

# Season after PENTECOST SERMON

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

June 14, 2026

Sermon Text: Luke 14:12-24

*(Note that the illustrations and examples used in this sermon are the personal experience of the author)*

Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God! 'Come, for everything is now ready.' Luke 14:12–24

I have a confession to make this morning. Nothing that you didn't know or couldn't tell about me. I love food. I come by my love of food through the matriarchs of my family, especially my grandmother whom I had the great joy of my life to live under her roof for a year after high school. I was one of those suitcase graduates. You know. The ones who got a suitcase as a graduation gift. My grandmother taught me the basics of how to live. Most basic among the wisdom she imparted to me was how to cook. Even in her old age she loved to cook. She loved to take whatever she could find, scraps of this and that and prepare a meal fit for a king or in my case, a "clueless whipper snapper" as she would sometimes call me when I was impetuous. She had a twinkle in her eye and a smile on her face and joy and satisfaction in her heart to be able to sustain her family and those who visited her table. As she set the food on the table she would announce to all in the house, "Come and get it. Dinner is ready!" What a blessed year I was given to revel in the company of my now sainted grandparents and to eat and to live and learn to live in their presence. I love food. My mother and grandmother taught me that. And they also taught me through the joy of their vocation and in the great compassion they had for me, the love of God in Christ Jesus.

One Hundred and fifty-six years ago, the great banquet was set on the table of the Lord here in Winnipeg and German immigrants from the time of the great migration heard the invitation, "Come. For everything is now ready." The occasion was the dedication of two Lutheran congregations. By Word and with prayer the congregations were established. And the Word of the Lord continued its expansion into all of Canada and the great banquet was celebrated across Canada as congregation after congregation was established. Thirty-Eight years ago, in a convention such as this the call went forth. Come. Everything is ready. And the people of God, responded. They came together at the great banquet, and with Word and through prayer they pledged themselves to walk together as One, under the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ. And by the grace and mercy of her Lord, Lutheran Church Canada was formed. And you are all witnesses of it to this very day.

Since the time of the establishment of Lutheran congregations, beginning in what is now known as Fisherville and surrounding areas, our Lutheran Churches have supported the mission and ministry of her lord – in the words of our Gospel text, "to extend the invitation of God to the highways and byways" so that all people might receive the good news, "Come, for everything is now ready. Come. You who are blessed, eat bread in the kingdom of God."

So even now at this convention the great banquet has been prepared and the invitation sent. And the Master of the Banquet, is here. And so too the bread life, our Lord Jesus Christ is present. And you and I are here.

And blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

St. Luke, the evangelist, records this utterance as coming from the mouth of Jesus' opponent. In a similar manner St John records in the eleventh chapter of his Gospel that Caiphas prophesied about Jesus, "that it is expedient that one man should die for the people." (John 11:20).

And blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God.

The word uttered by Jesus' opponent condemns his unbelief. Jesus, speaking in parable like form, informs the man of God's anger against his unbelief. And our text ends with a word of rebuke against the man, "I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste my banquet."

These words were intended not only for the man who uttered them. They stand until the end of this age for all who are caught up in unbelief. And they are intended for our ears to receive today.

Jesus' earthly ministry was conducted in first century Palestine. The Gospels record that he made three mission journeys, traveling throughout Galilee meeting specifically with his own people, Israel, visiting with them in their synagogues, the local places of prayer where God's people gathered to hear and receive His Word, His torah.

The people of Israel were the ones who had first been invited to the great banquet. They were favoured before all nations so that David could say to the Lord, "Who is like your people Israel- the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself and to make for himself a name, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out the nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt. (2 Samuel 7:23).

But the people did not live up to their calling. They continually rebelled against God and provoked him to anger in the wilderness on the way to the Promised land. They broke covenant with God. They worshipped other gods and idols. Still God did not forsake his chosen people. He punished them for their sins and disciplined them. He delivered them over to the hands of other nations who held them in cruel captivity and treated them harshly. At times it seemed as if Israel would be utterly destroyed, but God, faithful to His covenant promise, preserved a remnant.

At last God's long suffering and patience with Israel was exhausted. He sent His own son into their midst. He performed all sorts of miracles and proclaimed to them the kingdom of God. The evangelist, Luke, records eight times that Jesus spoke to his people, concerning the Messianic Banquet. The great banquet. In Word and by deed, Jesus issued in the Kingdom of God among his people. But despite all this, they disbelieved and rejected their own Messiah, their Saviour and Lord. They stained their hands with his blood and cried out, "His blood be upon us and upon our children."

To His beloved people Jesus declares God's judgement, "I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste of my supper."

The word is not only for Israel. It is also spoken into us this day. Are we not those who have despised our Saviour? Jesus sets forth examples for us to consider. The Evangelist records, "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' These are representatives of the stuff of life. The things Jesus teaches us to pray for in his own prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." These are things that we all confess together concerning God's creating in the First Article of the Apostles Creed. I believe that God has given me... house, wife, oxen, fields, and the like which we are to be good stewards of. These excuses had all been codified by the Pharisees, the teachers of the Law. They were all kosher excuses.

In our day we have developed our own kosher excuses, haven't we? And the list continues to grow. With this word, Jesus lays open before us our unbelief. It is not about the stuff; it is about the heart of God's people. It is about Sin that daily rises within us. It is about us trying set God's good gifts against Him. This indeed, evokes God to anger. Of this we should have no doubt.

And how does God respond? He continues with His great banquet. He continues to set a table laden with food. He instructs His servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' And when the servant reports back that he has done that and there is still room at the table, the house father commands him again "Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled."

Here is the good news. God is determined to redeem the fallen world. He sends out His servant, the Servant. He sends His only begotten son into the world. His incarnate Son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin, Mary, true man, and true God was anointed to serve. He is the faithful servant who came under the Law to fulfill all righteousness. Though he knew no sin, he became sin for us. He the great servant of His people. He bore the punishment, our punishment in our place, and the death that we deserved, so that we would not perish eternally but live forever. God made of His son, not only to be His servant, but the servant is also the bread of life for us all, so that whoever partakes of Him would be incorporated into Him and have eternal life. Jesus fulfilled the prophecy uttered by his enemy," And blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God." Just so, Jesus proclaimed, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; and the bread that I will give is my flesh which I give for the life of the world.

For thousands of years God made preparations for the great supper. Already in paradise God made his preparations for the great Supper and gave the promise to our first parents, Adam and Eve that He would provide His deliverer, His servant. The time of the Old Testament is the time of the announcement of the coming Great Supper when God's servant, the world's Redeemer would appear and the victory over sin and death and evil won. Finally, the right time had come. The great supper is served. Luther, I believe is right in understand that the great supper of our text, is the Gospel. The Gospel enfleshed in the human flesh and blood of Jesus. The great supper is Jesus.

One of the things that makes a supper great is the preparation. Solomon is recorded as making a great feast for all Israel on the occasion of the dedication of the temple. The number of sheep and oxen beyond counting.

I have experienced feasts something like that on many occasions in the church. Lutherans are known for pulling out the stops to make a great feast. Lately I have had the privilege to be invited to installations of pastors, and anniversaries of congregations, ordinations of our pastors and even the dedication of a new congregation. The halls have been filled with food of all kinds and from many parts of the world. In abundance. And even here at convention. I think of the great preparations that have been undertaken to put on this convention, and I think of all the preparations that have been undertaken to feed us all. But what are the good feasts of men in comparison to the great supper that our God has prepared for us? God's banquet is great because of the lavish preparations. God did not even spare His own son but gave him up for us all. That is what makes the great banquet great.

"Come, everything is ready." Friend there is nothing in heaven or on earth or under the earth, nothing that can change this reality. Everything is ready.

What makes a supper great is its preparation. What also makes a supper great is the invitation. I have seen too many weddings canceled because the families cannot agree on who is to be invited. I have seen too many families torn apart, sometimes for a generation or more because of who was or who was not invited to the family dinner. So, some families don't have family dinners because it's just less hassle. And some couples don't have weddings because it's just better that way. The pandemic has created a social phobia among us. The less I am directly in contact with people, the better, the safer my life will be. So why would I want to invite anyone to anything, in person at least, and why would I want to go. What a deplorable state we are in.

What makes the great banquet great is not only preparations but the invitation.

Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'

While all the world, and Satan and his legions reject and seek to destroy and so proudly plan to put an end to the Kingdom of God and put to not the great banquet, the housemaster sends his invitation to the least wherever they may be found. People, like Zacchaeus, who for example gladly accepted the Lord's invitation. How sweet the words must have been in the ear of the criminal who hung beside Jesus and to whom Jesus said, "Today, this day, you shall be with me in paradise."

The invitation is extended to all those who know the burden of sin and evil, guilt and shame in their life. It is extended to those who live in the grasp of that devastating reality every day of their life. It is an impossibility to even think that they could participate in a good meal, let alone a great banquet. Perhaps you find yourself among them. Perhaps you find yourself as one among helpless, the hopeless, the crushed down, those lost, confused, perplexed. The faceless, the lonely. God sends his invitation to you. Come. Everything is now ready, for you. Perhaps you are sick, physically, or mentally, in body, mind or spirit. Perhaps you are dying. Come quickly then, everything is ready for you.

What encouragement to hear the report of the servant. The invitation is sent and there are those who have come to the great banquet. And friend, I invite you to find your own face among them. You are the ones to whom the servant of God has proclaimed his invitation. I have heard from the pew, from the kitchen table, from the bed at your nursing home, or hospital side, or on the palliative care ward. You who sing, "Chief of sinners though I be Jesus shed his blood for me. You who confess, I believe that I cannot by own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel. I have heard you as you have prayed, the Lord's Prayer, "lead us not into the temptation, but deliver us from evil."

To you dear redeemed saints of the Lord, the invitation has come and even this day the great feast is being given to you as you receive the proclamation of the Gospel, as you receive the Lord's own body and blood, as you receive the Holy Absolution and as you engage one another in this convention in those holy conversations. "Sir, what you commanded has been done." And it has been among you dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

But the news gets even better, there is still room. "Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled." We in Lutheran Church Canada have been made very aware by the Lord of the Church, the faithful servant, that there is still more room at the great banquet. Now the work of the servant moves out into the world, to all who have never heard the Gospel. Every person is to be compelled to come. Not by force or coercion but by the Word of God. Luther, in his sermon on this text preaches that this compelling happens where the Word of God is correctly preached into the hearts people and through the working of the Spirit they repent and believe the Gospel. For this reason, the Lord of the Church sends forth His servants of the Word, His pastors and authorizes them to go out and preach His Word and administer His sacraments according to His command.

Dear brothers and sisters God proclaims into our ears that we must no longer engage in the things of the flesh, for these will only lead us back to a life lived under condemnation and death. He preaches into our ears God's gracious word of promise. Come. Everything is ready. Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God! This word sets us free to confess our sins and receive God's gift of forgiveness and life. This Word compels us to share God's gracious invitation with the words of His Gospel. This word fills us with His compassion in the various vocations and stations in life He has placed us in. Our neighbors need us to share the Gospel and embrace them with the Lord's compassion.

Perhaps we are getting tired, even exhausted of inviting our family and friends and community to the great banquet and seeing that invitation rejected repeatedly. As we see the overwhelming challenges on so many fronts the Lord speaks into our ears the reality, Church, the great banquet is prepared. Nothing will change that. So, my people do not grow weary in doing good: for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. As we have opportunity then, let us do good to all people and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God! 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

O Lord in your tender mercy grant us ears to hear and faith to receive Your Divine Word and rejoice in the banquet you have prepare before the face of all people.. For Jesus' sake. Amen.