

In the Apocalypse, the great vision of the victory of the Lamb who was slain, and eternal life in heaven, John the Apostle is told to write: “Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb.” [Rev. 19: 9](#)

He uses the picture of a wedding feast to express the intimate relationship that exists between the Lord, and His people.

It has its roots deep in Old Testament prophecy; no more so than the Old Testament reading we’ve just listened to.

In that passage, Isaiah looks toward the Last Day when the Lord will call all His faithful people to the wedding feast of heaven.

And he uses the image of: “A feast of juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines.” [Is. 25: 6](#) to help us see how wonderful it will be.

It’s symbolic of great spiritual blessings; but it also points to physical blessings as well.

After all, we’re body and spirit; and we believe that we’ll be resurrected body and spirit.

We will follow Jesus: “The firstborn from the dead.” [Col. 1: 18](#) through: “The valley of the shadow of death.” [Ps. 23: 4](#) into eternal life with Him, where we will: “Live in the house of the Lord forever.”

[Ps. 23: 6](#)

And fear of death is that awful nightmare, which affects us not just physically, but also spiritually.

However, Isaiah promises us that the Lord: “Will remove the shadow of death that hangs over the earth. He will destroy death forever. The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces.”

[Is. 25: 7 – 8](#)

What we must hold in our hearts and minds is that all of this isn’t something promised for the dim and distant future; because, in Jesus, it’s burst into the here, and now.

Jesus has destroyed death, through His Death, and Resurrection.

This is the Good News we have to give to the world, and is at the heart of the Parable in our Gospel, which Jesus speaks to each one of us tonight/this morning.

But Parables disturb us, because we want to hear a nice story about the Lord throwing a party, where everyone is let in.

We shy away from talking about judgement on the wicked, or about having Christian standards of holiness, and morality.

But, doesn’t Isaiah tell us, you might ask, that the Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces?

Yes, he does; but it has to be put in its context.

It doesn’t mean that God will act like an indulgent parent telling us: ‘There, there it doesn’t matter, you’re only a child, so go ahead, and do whatever you want.’

No, He wants us to be grown-up, mature Christians; not babies.

And part of being grown-up is we learn that actions have consequences, that moral choices matter – eternally.

Real life isn’t like a child’s game, where, even if we do badly, the pieces go safely back in the box at the end of the day, and we start again tomorrow.

The deep mystery of God’s forgiveness isn’t the same as saying that whatever we do isn’t really important, because He’ll always forgive us.

This isn’t a lesson we want to learn, so that’s why we find this Parable difficult to take.

As with the all of the Parables Jesus told, they had a direct relevance to the people who heard them.

But they also speak as forcefully to every person who hears them; The People of God – the Jewish people – were like guests invited to a wedding: God’s wedding Feast; the party He was throwing for His Son.

But they refused the invitation. The longed-for Saviour was here in Jerusalem where His Father’s House, the Temple, stood; and His people didn’t want to know.

The Prophets throughout the Old Testament had foretold this moment, but they'd been abused, ridiculed, and killed.

Now the same was going to happen to God's One and Only Son.

Except for: "A remnant chosen by grace," [Rm. 11: 5](#) the People of God refused to accept Jesus as the Saviour.

Then, after the Lord's Resurrection, God sent out across the world that: "Remnant chosen by grace" – the Apostles – to tell anyone, and everyone to come to the party.

They came, and are still coming, in droves.

In Matthew's Gospel, and he a Jew who'd accepted Jesus as his Saviour, we constantly hear of Jesus calling into His Kingdom those who never dreamt they'd be part of it.

But there's a difference between this wide-open invitation, and the message so many people want to hear today.

We want to hear that everyone is all right exactly as they are; that the Lord loves us just as we are, and doesn't want us to change.

Yes, He does love us just as we are, and Scripture tells us that: "Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners." [Rm. 5: 6](#) Yes, He died for sinners like us, just as we are; but He desires to restore His image, and likeness within us.

His love reaches out to us where we are, but His love refuses to let us stay as we are.

He wants our lives to be transformed, healed, and changed.

I wonder if we genuinely want that to happen to us: or would we rather be like the man at the wedding feast who'd slipped in without changing into his wedding garment?

Yet, why was this man thrown out because he hadn't put on the right clothes?

Well, Paul supplies the answer in the Letter to the Ephesians, where he tells us to: "Throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy." [Eph. 4: 22 – 24](#)

The garment we have to put on to be an honoured guest at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb is the garment of righteousness and holiness we were given at our Baptism; which is cleansed and renewed and every time we receive the Lord in the Eucharist.

Going back to the Apocalypse, with which I began.

In that book, the Lord speaks these words to the luke-warm Christians of the Church in Laodicea.

I wonder if His words resonate with us today? "You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realise that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see."

[Rev 3: 17 - 18](#)

Then Jesus then says to us: "Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends." [Rev. 3: 20](#)

So, as we go on to celebrate the meal, and sacrifice of the Eucharist, let's put on our wedding garment; our: "New nature, created to be like God – truly righteous and holy." [Eph. 4: 24](#) which He gave to us a free gift at our Baptism.