

Sermon for The Second Sunday after Pentecost

Date: June 14, 2020

Location: St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

Old Testament: Deuteronomy 11:1-3, 8-9, 11-13, 15-22, 26-28, 32

Epistle Reading: Revelation 19:6-10

Gospel Reading: Matthew 25:1-19

Sermon Text: Matthew 25:1-19

Sermon Title: In My Father's House are Many Rooms

Introit: Psalm 67:4-7; Antiphon: Psalm 67:3

Hymns:

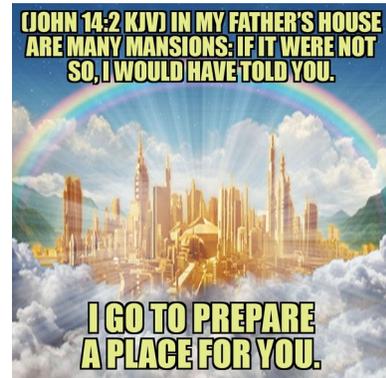
LSB 398 – Hail to the Lord's Anointed (v. 1,2,5)

LSB 514 – The Bridegroom Soon Will Call Us

LSB 543 – What Wondrous Love Is This

Liturgy:

Divine Service III, p. 184



Songs:

In Christ Alone

Knowing You

There Is A Redeemer

What Wondrous Love Is This

Liturgy:

Creative Worship



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Text: Holy Gospel: Matthew 9:35—10:20

Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And proclaim as you go, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without paying; give without pay. Acquire no gold nor silver nor copper for your belts, no bag for your journey, nor two tunics nor sandals nor a staff, for the laborer deserves his food. And whatever town or village you enter, find out who is worthy in it and stay there until you depart. As you enter the house, greet it. And if the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it, but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. And if anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town. Truly, I say to you, it will be more bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town.

“Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men, for they will deliver you over to courts and flog you in their synagogues, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you over, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say, for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.”

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Grace, peace, and mercy be yours in Jesus' name. Amen.

Weddings are a wonderful thing. They are a time of celebration with dancing, singing, and joy. There are many traditions for weddings that have come and gone through the ages. Preparations are made. Meals are planned. The wedding service is planned and practiced. There is often much fretting over meticulous designs to make everything just right.

About the time Jesus was walking the Earth, there was a tradition that was, by our standards, a little unusual. At that time, when a young man was of age, and feeling like he was ready to get married, he would approach his father and ask permission to get married. The father would have to give his consent. The young man was then instructed to build a room onto his father's house. Houses in that region were made up of several rooms built together over the generations. There would be generations of people living in the house. Each with their own room or rooms. Each generation added to the house. As older parts of the house became to run down they would be fixed up or torn down. A very large house with many rooms indicated a large family, probably with lots of sons.

So that father, after giving his permission for the young man to be married would begin teaching him how to build onto the house. Now the young man, having thing other than home construction on his mind, would want to throw up a quick bunch of boards and plaster, and call it all good. The father, however, would want the addition to his home to look good and to be done right. So the young man would have to build a part, get it approved, or tear it down and do it again. He had to work until everything was just right.

While all of this was going on people would take notice. "Did you hear? Mordecai's son is building a room!" All the young girls would hear the gossip. They might even find some reason to walk past the home to see how far along the construction was progressing. As the building was nearing completion the young girls would all have to get ready. They would get there wedding dress clean and hung, and ready to put on at a moments notice. Her wedding jewelry was laid out to ensure everything was perfect and ready for the big day.

No one knew what day that would be. The only one who knew was the son's Father. He and he alone would determine when the wedding would begin. Finally the day would come. All the preparations would have been completed by the young man. He would have, finally, put the last finishing touches on his new room. This could happen at any time. The young man is eager to get married. He may even be inclined to wake his father from a sound sleep to have him give the final inspection in the middle of the night.

The father would look over the room, the construction, the design. He would evaluate how well the work had been done. Then he would say the words. "It is ready. Go get your bride." At that the young man would wake up all his friends. They would put on their wedding cloths, and the party would begin. Even if it was in the middle of the night, it would not take long for everyone in the town to be awakened by the noise of revelry and celebration. The wedding party of men would then begin to walk through the streets. The young girls would be woken, and had to quickly get dressed. They had to do their hair, put on their makeup, and don their jewelry. Mothers, grandmother, sisters, and aunts would all be hustling and bustling about the house helping her get ready as quickly as possible.

Then they would hear the sound of the party approaching. The young girls would all go out into the streets and wait to see who the young man would choose as his bride. You see until now, only the son knew who was chosen. He knew who he wanted but it was supposed to be kept a secret. So only he could go out and bring her home to himself. The party would wind through the streets and they might even make a few trips through the town before, finally, the young man would make that last turn down that last street and head for the girl of his choosing.

As he approached the excitement would rise. The shouts of celebration would grow louder. Mothers would be crying, girls would be squealing, and then the young man would offer his hand to the girl of his choice. As she took his hand the uproar of joy would fill the streets. The wedding party would last for days. You see the father, while he was inspecting the construction process, was also making preparations. He had to get a fatted calf or two. He had to get the wine, and all the other accouterments necessary to put on a decent wedding celebration. Because as soon as the son extended his hand to that young girl, everyone was going to be running to his house for week of food, fun, festivities and celebration. He would have to feed them all.

Now sometimes people from neighboring towns, upon hearing of the celebration would try to sneak in and join in the fun and food, even though they were were not invited. For that reason each person had to have a specific set of wedding cloths. Those cloths were part of your identity. They identified you as well as your relationship to your family and your family's heritage. Wedding clothes were a statement of pride. They were part of your family name. So if someone arrived at the wedding without the proper wedding clothes, they would be thrown out into the street, because they were just free loaders, wedding crashers. They had not been invited to the wedding.

After the week long celebration the young man would, finally, get to take his bride into his house, and show her all that he had built and prepared for her. She knew it would be done well because the father had overseen the construction and preparation, but it was still a surprise to see exactly how it would all look. From that day on she would be his bride, his wife, and they would live together forever.

Knowing the traditions of their society and culture, might give you a little better understanding of what Jesus was teaching. He often spoke of the relationship between God and His people like a wedding. Jesus said:

Don't be troubled. Believe in God, and believe in me. My Father's house has many rooms. If that were not true, would I have told you that I'm going to prepare a place for you? If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again. Then I will bring you into my presence so that you will be where I am.¹

After Jesus' ascension into Heaven He began preparing a place for us. He began building and constructing where we will live. Just like the young man who had to build a room on his father's house, so Jesus is building in His Father's house. So that we will have a place to live with Jesus and the Father.

Jesus said:

“No one knows when that day or hour will come. Even the angels in heaven and the Son don't know. Only the Father knows.”²

Just as the groom's friends and wedding party did not know the hour, just as the groom did not know when the time would come, Jesus says even He does not know. Only the Father knows. When all is ready He will give the word and the Son of God will come down in regal array, with all the angels, to choose who will go with Him. Jesus said,

When the Son of Man comes again, it will be exactly like the days of Noah.”

Meaning it will unexpected and without notice. He continues,

In the days before the flood, people were eating, drinking, and getting married until the day that Noah went into the ship. They were not aware of what was happening until the flood came and swept all of them

1 John 14:1-3

2 Matthew 24:36

away. That is how it will be when the Son of Man comes again.³

There will be no warning. Those young girls who were not ready, whose clothes were not prepared and hung, whose jewels were not laid out and cleaned, those who had not prepared would not be chosen. Jesus said when He returns:

At that time two men will be working in the field. One will be taken, and the other one will be left. Two women will be working at a mill. One will be taken, and the other one will be left. Therefore, be alert, because you don't know on what day your Lord will return. You, too, must be ready because the Son of Man will return when you least expect him.⁴

Jesus was using the example of their time to explain to them that we need to be ready at all time. We need to be prepared for Jesus' return when He will come without warning, without advanced notice. The Christian Church is described as the bride of Christ. So if the Church is the bride, if we are the ones waiting for the Son to return, how do we get ready? What are the preparations we need to make? What are the wedding clothes we need to have? Jesus' disciple John explained it this way:

I heard what sounded like the noise from a large crowd, like the noise of raging waters, like the noise of loud thunder, saying, "Hallelujah! The Lord our God, the Almighty, has become king. Let us rejoice, be happy, and give him glory because it is time for the Marriage of the Lamb. His bride [*the Church*] has made herself ready. She has been given the privilege of wearing dazzling, pure white linen. This fine linen represents the things that God's holy people do that have his approval.⁵

God's own Word, the Bible, tells us everything we need to know to get ready, to be ready, for His return. When He returns we will go to live with Him forever.

Just as marriage is an example of God's love for us in the Bible, it can still be an example to us. God's institution of marriage is still something that teaches us how to live for Him and under His care. We are the apple of God's eye.⁶ We are the

3 Matthew 24:37-39

4 Matthew 24:40-44

5 Revelation 19:6-8

6 Psalm 17:8

love of His heart. He wants everyone to be saved. He wants us all to go home with Him.⁷ Once we are with Him, nothing can take us out of His hand.⁸ Marriage was designed to be that example from the beginning of creation, and it remains that good example when all things are done well.

So from now on, when you attend a wedding, when you celebrate with family and friends, remember that all of that excitement and preparation is designed by God to teach us all about His love for us, and His desperate desire to save us all.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.



**Proclaim God's Word,
Encourage one another in faith,
Witness to God's love and
Serve all people**

7 1 Timothy 2:4

8 John 10:28