

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost
October 11, 2026 • 10:30am
Trinity Episcopal Church • New Orleans, LA

The Rev. John M. Pitzer

In the name of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen. You may be seated.

So, I'd like you to think about over the last four or five months, probably since May, I think it'll be five months, if you have attended a wedding during that time, would you raise your hand? A lot of you.

Raise your hand if you've attended more than one wedding. Yeah, several of you. Not that this is a competition or anything, but since May, May and June, I did seven weddings in a row.

Let me remind you, that's also seven weekends in a row. And it's not a competition, but, I mean, everybody loves a good wedding because we all love a good reception, right? I mean, weddings today have taken on a new life. One of the perks of being a priest is every once in a while you get to do a destination wedding.

And a few years ago, two weeks apart, I was on the top of Aspen Mountain, marrying a couple with the backdrop being the Rocky Mountains as the sun was starting to go down behind the mountains and the clouds. And I didn't think I could beat that until two weeks later I'm on a private island in the Bahamas doing another wedding. And all my priest friends are like, how do you get these gigs? And I'm like, I don't know, but I'm not complaining at this point.

Anyway, you've all been invited and you've all participated in weddings. How many of you have ever gotten an invitation and you may wonder, now, why did we get invited to that? We don't really know the family that well and you just decide not to go. Has that ever happened? Yeah, every once in a while it does happen.

Well, we have a really interesting gospel parable story today that Jesus tells and it is about a wedding. Now, Jesus knows a lot about weddings. Do you know where his first miracle was? Anyone? The wedding at Cana.

So Jesus is used to giving us examples about a wedding but the one today is a little bit disconcerting if you were really, really listening. So we're just going to kind of review what happened. There is a king whose son is getting married and he sends out all these invitations and when the time to celebrate was there he sends his servants out into the city or the village to remind people that it's the wedding and I expect all of you to be there and no one came.

So the king sent his servants out again and they still didn't come and because they didn't come some of those people were killed by the king and that's a great story, isn't it? Some of them were killed by the king's servants because he was so angry and then the king basically burned down the city. Really, that's the lovely, lovely story we're dealing with here. And then the third go-round the king says to his servants I want you to go out into the town and I want you to invite everybody.

Forget the people that were on the list who didn't want to come. Forget the people that were on the list and I had to deal with in my king-ish way. I want you to go out into the city streets and I want you to invite everyone.

So they did. And it says in Scripture they invited the good and the bad and that's kind of what we sometimes forget. He invited the good and the bad and then when someone shows up and is not wearing a wedding garment and gets booted, booted all the way to hell, by the way we automatically think that that was one of the bad people.

Why do we think that? I was in seminary in a class and a Dominican professor asked us why do you automatically think the person that got booted from the wedding was one of the bad ones? The simple fact is they got booted because they weren't wearing a wedding garment. So in other words it makes no difference how good you are or how bad you are. I don't care if you're the best personer in Trinity's long

history and you serve and you read and you go to TLF every week it doesn't make any difference.

I mean, I'm glad you do all that but that's not what's going to get you the invitation. And if you're sitting here thinking well, you know, I've got a pretty shady past, I've done some things that aren't really that doesn't make any difference either. I've said over and over again it does not make a difference what we've done or what we're going to do, it all makes a difference on our decision at the moment and that's really what this gospel is all about.

It was the intention of the person that got booted. They went because they were invited but they really had no intention of entering into the celebration. So why do you suppose that Jesus would use this parable to get his point across? So let's look at that for a moment.

In Jesus's three years of ministry not a very long time only three years was he doing ministry on this earth. He had a very consistent message. I think sometimes and scripture scholars will agree he didn't always get who he was but once he finally got it his message became very consistent.

He said, I'm the one you've been looking for. You know, whoever you've all been waiting for, I'm it. I am the one you've been looking for.

I am the Good Shepherd. I am the Vine. I am the Bread of Life.

I am the Alpha and the Omega. I am the Beginning and the End. I'm it.

You don't have to look any further. I'm the one you've been looking for. And then he backs all of that up by doing certain miracles throughout his three year long tenure of ministry.

He backs those statements up by feeding thousands of people on the side of a mountain with a few pieces of fish and a few pieces of bread by an unnamed boy

that gave him those things. He backs that statement up of I'm the one by calming the seas and by saying be still. He backs that statement up by walking on water.

He backs that statement up by saying to the blind man I want you to see. He backs that statement up by saying to the paralytic pick up your mat and walk. He backs that statement up by saying to people who were very ill with incurable diseases you have been healed.

He backed that statement up by saying to lepers you were whole again. Now go to your family. He backs that statement up by raising people from the dead.

He constantly backs up the statement of I am who you have been looking for. So why does he use this parable of the wedding? Because just like in the wedding where people don't come, people still don't get what Jesus is saying. They don't get it.

He's telling them over and over and over again I'm it. And he's showing them by doing miracle after miracle after miracle and people still don't get it. They can't wrap their minds around who this man is even though it is right in front of them.

My friends, the good and the bad, the table has been set. We come to the I'm really to be honest with you I'm preaching to the choir right now. I mean you're here.

You have no idea how much we love that and how much we appreciate that. You've come to the feast. You've got the invitation.

You're here. But it's not enough. You've got to put on the wedding garment.

And putting on the wedding garment means you're ready to go into the world and love unconditionally. It means you're ready to go into the world and forgive unconditionally. It means by putting on that garment you're ready to go into the world to bring about the kingdom.

It's all about putting on the dang garment. Not who you are or what you've done or where you've been. To be honest with you we are at such a perfect moment in our church.

We are putting together, we already have, a phenomenal search committee for our new rector. We have a phenomenal, you have no idea how great our staff is at church. You have no idea how great our staff is.

Our different ministries. Our music. Everything.

You. Here. Today.

The feast has been set. The banquet has been set. The invitations are getting ready to go out.

And if we expect people to respond. If we expect people to say yes I want to be a part of it. Then we better put on the dang wedding garment.

And be ready to go into the world so that Trinity can help bring about the kingdom. Wow. Jesus thanks for that gospel.

It was a tough one. But when you think about it it's not so tough. It's really not so tough.

So be prepared. Put on your garment. Hear the word.

Receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Go into the world and bring about the kingdom.

Amen.