

At the sound of the door latch clunking, then the screen door screeching open, Mom would call out around that screen door: “Boys! Supper's ready!”

Often enough, I can recall times I'd be outside with my brother Aaron--playing catch with ball and glove. We'd still be intent to keep going with our game. Maybe it was how many catches we could make in a row? 89, 90, 91. . . . Maybe seven minutes later, Mom would call out again: “Boys, supper's getting cold! Did you hear me? Are you coming in?”

“Okay, yeah, Mom!” We'd finally acknowledge that we heard, yet seek to end our game by throwing each other in to the door. You know, you had to stand on your spot, unless you were chasing to catch the ball. So, like a quarterback leading his receiver, we'd throw to move each other in turn closer to the door. But once you caught it, you had to stay in place and throw the other guy closer. Maybe six or seven throws each, we'd finally get to the door, open it, and step inside. Sweaty, needing to wash up, it took a couple of minutes yet before we'd come to the table. The food wasn't so warm anymore. Perhaps they had waited; or more often she and the rest of the family had prayed already and started eating by the time we arrived. Yet often they'd pray again with us, to welcome Jesus as our Guest at the family table.

How well did we heed Mom's invitation to come for supper? Well, you have seen for yourself. Not well! Not quickly. It seemed we often had our own outdoor play agenda to finish up first.

Today's message is entitled: ***“Don't Trash Jesus' Invitation!”***

To really hear this parable, it serves as a real eye-opener. But we're not dealing merely with things here. God is intent on winning our hearts over. And these are living, spiritual, eternal truths God is inviting us to receive.

“Boys and girls! Ladies and Gentlemen! Leaders and followers! Hey, Everybody!” Jesus' Invitation is reaching to us all! The Kingdom of Heaven is like this: God has prepared a glorious and wonderful wedding feast for His Son, and you all are invited to attend!

The Feast is ready! God is ready for you to spend time with Him! To receive His Word upon your heart and mind! So come on in! His Supper's ready!

And what happens out there in this day and time? What happens in here--in my heart and yours? Where are we at in terms of receiving Jesus' Invitation to come to Him for the life He offers?

Amid so many other siren voices and attracting worldly desires and applauses, where does God's invitation rate with you? His invitation for you to know and grow and follow His Son, according to His Word, by which His Spirit enters you for a living and thriving faith that not only touches you, but others through you in Jesus' good Name?

Jesus' parable today is maybe something like the door latch and screen door screeching to shout out: God's feast is ready! Come and get it!”

So what's your reaction? ***Don't Trash Jesus' Invitation!***

How easy it is to throw holy and higher things, as it were, into the trash! How does it happen? How does it happen with you?

By ignoring His message? How does *this* happen? In this parable, note what Jesus points out--this time, according to the Living Bible translation: **“But the guests he had invited merely laughed and went on about their business, one to his farm, another to his store; others beat up his messengers and treated them shamefully, even killing some of them. (v.5-6)**

As Jesus so often calls out in His teaching: **“He who has ears, let him hear!”**

Just what *is* happening among people who hear--or should hear--or could hear--Jesus' invitation? Church is too religious? We don't do religion! It's not our hobby! It's too boring.

The context of those first hearers was especially the Jews, the children of Israel, of Jesus' day. It's like Jesus' parables cast mirrors before everyone's eyes, so that they might see themselves reflected in His Words.

And into view come all those who had their own commitments and interests in their first view. They were people who, hearing the invitation, not only put it off, but basically trashed it into “file thirteen.” Into the dump. They had other pursuits of this world and time to tend to. There are those who, instead, headed out to take care of their farms, the parable reveals. Might it mean cabins and cottages or boats or sports fields and gyms and pools these days? And then there are those many who turn away from the Lord's call to carry on their own businesses--as dealing with the emporium, the Greek word literally states. Buying and selling! Maybe you and I might identify with it quite easily. Like when we put our focus to follow our whims and dreams and wants. We surf the net, or cruise to Costco or Best Buy or Home Depot, planning, charging, buying, shipping, and spending what we have for so many things we keep on wanting. Of course, there's all the stuff available on Amazon. And we can do it 24/7. I wonder if Jesus' parable today might talk about some detour these people are taking, trashing God's calling to go *Amazon Prime*? Using their prime time to trade up for the next smart phone in line, rather than stopping to relish and attend to God's calling, where it's like He's saying, “the prime beef and every true fulfilling food is ready for you at His heavenly banqueting hall!” For truly, man does not live by bread alone (nor lusting after iPhone 15s or Samsung's Galaxy Nexts), but by every Word that comes from the mouth of God!

You see, there's true life to hear and receive from God's Word, His Son, who lived among us, and gave His very physical Self for us. Jesus did not withhold Himself from doing what served us. He truly poured Himself out in compassion and love. He gave Himself according to His Father's Will, to make us pure and holy again in the face of God!

So don't let God's Food for you get all cold! Be present--not as if forced or begrudgingly, but by the working of His Spirit in you, to receive Jesus' invitation. He truly delivers what you need most! Forgiveness for your sins and shortfalls. Peace for your mind and soul. Compassion that changes your selfish heart and ways to make the difference for good also in

someone else's life. Joy that surpasses anything you could reason or know by your brain--for Your God calls you to Himself, and clothes you with His robe of righteousness.

It appears this last point Jesus' parable drives home is a clarification that drives home God's purpose and will to save you and me for Himself for eternity!

That baptismal grace of God for you is not cheap! That robe of righteousness that surrounds you, in fact, cleanses you! It's powerful! It delivers you from the shroud of death forever! It covers your sins, it sets you free!

For it ties you in, it unites you in faith to trust and believe and live by all Jesus Christ came under our Father's eternal plan to accomplish. His suffering and death to atone for the sins of all this world are brought to everyone, that they may believe and, being baptized, might inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. Faith in Jesus results in salvation--not only the saving from your sins and mine--but also from the evil and death that oppresses us from outside! God in Christ Jesus reaches into our darkened world. His delivering love and grace are also powerful! So powerful--to swallow up for eternity all the unjust and terrible atrocities that flood our news screens daily. God's love sponges up these horrible acts and deeds that show our world being trashed! Desperate is the need for love and respect, understanding and aid, generosity that lifts up and builds lives, rather than cuts them down and destroys and humiliates. O Lord, have mercy on us!

Don't throw God's robe away! Don't pooh-pooh the Word of Christ Jesus as if it is some boring irrelevant thing. Look to Jesus in faith. He is the Light of the world. His light shines hope and forgiveness and life into lives at the brink of the outer darkness that without Him, otherwise, casts this world hopeless, into headlong despair and unending gloom.

So, ***“Don't Trash Jesus' Invitation!”*** In Him, God makes all things new. Learn from Him how much God truly loves you, and delivers you from death for life eternal with Himself!