is forgiven at first. The invited guests become enemies even though they have a place at the table. And it's all their own fault. They refused the king's goodness and so they get the king's wrath. Turn away from the Gospel, and all that's left is the Law with its attendant outer darkness and gnashing of teeth.

COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING Now let's clear up a common misunderstanding. **You don't earn your salvation by your perfect church attendance**, but **you do practice the fact that you are saved** by coming to church to hear the Word of forgiveness and receive that foretaste of the feast to come. Similarly, you don't get condemned for your absence from church, but by your absence you are rehearsing for the day of your damnation. So be [very] careful about saying **"NO"** when the LORD's gifts are offered to you. Those **NOs** to God's grace may culminate in the big rejection on the **Day of Judgment**. Or to put it another way, what are you **"practicing"** for: **Salvation or Damnation?**

WHO ARE THE "A-LIST" (?) As Jesus tells the Parable, the A-list, of course, is Israel and its religious leaders who were actively rejecting Jesus and in so doing forfeiting their seat at the feast. "He came to His own, but His own people did not receive Him." "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone and cornerstone." Jesus, the rejected Messiah of Israel, the Savior of the world. In His rejection is our acceptance.

THE GOOD, BAD & UGLY The king now has a bit of a dilemma. The A-list is not only not coming to the feast, they are quite dead. The feast is still ready. The only thing missing are guests. And so he sends out his servants again, this time out onto the roads and the alleyways, and he has them invite anyone and everyone, the good, the bad, the ugly, reputable and the disreputable. The least, the lost, the lowly, the good as dead. Two-bit hookers, tax collectors, zealots, you name it. The feast is ready, come to the feast. And the wedding hall is full of guests. Of course, this crowd represents the church, the Israel of the end times, a gathering of all sorts of the good, the bad, the ugly, sinners of every stripe.

STOP FOR A SECOND Pause [the movie] for a second. At this point is there anyone who is **not** invited? Is there anyone who is **truly left out?** - **NO**. For all intents and purposes, the whole kingdom is invited. And do these guests **"deserve"** to be there? **Not in the least!** In fact, the A-listers, who are now quite dead, would probably have been mortified to be at the same party with this bunch of losers. It's **grace, gift, Gospel**. Unearned, unmerited. The **worthy are found unworthy, the unworthy are declared worthy**. Remember that.

NO SUIT, BUDDY... [Back to our movie.] The king looks over the crowd, and what a crowd it is! They're eating and drinking and having a great time. And then he spies a man off in the corner who's not wearing a wedding suit. Remember that these people were just rounded up off the streets with no time to change, so we have to assume that the king is handing our Armani suits at the door. He's crazy good and gracious. But for some reason, this man isn't wearing the wedding suit. The king confronts him. *"Hey, buddy. How did you get in here **without a suit?**"*

SPEECHLESS vs. SILENT Now the translation we have says the man was "speechless." But what it actually says is that the man was **silent**. Speechless implies he was stunned at getting caught, kind of like a wedding crasher. **Silent** suggests that he refuses to even acknowledge the king's presence much less talk to him. As in most of the Parables, what should the man have said? That's right, *"I'm sorry. Please forgive me."* [Because] That **always** works in **this Kingdom**. But instead he refuses to speak to the king and insists on being at the feast on his own terms. Not a good idea.

SUMMARY STATEMENT He winds up bound and unceremoniously tossed into outer darkness where he can spend an eternity weeping and gnashing his teeth. And to this, Jesus adds the summary clincher: *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* The called many are all who have heard the great Good News: **Christ has died, Christ has risen. Christ Will come again**. The feast is ready. Come to the feast. The chosen few are those who in faith are gathered at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb in His Kingdom, who are clothed with the wedding garment of His righteousness in Holy Baptism.

INCLUDED BY GRACE To be included is by God's grace, His gift to you. To be excluded is entirely your doing, your refusal, your turning away. He will compel you, lavish His gifts upon you, put the wedding suit on you, seat you at His table and feed you. But he won't force you to stay. The guests at this table are free, they are not imprisoned. Luther once quipped that the doors of the church swing in both directions so that those who wish to come to feast may come, and those who wish to leave can leave. But be careful. The alternative to the wedding feast is outer darkness, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth. And it's so entirely unnecessary.

You are invited. You are clothed. The feast is ready. Come. **IJ'N, Amen. SDG**