**8/31/25**

**We have a banquet coming up!**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Luke 14:1, 7-14 (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

This Gospel Reading is getting put into a real time format and context in just a few short weeks. These very stories will actually be lived out (right here) at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church. That is very cool, and yet that is very stressful. Of course, these stories may be in a different time and community, and are obviously for a slightly different purpose with some different guests. However, we will live them out and we will write more of our own history in the life of this community in 2025.

Now, you may know that we will be gathering together with one another for our 75th Anniversary on Sunday, October 19th. You may also realize that we will gather together at a special Worship Service time of 3PM at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church. You may even know that we will have the newly elected and installed Bishop of the New Jersey Synod present with us, along with several of our neighbors as our guests of honor. However, do you happen to realize that we will also have the ever-present host and guest with us? Christ in the form of the Holy Spirit will indeed be alongside each and every one of us, just as he was back then in the flesh. Yet, do we really realize that or focus on that like we should? If we truly intend to have a wonderful banquet with amazing guests during our celebration then we should realize that without our Triune God we actually have nothing.

With all that in mind… What will we actually do different or even radical? What will we do to ensure that the ending of verse 14 becomes a reality into which each and every single one of us lives into? For when it comes down to it, we come to the realization that we actually need repaid for absolutely nothing here and now. If we are living out our lives right then we are aware of the very hope and reassurance of the ultimate reward that is out there for each and every single one of us and that it will be “repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” (2)

Now, just let all of that sink in a little bit. Let that date and time of Sunday, October 19th come to the forefront of your minds, and let us ponder how much more that particular day actually means. However, first and foremost, let us give thanks to God for blessing this community on its upcoming 75th Anniversary. Let us also give thanks to God for allowing us to join together with one another to explore this Life-Giving Word today. This is where I thank you for continuing to make a commitment to come together each week and support one another. This is where I thank you for continuing to hold one another up, and help one another grow precisely as our Triune God intended. This is also where I thank you for not heaping it all on my shoulders, and being willing to shoulder it alongside of me and the Holy Spirit. The scripture is indeed unleashed from this book when we live it out in our daily lives, and more importantly when we share it with one another.

So, after that little pause and refocus there let’s get back to business here! Let’s unwrap this text in a way that you may or may not have ever thought of before. Let’s really make this text something we learn from and live into not just for our 75th Anniversary, but something we really learn from and live into each and every single day of our lives moving forward as well. (And for those of you sitting in the pews here at Brookdale this afternoon, just realize that the invitation to this celebration and banquet is extended to you all. You are an extension of our very family at Holy Spirit Lutheran Church. That family is what brings me here to worship with you on every occasion in which I have the special privilege and honor of doing. It is also my hope that you can connect with this life and story I am relating to from today’s Gospel Reading to Holy Spirit Lutheran Church, or any other celebration that you have had in your lives in the past or have coming up as well.) Alright, enough talk and build… let’s dig in!

We have a banquet coming up! So, is the community watching us as intently as the Pharisees were watching Jesus back then? We have a banquet coming up! So, are we defining who we are as the Lutherans in the center of the Villas actually by picking out our seat at the head of the table, or by sitting in amongst the crowd? We have a banquet coming up! So, are we actually inviting everyone and anyone in the community to be around our tables with us? We have a banquet coming up! So, is it our intent to be repaid here and now for temporary gain, or is it our intent to live out our lives of faith knowing that we have an eternal reward that was paid for and promised to all of us? We have a lot to ponder in just the few short verses and the two parables Jesus shared. Let alone we have a lot to ponder even more so now with all these questions that I have just thrown at all of you, and even myself for deeper reflection. So, let’s break everything down together as we march forward in our exploration and discovery of how this text relates to our lives now, and not just the lives of the people back then.

We have a banquet coming up! So, is the community watching us as intently as the Pharisees were watching Jesus back then? The trick to this one was and always will be a two-sided affair. If the Pharisees did not think that Jesus was watching them in an alternatively close manner then they truly were clueless. At times we know the Pharisees were indeed looking to trip up Jesus and his interpretation of the law. However, at other times there is no way that you can’t think that they were not in awe of how he was redefining the kingdom. Jesus was not just making it something we had to reach up for or climb a ladder to, but instead Jesus was bringing the kingdom right to everyone. Jesus does the exact same thing for those of us today as well. So, we are called to remember to watch others as they watch us and how we live out our lives in a Christlike manner. We are called to imitate the good and the right, and to learn from and even help others do the very same thing.

We have a banquet coming up! So, are we defining who we are as the Lutherans in the center of the Villas actually by picking out our seat at the head of the table, or by sitting in amongst the crowd? Back in the day there were seating charts, and there were indeed places of honor or distinction. And let’s be honest, that sort of thing still exists to this very day as well. However, this question is also a little bit harder or deeper than it actually appears at the surface. For we may always want to sit up front, or even sit with those that we desire. It may very well just be due to comfort, and quite honestly it may also be due to status. We may even feel that it has been earned somehow, or even that the so-called important people’s status somehow matters more than any other single person’s status in the room. If we actually humble ourselves just a little bit then we come to realize that it is not our seat, place, or even status that matters. It is our presence that actually really matters, and it really matters where our heart is in all of this.

We have a banquet coming up! So, are we actually inviting everyone and anyone in the community to be around our tables with us? Clearly the Pharisees did not do that back then, and that is why Jesus called them out at times. He was not being disrespectful in any manner; he was just calling them to something entirely different. Back then the Pharisees questioned who Jesus sat with or even accepted an invitation from. Jesus was showing them and calling them to focus on every single person that they had any kind of influence or guiding role over, not just some. This one is hard for us as well as we have been exploring costs and the ability to host whoever decides to join us in our space on our special day. However, if we exclude anyone, we have not truly fulfilled the mission into which we have been called to live into. For if we are not truly inclusive and welcoming then we have just become some sort of awkward country club with an exclusive membership, and let’s face it, we already have enough of those. So, let us all be humbled and realize that we come to the table, the party, the occasion precisely the same, as sinner and saint alike, and with empty hands seeking out forgiveness of sins and mercy as equals.

We have a banquet coming up! So, is it our intent to be repaid here and now for temporary gain, or is it our intent to live out our lives of faith knowing that we have an eternal reward that was paid for and promised to all of us? The Pharisees back then knew the scriptures very well, and I am sure that there are several of us in this room that know the scriptures very well too. The Pharisees knew that their rewards here were only temporary, and we know just the same. However, it always seems like when the invites start rolling out, we first think of whose party we were at last, or who we might get invited to for something in the future. Then, again we may think of who might bring us the best gift, or who might bless us the most with their very presence. It actually is rare that we think of everyone and anyone as if they matter equally, and that we may gain something way more than we ever can imagine from their very presence with us on a special occasion. The company we keep is all about that radical mindset that all are invited, all are welcome, and all should receive the very same gift of eternal life at the most awesome of all tables in heaven. Let alone we all should remember that the ultimate sacrifice has been paid for each and every one of us. All of our seats at the banquet have been paid for at the cross, and we should just grab our ticket and be thankful for the invite and all that our Triune God has done for us, and continues to do for us each and every single day.

**Amen****.**

**Luke 14:1, 7-14 (NRSVUE)**

 Jesus observes guests jockeying for position at the table. He uses the

 opportunity to teach his hearers to choose humility rather than self-exaltation.

 Jesus also makes an appeal for hosts to imitate God’s gracious hospitality to

 those in need.

 1 On one occasion when Jesus was going to the house of a leader of the

 Pharisees to eat a meal on the Sabbath, they were watching him closely.

 7 When he noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, he told them a

 parable. 8 “When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit

 down at the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has

 been invited by your host, 9 and the host who invited both of you may come and

 say to you, ‘Give this person your place,’ and then in disgrace you would start to

 take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest

 place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up

 higher’; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with

 you. 11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble

 themselves will be exalted.”

 12 He said also to the one who had invited him, “When you give a luncheon or a

 dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers and sisters or your relatives or

 rich neighbors, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid.

 13 But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the

 blind. 14 And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you, for you will be

 repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

 Preaching

 Year C 2025

 August 31st, 2025

 12th Sunday after Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

 Revised and Updated

 A Guide to Biblical Preaching

 Paul Scott Wilson

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 Abingdon Press

(4) WorkingPreacher.org

 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

 Trust the abundance of God

 August 31, 2025

 Commentary on Luke 14:1, 7-14

 E. Trey Clark

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

 Luke 14:7–14 is the third dinner invitation Jesus accepts from a Pharisee

 (Luke 7:36–50; 11:37–43).

 September 1, 2019

 Commentary on Luke 14:1, 7-14

 Mitzi J. Smith

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

 Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost

 The “lowly” are interpellated as cherished recipients of God’s favor and succor

 August 28, 2022

 Commentary on Luke 14:1, 7-14

 Carolyn J. Sharp

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 Outwardly, the pericope for this Sunday seems to be offering just wise advice.

 August 28, 2016

 Commentary on Luke 14:1, 7-14

 David Schnasa Jacobsen

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 My family sits down together at dinnertime most evenings.

 September 1, 2013

 Commentary on Luke 14:1, 7-14

 Emerson Powery

(9) WorkingPreacher.org

 Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost

 Giving great honor to those who are distinguished. Ignoring those who are ordinary

 or “defective.” Seating charts that are set up to emphasize the high status of some

 and the lower status of others.

 August 29, 2010

 Commentary on Luke 14:1, 7-14

 Jeannine K. Brown