

# How Do We Respond to God's Invitation?

Sermon Notes for Oct 15, 2017 at Brentwood

Ps 23 (491) & Matthew 22:1-14 (902)



**Again he sent other slaves, saying,  
“Tell those who have been invited:  
Look, I have prepared my dinner,  
my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered,  
and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.”  
(Matt 22:4)**

## Provocative Ponderings that Call Forth Our Potential in Christ

- There are lots of ways of reading Jesus' parables – and, as Terry often points out at Bible Study, Jesus doesn't always tell us what he means by them – we're left to talk about them and figure their meaning out in communities like this one, followers and friends of Jesus gathering to support each other in our participation in God's mission of justice, peace, and joy in the world – so, what might we make of this story in this place at this time?
- It does help to know a bit about the social structure and wedding customs of Jesus' times – this is a story told to teach about the Commonwealth of God - a generous ruler is throwing a wedding party – the initial invitations go out to other rich people in positions of prominence and power in government and business – the anticipated guests are the social 'in crowd' – but they reject the invitation – they have better things to do – so the king extends the invitation to everyone – and they come – filled with gratitude for this generosity – but there is one who does not respect the generosity and he is dismissed from the banquet – his lack of respect leads to great suffering
- The core meaning of this story, as it enters into our day and age, picks up a Biblical theme of great importance – how do we show hospitality to the stranger, to the migrant, to those of lesser means and lower social standing?
- But there is more here, a prior question, I think – how do we, caught up in the multi-generational complexities of the web of our rebellion against God's mission, accept God's invitation to the wedding feast – it's a celebration of our reconciliation with God, a celebration of God's gift of a covenant that restores our proper role as the 'groundskeepers' (Pat Dutcher-Walls' translation of the mission given to humanity in Gen 2) of God's creation – we join with God in joy at that 'wedding' – we are nourished, generation after generation, in the Lord's Supper, the wedding feast of the Commonwealth of God – that's why we reminded ourselves of that feast in the communion hymns we sang at the beginning of the service this morning – around the table are friends and strangers, the settled and the transitory, the rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish – all welcomed by the ruler – all equally loved in his eyes

## So, what are we going to do with this ...

Two things stand out for me in thinking about how this story has reshaped my understanding of our mission in Christ – be respectfully grateful for God's generosity and be welcoming to all the surprising people the ruler has invited out of his love

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