

Everyone Is Invited to the Feast of the Kingdom of God

July 31, 2022

Introduction

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ. Online Ministry Services are presented on YouTube, Facebook and our website. One week following recording this week's message is titled Everyone is Invited to the Feast of the Kingdom of God. Thank you to Geoff, Ed, Dianne, and Don for being involved in the video. The scripture reading is Luke 13:29 to 30 and 14: 12 to 14.

Welcome & Announcements

Welcome. We have a small group this morning. I'd like to read from the Book of Matthew as we begin this story begins with Jesus meeting a centurion who was so trusting he said he was not worthy for Jesus to come to his house and he or his servant, rather Jesus word, was good enough. And Jesus was amazed at the man who was not even of Israel. And this is what he said. When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, Truly, I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the East and the West and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven. Such is the universal promise that Jesus makes to those of faith. To those of you in the audience this morning, to those of you who are viewing one little guy in the back there who's waving to me, we invite you this morning to share in this invitation from Jesus to come and celebrate at his feast. Let's go to God in prayer.

Father, today we pray for many in our congregation. We pray a prayer today for those in the Ukraine, for family members of the Fleming family who are still there. And the ongoing atrocities. And Father, we pray for an early end to this four nations and to come to their senses and realize that this is needless and hurtful. Father, we pray for several families who've lost family members recently. We pray for the Lamothe family and the Perry family. We celebrated Gloria and her life, but there's still a hole for Jim and for the others. And we pray that you will comfort them. For the Griffin family. Again, a longtime member who is gone from us now and a family was left to grieve for the McKay family even more recently. And Father, we pray that there will be comfort there and for the Smith family. Father at the loss of yet another of our membership. Father to us. It is a great thing to lose people to you. It's. It's different. Help us in our unbelief, Father. And. And our lack of trust unlike this centurion. We often spend times in the here and now not ready to look forward to what you have to offer. A magnificent and gracious father, accept our worship this morning. Open our hearts that you might work in them. Heal us, Father, from our sins and father make us the people that you want us to be in. Christ, we pray. Amen.

I have a few announcements. I don't know how well they follow the list here. Oh, yes. First one. First one. We have one birthday this week. Mariam, there she is, age nine. Yes. So we hope to go and celebrate with her later this week. She was out at camp and had a good time. From what I heard last week. Singspiration. Speaking of Camp is Coming. 5:00 the barbecue and singing at six and bring your lawn chairs. There are a couple of prayer requests for you to keep in mind. Mike is traveling in the U.S. to visit, especially with friends who've suffered their own losses. And Marie is coming back from Nova Scotia and on the positive side, Justin and Alisha will be here for the next couple of weeks after next week. So pray for those people.

Communion

So I'm a wondering sort of person. I wonder about a lot of things, and I've been wondering about Noah, not because it's raining today, but just because I was just wondering about him. So now, first of all, he's centuries old. When God tells him that he needs to build an ark, a huge, massive task, how they would lumber that wood and get that wood shaped right and get that thing put together and get it pitched on the inside and get it the right size with the right number of floors and the right stuff in the right place. I'm sure God must have been guiding him, no question about that. But then the rains come and then he has to get all of those animals in there. And I'm sure they all lined up for him. I don't think that he had to chase them down and herd them in there. He probably the Lord probably helped with that process of getting them all on there. But then they have to have provisions for how long they were in the ark. It's been estimated a year and five days to have food in there for all of those animals and all of those different beings that were in there and for the humans that were on board would be a massive task. But then the rains come and you can just tell all the derision that he took while it was building.

And I'm sure there were people saying, Go for it, Noah. They're probably saying, you know what, you're an idiot building a boat out here in the desert. But then the rains come and you can just sort of feel, you know, you can hear the sound of that boat just kind of aching as it lifts off of the off of the land. Now he's floating and it rains for 40 days and 40 nights. And now you can I can imagine that the day times or the night times were very pleasant, probably dark, dreary. And I'm sure he's wondering what's going to happen next. So months passed, still floating around. Now he decides to let a raven-- and the actually the the ark settles down on Mt. Ararat. But it's not over yet. The water is still pretty high. He settled down on a mountain, so he sends out a raven and he doesn't get really a result from that. But then he sends out a dove and the dove comes back with a twig from an olive tree. And I can just imagine Noah's heart when that dove lands with that twig, because that twig represents hope. There's going to be an end to this. Well, they still waited several quite a while before they actually got off the ark.

Well, as was mentioned in our prayer today, we have been a church in mourning. And even in our extended family, there has been mourning. It wasn't necessarily related to this church. The overall theme of these six funerals that I've been to in the last two months is this idea of hope. There was a positive energy in all of them that this is not all there is, that there's life beyond this and that this life beyond this is going to be far better than this one, because there won't be any sin. Not exactly sure what it's going to look like, but we live with hope. Why? Because we have been given an olive branch from God in Jesus Christ. He is the one who gives us hope. And in the meantime, if you were here last week in the meantime, our duty is to love one another and to love God. So as we remember Jesus and the sacrifice that He made and the God that sent him, we realize that we have hope and we realize that our responsibility now is to love.

Let's pray our father in Heaven. We are thankful for Jesus who came to this earth, who died for us, who was resurrected. That gives us such a powerful hope to live with as we live together on this on this earth, we pray, Father, that you might help us to live lives that are characterized by love. Help us to understand what that looks like. Help us to understand how we can execute that we can live that. And we pray, Father, for this bread that's being broken today and for this cup. The reminder of your son's broken body and is shed blood for which we are thankful for this sacrifice. And we pray, Father, that you'll transform us to be people of love. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen.

Scripture Reading

So the reading is from Luke 13:29. Those people will come from east and west and north and south, and we'll take their places at the feast in the Kingdom of God. Indeed, there are those who are last, who would

be first and first, who will be last. And then we'll look at Luke 14, 12. Then Jesus said to his host, When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers, or relatives or your rich neighbors. If you do, they may invite you back, and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame. Although they cannot pay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. Bless God's word.

Sermon

Good morning, everyone. Glad that you are with us. Last Sunday, Barb and I were away doing a wedding up in Thessalon. It reminded me of Little House on the Prairie. It was an old country store that has been kept in a one room schoolhouse for actually my father and his father attended school. So it was just going way, way back and in the history. And we did an outdoor wedding that was there and that kind of flows into what I want to talk a little bit about today that Jesus, Isaiah, John and others all talk about that we are invited to the Feast of the Kingdom of God many times at weddings there. This there are times of celebration, people coming together and celebrating together. And I suppose every Sunday that we gather we are celebrating the fact that we believe in Christ and that we believe in all the promises of God, and that we have the Holy Spirit living in us, encouraging us, helping us on a daily basis. So I'm I'm glad of all of that today. I want to just spend a little bit of time talking about some scriptures about how you and I are invited to the Kingdom of God some 800 years. As I said before, Jesus came into the world, Isaiah spoke of the kingdom of Heaven on Earth, that Jesus will one day restore, renew all of God's kingdom, that everyone is invited to the Kingdom of God. So let me just read to you a passage that you all would know very well if it's found in Luke Chapter 14.

But before that, in Chapter 13, verse 29, it says this As we've heard today, people will come from the east and the west and the north and the south, and they will take their places at the Feast of the Kingdom of God. Sometimes when we read Scripture, we'll read it and go, Oh, isn't that nice? But it's really important to listen to the promises of God that people will come from the Eastern part of the world, the western part of the world, the northern part of the world, the southern part of the world. And that we are taking a place in the feast of the Kingdom of Heaven. And what will that be like? So in Luke Chapter 14 called The Parable of the Great Banquet, beginning in verse 15, it says this when one of those at the table with Jesus heard, he said to Jesus, Blessed are those who will eat at the Feast of the Kingdom of God. And then Jesus replied, A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited come for everything is now ready, but they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, I have just bought a field and I must go and see it. Please excuse me, which is interesting. He's going to see something that he bought before on excuses, isn't it? Another said I, I've just bought Five ox-- for five yoke of oxen and I'm on my way to try them. Please excuse me. Still, another said. I just got married. I can't come. The servant came back and reported to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered the servant to go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town, or bring in the poor, the cripple, the blind in the lane. Sir, the servant said. What you ordered has been done. But there's still room. Then the master said, I tell you, not one of those who were invited and didn't account will get a taste of the banquet.

You and I are encouraged to know that from Old Testament to New to today, we are welcomed at the Feast of the Kingdom of God. Now we know that. I suspect if we ask the question, what is the most well known Scripture in all the Bible, I think most of us would reply. John 3:16 For God so loved the world that anyone who believes in him would not perish but have everlasting life. Life that makes sense today. Tomorrow and forever. So I just want to be on a little bit of a journey today. I'm going to go way back into the Old Testament, and I just want to look at some of these amazing scriptures that talk about the future, the talk

about the Kingdom of God, the talk about the banquet, the heavenly banquet of God. And there's some marvelous passages. And I'm going to begin in Isaiah chapter two. I'm just going to start in verse one. You said this is what Isaiah, a son of Amos, saw. God gave him a view of it. He gave him a picture of it concerning Judah in Jerusalem, in the last days, which would be the times of Jesus. In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains. It will be exalted above the hills. Listen to this. And all nations will stream to it. Many people will come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob.

He will teach us His ways so that we may walk in his paths. Think they're talking about when Jesus comes on the earth, the law will go out from Zion, the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He will judge between the nations and he will settle disputes for many peoples. He will settle disputes. They will beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks. They don't need war. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they need to train for war. Any more. It's this wonderful picture of the Kingdom of God, what it would look like on the Earth today if all people would hear the Word of God. Believe in God, believe in Christ, believe in the Holy Spirit, and live lives of joy and peace. You know, there's a reason why the Bible talks about these marvelous descriptions of life, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and control. It's needed as badly today as when it was written by Paul. And so there's this future. Look what it looks like exactly. We don't know. But there's this future. Look, Jeremiah says this no longer will they need to teach their neighbors or to say to one another, You need to know the Lord, because all will know the Lord from the least to the greatest in this picture. Again, it's just a marvelous picture. The wolf will live with the lamb shouldn't say that. It should say the wolf will eat the lamb, but it doesn't. That's not going to happen. The leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion in the yearling together. And then

I can't help but get this picture of a little girl with the leash walking a lion down the street. And there's this picture. There's just no worries anymore of this horrific times of life that the cow will feed with the bear. The young will lie down together in the lion will eat straw like the ox. Infants will play near the hole of the cobra. Young children will put their hands into the cobra's nest, but they will neither ha nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Won't that be amazing? It gives us a reality of our future and that those who have gone before us, we will see them again. Excuse me. So there are many pictures of the invitation of God, not just in the New Testament, but old alike. I suppose, as I said before, that. John 316 is that scripture because it encourages and invites all people. And maybe that's what Paul was talking about when he said that all of creation has been groaning in the pains of childbirth right up to this present time, because he knows they know what will come someday. Martin Luther King, many of us remember, had this better picture of a world view. And so there are a variety of scriptures and one of my favorite passages is found in Isaiah Chapter 19, and it starts in verse 23. It's a marvelous picture. It gives us this this picture in our minds that is going to be a reality in that day. There will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria, the Egyptians and Assyria. Eons will worship together. And then it says, verse 25, The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people and Assyria, my handiwork, and Israel, my inheritance. That may not mean so much to us when we go back and read it. They were sworn enemies. There was no light or love between any of them. It was dangerous territory and Jesus comes along and said, But all the nations will come together as one. And so there's the invitation. Old Testament, years before Jesus comes into the world, all of these wonderful scriptures reminding us of what will come someday, as we know.

John 316 And then in Matthew 28 talks about the disciples and in all nations coming to God. John, 1721 that we may be one father, as you are, me and I am in you, that the whole world will believe that you have sent me into the world. Or, as Paul said, that God has been reconciling to Himself, not counting people's sins against. And that message is for us and for everyone. It's this marvelous picture of a of a while. So in that

day it says there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, the Assyrians to Egypt and Egyptians to Assyria. And the Egyptians in the Assyrians will worship together. That may not mean much to us, but back then those were fighting words. Nooooo. I don't talk to the Assyrians. No, no, no. We don't talk to the Egyptians. They are separate and apart. But long before Jesus comes into the world, God is giving us this picture. And Isaiah, chapter 55 come all of you who are thirsty, come to the waters or in John for whoever drinks the water I give will never thirst it. If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me and drink and rivers of living Water will flow from within or revelation Let those who are thirsty come in All those who wish to take the free gift of the water of life. These are beautiful pictures to grasp in our knowledge or how about Isaiah chapter 25 again, some 800 years before Jesus comes into the world, he's giving us these clues, these these visions of what world can be like.

Matthew Pardon me. Isaiah 25 I'm going to start reading in verse three, therefore, strong peoples will honor you. Cities are ruthless. Nations will revere you. You have been a refuge for the poor, a refuge for the needy in their distress, a shelter from the storm is not a beautiful description. A shade from the heat for the breath of the roost. This is like a storm driving against a wall in the heat of a desert. You silence the uproar of foreigners as heat is reduced by the shadow of a cloud. So the song of the ruthless is heard No more. A glimpse of the end of all things First Corinthians 13:12. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror. Then we shall see God face to face. That will be our experience. One day on this mountain, the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine, the best of meats, the finest of wines on this mountain. He will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever. The sovereign Lord will wipe away the tears from all faces. He will remove his peoples disgrace from the earth. And then he says in Isaiah, Oh, Isaiah, I will create a new heaven and a new earth. The coming together as one all things will be made new, isn't it never remarkable years and years and years before Jesus comes into the world, and then you go through the New Testament. Jesus died, Was buried, he rose again. And then we get to the revelation and we are reminded of the new heavens and the new earth. I will create new heavens and a new world, Isaiah says. And then Jesus says, I am making all things new. Revelation 21:5 The restoring of all things, the redemption and the liberation of all creation is said in Romans Chapter eight and later.

Paul just calls it this We're going to reconcile all things. We're going to make things. All right. It is the reconciliation of all things. So in Isaiah 43, again, here is this picture and I don't know about you. Some people hear something for the first time, a major teaching, and they never forget it. It's just always there for me. I struggle. I love learning new things and grabbing hold of it and I'll say, I'm going to remember that for the rest of my life. And the next day I go, I know I'm supposed to remember something from yesterday that was really, really important, and I'm going to remember it forever, but I just can't seem to get it. Well, that's one of the reasons why Isaiah says what he says. Nahum says what he says. Jesus says what he says. Paul says what he says. And it all comes together. It fits like a glove. The future of all things is given to us by God, and it's demonstrated by this banquet of God all coming together as one. So in Isaiah 43 it says, But now this is what the Lord says. He who created you, Jacob? He who formed you? Israel do not fear for I have redeemed you. I have summoned you by name. You are mine. That was written 800 years before Jesus came into the world. And how many years has it been since Jesus came into the world and then left the world one day all things will be renewed and restored. Can we, in that time be faithful not only to Jesus, but to the claims that He gives us as promises? Can we hang on to those promises? Can we see many of these promises taking place in how our lives continually change? And if we've been Christians for years and years and years, it's always great to learn new things, to know more about God, not to ever just feel like I'm settled, I'm satisfied, but to let God's Holy Spirit teach us even more.

And it's wonderful. We look at these scriptures in a powerful way. Listen to Isaiah 65. See, I will create new heavens and the new words the former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. Won't that be great? But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and all its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people. The sound of weeping, crying will be heard no more. Another way that it's said is by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:10 this and I think it's important it's God's intent to bring all things together things in heaven and things on earth. That's a powerful scripture. It's God's intent from the very beginning to bring all things together. The joining together of heaven and Earth becoming one. So lastly, in Isaiah 66, in verse 22, it talks about life after life after death 66 and verse 22 as the new heavens and the new earth. I will make it will endure before me. That's Isaiah 66. And I think that's 22. Right as the new heavens and the new earth that I will make it will endure before me. It's this beautiful description of a heavenly banquet, the renewal of all things, the restoration of all things, the redemption of all things, the of all things. It's something that you and I will not only read about as we did today here about as we did today, but it's something that's guaranteed that you and I will experience one day. One day, something will happen. The skies will open the kingdom of God will begin a new life. And you and I can be part of it. Can we wait for.

Closing Prayer

Thank you, Don. One more feast. The second chapter of John Jesus has gone to a wedding and they run out of wine. And his mother says, and I'm paraphrasing a bit here, what if my son can take care of that? And though he doesn't want to, Jesus goes ahead and changes water into wine so that the bridegroom won't be embarrassed. And the master of ceremonies comes and he says, as he calls the bridegroom aside, everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink, but you have saved the best till now. Well, if Jesus reluctantly made the best wine he could at this wedding, think of what he will do for us. And as Don reminded us, this promise of all of a new heaven and a new earth is the promise that he has given us, and he is going to give us his best. There's no doubt about that. Let's go to him in prayer. Father, we thank you so much for the solid promise you have given. We have a hope that is secure with a foundation because your promises are true.

Thank you that you have a place waiting for us, a seat set and everything is just waiting for the time we can come. We have that joy, Father. Now, as we as we go our separate ways, we think about those who are traveling that we mentioned earlier. We think about Mike and Marie. And in the coming weeks, Justin and Alisha, please keep them safe. And others who are traveling say, Father, may we be a reflection, your son, to this world in a time when it needs it so desperately? Thank you for his gift of a seat at that table. And we look forward to being there to celebrate the wedding feast of the LAMB through him and through your spirit, we pray. Amen.

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