

Sermon
20th Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 23)
Light Lutheran Church
October 11th, 2026

Matthew 22:1-14 - “Do I have those ‘righteous’ Robes?”

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be blessed in Christ Jesus, Amen. Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to begin with a question: **Who’s got God’s wedding robes?**

Not, “Who’s got their best clothes on?” Not, “Who looks like they belong here?” But **who’s wearing the garment the King has provided?** Because that’s really what Jesus asks us in this strange parable about a wedding feast.

Jesus says the kingdom of heaven looks like a king who prepares a wedding feast for his son. The food is ready. The tables are set. Everything is prepared. So, the king sends his servants out with a simple message: **“Come to the wedding feast!”**

What an invitation! You don’t have to organise the food. You don’t have to pay for the meal. You don’t have to prove that you deserve a seat. The King has done it all. Just come. But some people refuse. They simply don’t want to come. Others get on with their own business. One goes to his farm. Another goes to his business and that sounds remarkably familiar, doesn’t it? We live in a culture where people have plenty to do. Work. Sport. Family. Gardens. Holidays. Renovations. Fishing. Footy. The list goes on and none of those things are necessarily bad.

But we can fill our lives with good things and still have no room for God. That’s the uncomfortable part of Jesus’ parable. **The invitation goes out, but not everyone wants it.** And that invitation still goes out today.

“Come to Jesus.” “Come and receive forgiveness.” “Come and hear God’s Word.” “Come to the feast.” “Come and receive Christ.” But plenty of people simply aren’t interested and we shouldn’t kid ourselves: sometimes we aren’t very interested either. We can become comfortable with church. Comfortable with our pew or seat. Comfortable with our congregation. Comfortable with our own building.

We can enjoy having our little corner of the kingdom sorted out, but Jesus reminds us that the King's invitation reaches much further than our comfortable little corner. The King wants his wedding hall full.

So, he says to his servants: **“Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.”** Anyone. The poor. The needy. The outsider. The person who doesn't have their life together. The person who doesn't know the hymns. The person who hasn't darkened the door of a church for twenty years. The person who thinks Christianity has nothing to do with them.

Go and invite them.

But here's the important thing: Jesus doesn't tell us to invite people because our church needs bigger numbers. He doesn't tell us to invite people because we need to keep an organisation alive and he certainly doesn't tell us to invite people so that we can prove ourselves to God. **We invite because God has already invited us.** That's what changes everything.

But then Jesus takes the parable in a confronting direction. The servants bring in everyone they can find. The wedding hall fills up. But then the king notices someone who isn't wearing a wedding garment and the king asks:

“Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?” The man has nothing to say. No explanation. So, the king has him thrown out.

That sounds harsh don't you think? But Jesus gives us an important picture here. Jesus doesn't tell us exactly how this man came to the feast without a wedding garment. But that's precisely the point of the picture. He has entered the banquet without receiving what the King provides. He wants the feast, but he refuses the garment. He wants the kingdom on his own terms. He's a wedding crasher. He's in for the free food and drink. He wants the banquet without receiving what the King gives and that brings us right to the heart of the Gospel.

So, here is a warning for us. We don't come before God dressed in our own goodness. We don't come wearing our church record, our family history, our morality or our religious achievements. We come wearing Christ.

God gives us the wedding garment. In baptism, he clothes us with Christ. Through faith, we receive Christ's righteousness as our own. Jesus takes our sin in the great exchange and gives us his rightness.

So, the question isn't, 'Have I made myself good enough for God's banquet?' The answer to that is always no. The question is, 'Am I trusting Christ?' Because Christ is our wedding garment.

God invites us to his feast, and God also provides what we need to enter it.

He doesn't look at us and say: "Get yourself cleaned up and then come." He doesn't say: "Make yourself worthy and then I'll accept you." He says: **"Come."** And then he clothes us. Not with our goodness. Not with our achievements. Not with our church attendance. Not with our reputation. Not with the fact that we have been Lutheran for fifty, sixty or seventy years. He clothes us with **Christ**.

Paul says in Galatians: **"All of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."**

There's our wedding garment. **Christ himself**. Jesus takes our sin and gives us his righteousness. He takes our shame and gives us his holiness. He takes our death and gives us his life. He takes everything that separates us from God and carries it to the cross and in the great exchange, he gives us everything that belongs to him. That's grace. That's the Gospel.

We don't come to God dressed in our own righteousness. We come wearing Christ and that means the person sitting beside you today doesn't need to prove themselves either. Neither do you. The farmer. The retiree. The professional. The battler. The newcomer. The person whose life looks completely sorted. The person whose life has fallen apart. **Christ is enough for all of us.** That's why there is room at the table.

And now we can understand the last part of the parable differently. The King sends his servants out to gather people in. That means **we are also those servants**. But notice what we carry. We don't carry a list of demands. We don't carry a clipboard checking whether people are good enough. We don't stand at the door saying: "Clean yourself up first." We carry the King's invitation. **"Come."** Come and hear the good news. Come and receive forgiveness. Come and meet Jesus. Come and

hear God's Word. Come and receive his gifts. Come to the feast and that matters for us as a collection of preaching points.

Freeling doesn't exist just for Freeling. Kapunda doesn't exist just for Kapunda. Allen's Creek, Bethel and Rosedale don't exist just for the people already sitting in those churches either.

God has placed us here as his servants. We have been blessed. We have buildings. We have people. We have history. We have resources. We have the Gospel. **We have Christ**, and we have people all around us who need what we have received. Some of them know they need it. Many don't.

Some are lonely. Some are struggling financially. Some have families falling apart. Some carry guilt they never talk about. Some simply assume Christianity has nothing to offer them, and some are perfectly comfortable and don't think they need God at all.

Our job isn't to force them through the door. Our job isn't to carry the guilt of whether they respond. **Our job is simply to invite.** The Holy Spirit does the rest. That takes the pressure off. We don't save people. Jesus does. We don't manufacture faith. The Holy Spirit creates faith through the Word. We don't provide the wedding garment. **The King does.** We simply take the invitation into the streets and sometimes that invitation might look very ordinary.

A conversation over the fence. A cup of coffee. An invitation to a barbecue. A visit to someone who hasn't been around for a while. Offering to pray with someone. Inviting a neighbour to church. Sitting beside someone who feels alone. Forgiving someone who has hurt us. Showing practical love when somebody needs a hand. These things don't earn God's favour. **They flow from the favour we have already received.**

So, who's got the wedding robe?

If you're trusting in yourself, you haven't got one. If you're trusting in how good you've been, you haven't got one. If you're trusting in your church membership, your family last name or history, or your religious achievements, you haven't got one. But if you trust in Jesus Christ, **you're wearing Christ.** And that is enough.

The King has invited you. The King has provided the garment. The King has prepared the feast. The King has forgiven your sin, and the King now sends you out with the same invitation: **“Come to the feast.”**

So, let’s enjoy the feast. Let’s live together in the forgiveness Christ has given us and then, as forgiven people wearing Christ, let’s open the doors and invite others in. Not because we have to make the kingdom bigger, but because **the King wants his house full**. Not because we have something to prove, but because **we have something wonderful to share**. Christ has clothed us, forgiven us and has welcomed us.

Now let’s go and invite others to the feast.

We Pray:

Heavenly Father, thank you for inviting us to the wedding feast of your Son. Thank you that Christ has taken our sin and clothed us with his righteousness. Keep us trusting in him, living in his forgiveness, and ready to share your gracious invitation with others.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

Children’s Address: