

Trinity II, 2006
Text: Luke 14:15-24
Trinity Lutheran, Worden, IL & Zion Lutheran, Carpenter, IL
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✠Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ ✠

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

All is now ready! Come to the feast! Do not hold back. Do not hedge your bets. There is nothing more important, nothing more urgent than this feast. Stop with your excuses. The pairs of oxen can break themselves in. Your field will still be there tomorrow. Bring your spouse with you – or leave your spouse behind should he refuse to come, for the one who invites you to the feast says, “He who loves father or mother, or spouse or children more than me is not worthy of me.” His love demands all because it gives all. He has laid it all on the line for you – he spreads out his salvation before you at the feast. So do not delay, do not ask to be excused – come to the feast.

Come to the feast because it is only here that you will have true nourishment. The simple fact is that you will starve to death if you stay away. For you do not know what to eat. When you feast on your thoughts of revenge against those who have harmed you, you think you are tasting the succulent nourishment of a fine steak – but it will always turn to sawdust in your mouth. You think that by indulging your eyes with pictures and visions contrary to your calling as husband that you are drinking down a fine wine – but it will be the sharpest vinegar that burns your throat. And those petty, spiteful words, or the lingering thoughts of envy, or the rush of adrenaline that comes with lashing out with your temper – these are not the sweet little morsels you desire but sour, rotten grapes that will curdle your stomach.

So repent. Give up on your own notions of what will nourish your soul. Give up on yourself completely and instead just come to the feast prepared for you. For in your heart of hearts you know that you are starving. In your moments of clarity you feel the raw hunger inside of you. You can see what your malnutrition had done to you – how you are crippled in spiritual things and lost in the lonely streets of this world; how your faith waivers, how your prayers falter, how your mind wanders away from the things of God. So repent of it all – give up on it all – and come to the feast.

For behold: all has been prepared for you – and it is an expensively set table, indeed it cost the host everything he had, his entire fortune, to provide you the meal you need to sustain your soul. He held nothing back from you – he lavished his grace on you. Indeed, our Lord Jesus Christ, God in the flesh did not set this Table before you by buying what you needed with gold and silver. No, he purchased your salvation, your redemption, your eternal life with his holy precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. He himself had the life starved out of him by man's hatred as he died on the cross – so that you might be nourished and filled with his Life.

For behold, this banquet is like no other. Here you have nourishment that lasts not a lifetime but an eternity. For here you have eternal food – the very Bread which came down from heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ. His blood will quench and heal your vinegar scarred throat. His body will fill your deepest hunger. In receiving the Food and Drink laid out for you at this Table you will have the forgiveness of your sins. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross bought this forgiveness for you, and now this forgiveness is given to you as you receive the very body that was sacrificed for you, the very blood that was out-poured for the remission of your sins.

All is well now. You will not starve and fade away to nothing, instead you shall be healed and have your strength renewed. He who feeds you with his own risen body and blood will not allow you remain in the grave either. Since you have been filled with Christ's Body and Blood you too shall have eternal life in a resurrected body. As you participate now in the first course of the heavenly banquet, this Lord's Supper where you receive Jesus in the here and now, even so shall you gain entrance into the kingdom where this feast will continue forever in ways we cannot fully understand now. But you are invited – the feast is ready – it is yours – you are clothed in the Baptismal garments of Christ's righteousness – so what are we waiting for? All you who hunger and thirst for a love and a righteousness you cannot attain on your own, come to the feast and receive your Lord Jesus who here, in his body and blood, gives you forgiveness, life, and salvation. Come to the feast: the line starts right there.

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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Now the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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