

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 6, 2013

The Rev. Joel Montgomery '13, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Vandalia, Mo.

SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 22:1-14

1 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. 4 Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' 5 But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 9 Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' 10 Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, 12 and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. 13 Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 For many are called, but few are chosen."

DEVOTIONAL

The person wasn't wearing a wedding garment. Doesn't it seem a bit harsh of the king, after extending this vast invitation? What if this person didn't have a wedding garment and just came as s/he was to the last-minute invitation? Is that fair?

Then we realize - it's not about the clothes. Not really. The person didn't even try. S/He wasn't prepared and didn't appreciate the invitation s/he'd been given. The king could have provided a robe if s/he'd only asked, but the person just stood speechless.

As we celebrate the Advent season, we remember that we, too, have been invited and called. And that call is a serious one - it changes our very world. God calls us as we are, but also clothes us in Christ so that we, too, are made worthy through Christ to celebrate at the feast. Are you "dressed" this Advent?

PRAYER

Emmanuel, God with us, you have invited us to your banquet. You have invited us in our ratty jeans and rag-man shirts to come and dine with you. Accept the offering we give of the tatters of ourselves, Lord, and re-clothe us in Christ that we who have been called may also be chosen. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.

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