

Reflection for Trinity 19. Matt 22.1-14

This week's gospel reading is one of those really hard ones, that seems to challenge how we think about Jesus and his teaching. The Parable of the Wedding Feast is so harsh. I read the comment about it that it "is enough to make any interpreter go weak at the knees."

The two really hard bits are the apparent injustice of the way the improperly dressed wedding guest is treated so harshly and the final verse, "Many are called but few are chosen."

The first of these seems to contradict directly the words of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 6.25-31, Luke's version of which we heard last week at Harvest, teaching us not to worry about what we wear. The famous saying "Consider the lilies of the field..." What is the answer? How can we deal with such a contradiction?

The second bit, verse 14, is perhaps the hardest. It seems to speak of predetermination. It seems so harsh. Are only a few of us chosen in spite of so many being called? Surely Jesus calls us all and wants us to follow him and inherit eternal life?

Perhaps we need to remember that Jesus is speaking these harsh words to the Chief Priests and Pharisees, his most greatest enemies of whom he was highly critical.

Perhaps we need to take comfort in Jesus' words in Matt 11.28-30. "*Come to me all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.....For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*"

Phil Baker



NEXT SUNDAY 22.10.2023 Trinity 20

10.30am Sung Eucharist in Church

READINGS: OT Isaiah 45: 1-7

NT 1 Thessalonians 1: 1-10

GOSPEL Matthew 22: 15-22



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St Thomas, Exeter

15th October 2023

Trinity 19

10.30am in Church

Today

10.30am Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

432 Rejoice, the Lord is King

259 Jerusalem the golden

518 Thy hand, O God, has guided

Tuesday 17th October

7.30pm House Group 'Finding Wisdom' See Notices

Wednesday 18th October

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

7/7.30pm Deanery Synod in the Hall

Thursday 19th October

9.30—11am St Thomas Tots

10.30am-12noon Knit & Natter, 19 Maple Rd

Details from Jenny on 01392 498725

Friday 20th October

9.30am Morning Prayer

10am Staff Meeting



Collect

O God, forasmuch as without you we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Isaiah 25: 1-9

O LORD, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rain-storm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled. On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear.

And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the LORD has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

Philippians 4: 1-9

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry

about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Matthew 22: 1-14

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. 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." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. 'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'

Post Communion

Holy and blessed God, you have fed us with the body and blood of your Son and filled us with your Holy Spirit: may we honour you, not only with our lips but in lives dedicated to the service of Jesus Christ our Lord.

NOTICES

We are considering having a **warm space** again this year. If you would like to volunteer to help with this, please speak to Revd Sarah.

Community Larder There is no longer a donation point on Thursdays. There will be a collection box in church on Sundays for food donations. The need remains great so please be mindful of our wider community.

House Group has started meeting again when we will study the Book of Proverbs. Meetings will be held at Perridge Close at 7.30pm. Please ring Helen on 410400 for details.

As you may know **St Thomas Library** is having to relocate. Devon County Council would like you to have your Say about the library and potential new locations: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/haveyoursay/categories/libraries-and-heritage> There are also feedback forms at the library and email stthomas.library@librariesunlimited.org.uk

All Souls service is on Sunday 5th November. If you have a relative or friend you wish to be remembered please add their name to the list of the back of the church before Sunday 29th October. The names included last year will be read out automatically.

There will be an **inter-cultural celebration of All Souls** in the church hall and churchyard on Sunday 29th October from 1pm until 5pm. All welcome. More details to follow.

