

Pastor Mark R Jacobson
Isaiah 25:6-9

All Saints (November 3, 2024)

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 and the finest of wines.

⁷On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; ⁸he will swallow up death forever.

The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.

⁹In that day they will say, "Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation."

THE WEDDING SUPPER OF THE LAMB

"Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God" (Revelation 19:9).

It was Jesus' first miracle. The "alpha" miracle, if you will, and the only wedding supper we hear of Jesus attending. That wedding was held in the city of Cana. The disciples attended. As did Mary, the mother of Jesus. We don't have the details about the richness of the food or the ranking of the meats at this wedding supper, but we do have some information regarding the quality and quantity of the wine. We know the first drinks were not the finest quality of wines and we have been given the insider information that there had been a miscalculation regarding the quantity of wine too.

Jesus solved the quantity issue and upgraded the quality. After the master of the banquet tasted this new batch of wine, he called the bridegroom to the side and said, *"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"* (Jn 2). The quality of this new batch of wine was the best. And the quantity of wine would last for the duration of the banquet and beyond.

A better banquet

The wedding supper of Cana was a good banquet, but the wedding supper of the Lamb is a better banquet. We are going to have a foretaste of that wedding supper of the Lamb in about twenty minutes. It's not the full taste, but even in this foretaste of the wedding supper of the Lamb the communicant receives in, with and under the bread and the wine the very body and the blood of the Lamb of God. This Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, takes away the sins of the world. His blood shed on the cross purifies us from all sins. As far as the east is from the west, so far the Lamb has removed our transgressions from us. This foretaste forgives our sins and strengthens our faith. The lifeless body of Jesus was buried in a tomb, but now his body has been raised to life again. Because Jesus lives in the body so also, we will live in the body even after our body has been turned to dust. This is our foretaste of the wedding supper of the Lamb.

But on this All Saints' Day we also contemplate our brothers and sisters who have recently experienced the full taste of the wedding supper of the Lamb. Pastor Sellnow read the list of names. We see Jesus by faith. They see Jesus by sight. We have been made holy through faith. They have been confirmed in their holiness like the angels. On the cross Jesus described this place as paradise. The Apostle John in his great revelation had heaven described for him with the words, "never again" and "no more". *"Never again will they hunger. Never again will*

they thirst" (Rev 7:16). *"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* The wedding supper of the Lamb is a better banquet than the wedding supper at Cana and every other banquet here on earth. It's a better banquet because it had a better miracle.

A better miracle

The turning of water into wine was a participation miracle. Many of the miracles had no participation. Jesus just said the word and the wounds were immediately and completely healed. Other times Jesus didn't even show up for the healing. He just said the word and the sick were restored. The turning of water into wine included the participation of servants. *"Do whatever he tells you,"* (Jn 2) was the instruction Mary, the mother of Jesus told the servants. And what Jesus had told the servants to do was to, "fill the jars with water." This filling of the jars required more work than turning a spigot and holding a hose. There was the heavy lifting of water jars and the huffing of back and forth from the well and for what? This was water, not wine. This participation activity reinforced what had been put into those jars. What must have seemed like a pointless task only reinforced the mighty miracle Jesus performed when the master of the banquet drank wine.

The wedding supper of Cana had an awesome miracle, but the wedding supper of the Lamb is a better miracle. There is a participation element in both the foretaste and the full-taste of the wedding supper of the Lamb. The bread and the wine still participate in the Lord's Supper. The bread and the wine are eaten and drunk in a natural way. And yet the body and blood of Christ are also eaten and drunk in a supernatural way. We believe this because Jesus simply said, "This is my body" and "This is my blood." Jesus is really present with us in the Lord's Supper. That is what Jesus tells us and that is good enough for us to believe it even as those words don't make sense to our reasoning abilities. This is a better miracle and a foretaste of another miracle to come. The Apostle Paul explains the miracle this way: ⁵¹ *Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—* ⁵² *in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.* ⁵³ *For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.* ⁵⁴ *When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory"* (Jn 15). This is the Apostle Paul quoting our sermon text today. *"Death has been swallowed up in victory."* Our triumphant members are enjoying the wedding supper of the Lamb and waiting for their resurrected bodies. This is a better miracle, and it is ours because of a better invitation.

A better invitation

The wedding Jesus attended in Cana is much like the weddings we attend in this way: Not everybody is invited. Often times not every relative or friend is invited either. Choices are made and not everyone is invited. That was true with the wedding of Cana, but that is not true with the wedding supper of the Lamb. "For all peoples" we have in our text. The book of Revelation speaks of "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7:9).

The gospel invitation to the wedding supper of the Lamb is for all, but not everybody accepts this great invitation. In his Parable of the Wedding Banquet Jesus taught how many are invited, but few are chosen (Mt 22). Like our wedding invitations, excuses are made for missing out on all the many opportunities to foretaste the wedding supper of the Lamb offered in weekly worship or personal Bible reading. Some presume to believe they can attend the wedding supper of the Lamb on their own merits and not on the merits of Christ. This righteousness of Christ is described as a robe, a wedding garment that has been given to by Christ.

The foretaste of the wedding supper of the Lamb requires an invitation and instruction and confirmation on what you have been taught and an examination on whether or not you have been living a godly life according to the Ten Commandments as you have been taught. An honest examination leads to daily repentance of sins and trust in Jesus to continue to forgive sins as he has promised. The invitation for the full-taste of the wedding supper of the Lamb has been given to all people, but only those who finish their life in faith will attend this wedding supper and that is what our members on this list did.

I've always kind of struggled with the wedding of Cana. That was the first miracle of Jesus and there hasn't been a miracle exactly like it. The other miracles involved healing the terminally sick or raising the dead or casting out demons and so the turning of water into wine just to save a wedding supper from some minor embarrassment seems a little silly to me. In the same way our worship and communion practices seem kind of silly to others. And yet this "alpha" miracle and this foretaste of the wedding supper of the Lamb does have an "Omega" miracle and a full-taste in its future. Our brothers and sisters in heaven are enjoying the wedding supper of the Lamb while they anticipate the resurrection of their bodies.

Let's not agonize about our names being on an All Saints' list because it means we have died. And let's not wish ourselves to be on this list because that means our troubles in this life are over. Instead, let us make the most of every opportunity to grow in our faith every time Jesus is with us in the preaching and teaching of God's Word and in every administration of a Sacrament. And let's live our faith as God helps us every day because the wedding supper of the Lamb is too good for us to miss, and we want other people to come to the wedding supper of the Lamb too. Amen.