Twentieth Sunday after Holy Trinity

October 9, 2016

Grace and mercy to you Meara, to Seth and Kala, sponsors Duncan and Kira, grandparents, friends,

all the people gathered here this morning; grace and mercy to you all from God our Father & the Lord Jesus Christ.

Meara Mae has received her wedding dress this morning. Yes, the Lord already knows the young man who will ask for Meara’s hand in marriage but I won’t be talking about that this morning. I am talking about the eternal wedding feast that begins at Holy Baptism. And the dress I am talking about is the robe of righteousness. It is a clean dress Meara will wear for the rest of her life, marking her as one who has been given authority to receive the forgiveness of her sins. It is an unwrinkled dress that Meara will continue to wear even in death, when her body is laid in a grave, and yet her nakedness will be covered before the Lord. It is a white robe of righteous that will cover her until Resurrection Day and beyond. Yes, Meara is well dressed for her eternal groom, Jesus the Christ.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus is preaching a parable about His Father’s invitation sent to all people to come to the wedding feast. For the kingdom of heaven is like a certain King of Kings who desires both the good and the bad to enter His kingdom.

So the King of kings first sends His prophets to gather ancient Israel who were the first to be invited. But the Israelites were to busy to attend the wedding feast.

So the King of kings sends His only begotten Son, Jesus the Christ. But Israelites and the Romans despised the Word of God. So much so they crucified Him. Dying a sinners death, Jesus humbled Himself, despising the shame set before Him and endured damnation, even damnation by death on a cross.

So the King of kings sends His apostles to scour the highways and byways to the ends of the earth to compel the unworthy to receive the wedding feast.

You must know something about these ancient feasts. Yes, you must be well dressed but you never had to dig into your own wardrobe. The father of the groom would proved you with the proper clothes for the feast. This is also true of the heavenly feast. You are not expected to dress your best. Rather you are expected to humble yourself and wear what is given you to wear. This morning, the King of kings gave Meara Mae the perfect clothing to attend the feast. But not all so called Christians enter so humbly and beautifully as Meara Mae.

Some Christians have the mistaken notion that the Lord will accept you just as you are. Well that is true as far as it goes but taken too literally it could lead to your damnation instead of to Christ’s glory.

The Lord does not accept proud, undressed, party crashers to His wedding feast. The man in the parable refused the garments given him. He refused to repent. He refused to humble himself before the Lord and actually thought he was so special that the Lord would delight in this proud, undressed, party crasher. He is speechless when in fact the Lord casts him into hell where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth rather than chicken or beef followed by dancing to the YMCA.

Today, the Christian church still encounters these four types of sinners. First are the busybodies who don’t have time for the Word of God. Second are those who despise the Word of God and crucify Him. Third are those who love a good party but refuse to receive the Word of God. Fourth are those like Meara Mae who receive from the Lord by being wetted by the Word and thereby cling to Jesus alone.

Which type of sinner are you? The answer is all four. So humble yourself in the name of Jesus. Jesus had no sin yet took upon Himself your sin as though it was His own. Your robe of righteousness is the blood of Christ who forgives you ffor you do not know what you are doing. Has someone sinned against you? In the name of Jesus, take that sin as your own, humble yourself under its weigh and forgive the sinner. Jesus will lift you up in due time; even on resurrection day.

Which type of sinner am I? The answer is all four. Do I Lord the Office of the Holy Ministry over you? Then humble me and point me to Jesus. Just as you don’t deserve to be a Christian so also I do not deserve to be a pastor. When I first arrived there was a big to-do about service times, but I think it was communicated that the Voters may choose any time they wish, even if I or the elders or the church council disagrees with you. After that there was some turmoil about what color the narthex and Sunday School rooms should be painted. Most recently, there is concern that an employee needs to be hired for the front office even though I disagree and the majority of the elected officials also agree for various reasons. But you know what the voters can change that at a properly convened voters’ assembly.

What does this all mean? It means that Jesus is the Lord of His church. Not the pastor. Not the elders. Not the church council. And not the Voters.

Let us together, humble ourselves under Jesus the Savior. In our humiliation, Jesus will lift us up in due time. Let us together, be reconciled in the name of Jesus for He has called us to be His holy bride. Let together bear each others sins as though we committed them ourselves for our Father has called us to be His own through the prophets and apostles and He has chosen/elected us to be His own through His Word and Sacrament.

All is prepared! Come to the feast both good and bad. Eat without pay. Drink without cost. The very body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, given to you for the forgivenss of all your sins, along with Meara May’s, and where there is forgiveness there is also life and salvation; in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The times are not politically correct and this will not be a politically correct sermon.