



Mount Carmel Lutheran Church

Participating in God's Presence & Power

Sermon by Pastor Rollie Martinson

on Matthew 22:1-14

Sunday, March 24, 2019

(This is an outline of the sermon Pr. Martinson delivered in worship.)

God has been present and at work around and among us forever!

God has been...

- *Making the universe including planet earth and all its stars!*
- *Calling the Jewish people and preparing them to be a blessing to the world.*
- *Issuing the 10 commandments as a compass and road map for living.*
- *Liberating Israel from Egypt and leading them into a land of their own.*
- *Sending prophets to challenge God's people to be faithful and if not faithful repent*

But...

What is God up to in Jesus?

What is this new presence and power of God in the world?

How do I participate?

This was the question of the Jewish leaders of Jesus' day. It is often our question.

Jesus was unconventional.

- *He had no institutional authorization*
- *He hadn't been to Rabbi school*
- *He wasn't a Chief priest*
- *Yet his teachings were true, clear, wise and sometimes jarring*
- *He healed sick people but not all*
- *He did miracles but only when he chose*
- *He hung out with both good and bad people*
- *He walked the countryside and the streets...as well as synagogues*

The religious leaders of his day were confused, upset and angry with him...

What is Jesus to do?

He tells them a story
Matthew 22:1-14

Can it be that what Jesus' mission in his day and ever since
 is like a Wedding Banquet?

Seems so...

- *In a wedding banquet there is good news...so too with Jesus*
- *A wedding banquet is a life changing event marking a new status...so too with Jesus*
- *A wedding banquet is a celebration of love...so too with Jesus*
- *Friends and family are invited...so too with Jesus*
- *There is food and drink and servers...so too with Jesus*
- *Guests talk and laugh and drink...so too with Jesus*

*So members and friends and visitors of Mt. Carmel...
 welcome to the wedding banquet!*

We have been baptized...we are members of God's family

If we have not been baptized,

we know that everyone is invited to God's wedding banquet

We are all guests at God's banquet this morning and every morning!

Jesus is the good news that God is present and powerful right here, right now

*The good news that God loves us...has taken us to himself
 Our relationship with God and our status in life have changed*

- *We belong with God and God's people*
- *We have been forgiven*
- *We are gaining new understanding and wisdom*
- *We are being healed*
- *We are comforted*
- *We are not alone*
- *We have meaning and purpose*
- *We are being inspired*
- *We are on a pathway of life for ever!*

*The new presence and power of God in Jesus...life-giving and jarring and
 unconventional...is good news...it is cause for celebration!*

So get up in the morning knowing God loves you and desires abundant life for you

- *Live your life aware that God is enabling others to live better because of you*

- *Come to worship and sing and pray your hearts out*
- *Dwell in God's word*
- *Receive communion*
- *Welcome and comfort one another*
- *Be supported in your hurt and anger and suffering*
- *Be sustained in your grief and sorrow and depression*
- *Carry on conversation with God*
- *Like with all other good things, include your life with God in your everyday conversations*

Life with Jesus in the new presence and power of God is different...its good...its like a wedding banquet.

*Francis knows-story; Sally knows-story
We've forgotten parts of Jesus' story of the wedding banquet.*

***In the wedding banquet in Jesus' story there is not only promise
there are problems and surprises:
The invited guests don't come...and
One or more at the banquet haven't dressed properly...
These people are thrown out of the celebration***

The invited guests don't come.

The invited guests...most likely both the Jewish leaders and Jesus knew he was referring to the Jewish people...particularly these very leaders who were speaking with him. The banquet was for them, but they wouldn't come... By choice they would not be a part of God's new presence and power.

So with the invited guests' rejection, the invitation to participate in God's new presence and power goes to anyone and everyone. They come; they fill the banquet hall!

A guest is not properly dressed.

A guest or guests don't come dressed in a wedding robe. The guest is confronted and thrown out of the banquet

*Is it possible today to be a Christian and not come to the banquet? And/or...
Is it possible to come to the banquet and not "fit or participate?"*

Certainly there those who drop away - "the dones"

Certainly, there are those who don't "join in:" who don't participate-the "nones"

The realization of abundant life comes to those who engage, who participate in the banquet's relationships and activities; to those who "live in and out of the new presence and power of God in Jesus."

The table is set; come:

Worship-Sing-Pray-Dwell in God's Word-Receive Communion-

Be forgiven and forgive;

Love and be loved; Welcome and be welcomed; Know and be known;

Listen and learn;

Comfort and be comforted; Support and be supported; Call and be called;

Celebrate and be celebrated!

Welcome to the Wedding Banquet!

Welcome to the Presence and Power of God!