

Lesson 22 . . . The Two Great Commandments
Gospel of Matthew



Notes From the Podium

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These notes are intended to augment your own reading and study of the lesson. Please use as an aid to help document the main message of the lecture.

Matthew 22:1-46

I. The Kingdom of Heaven

- A. We rarely think of heaven.
- B. Perhaps the most unmediated teaching of the Church.
- C. In parable after parable, our Lord draws our mind's eye toward the kingdom of heaven.
- D. Heaven begins in this life in the Church on earth and it comes to fruition in that same mystical body, the Church in Heaven.
 1. C.S Lewis once said that in the beginning God did not reveal the reality of heaven to the Jews because He wanted them to love Him first, and only then to long for the place in which they would abide with Him. (Reflections on the Psalms)
 2. It is not wrong to want heaven, but
 - a. First we receive Christ, and participation in the Blessed Trinity
 - b. The place in which we will abide with the Blessed Trinity is not simply spiritual but is also physical because we will have our bodies back.
 - c. That place we call heaven, our sweet and blessed country, but the one we should long for first in order to discover that country, is the one who dwells there and builds mansions for us.

II. The Parable of the Wedding Feast

- A. Marriage
 1. A natural symbol of the Blessed Trinity
 2. A sacrament, that which gives grace.
 3. As a sacrament, marriage imparts Grace to the husband and wife such that they have the capacity to image and fulfill the dictates of Christ's faithful love for His bride the Church.
- B. From Genesis to Revelation
 1. The book of Revelation tells us that the wedding feast of the Lamb has begun and His bride is prepared to welcome Him. –Rev 19:6-7
 2. All of Scripture has to do with this marriage between the Son of the Eternal Father and His bride, Israel, now the Church.
 3. Take note that when our Lord speaks of marriage in Scripture the Bridegroom never shows up, because He is the Bridegroom.
- C. A king throws a marriage feast for his son.
 1. The "king" is the Father.
 2. The "son" is the Eternal Son of God.

3. The king throws a marriage feast which would last for several days.
 - a. The marriage feast that our Lord invites us to began on Holy Thursday.
 - i. At this feast the Groom (Christ) will give to His bride (the Church) His own body, blood, soul and divinity.
 - ii. At the same time, our Lord inaugurates the Priesthood to perpetuate this sacrifice.
 - b. The Last Supper is the nuptial love of the bridegroom, in flesh and blood.
 - c. The feast (the Last Supper) is given before the sacrifice is made because those things are outside of time.
 - i. The sacrifices of Christ are taken up into one eternal reality that is penetrated in time by our celebration of the Holy Mass.
 - ii. At the Holy Mass, the crucifixion and the resurrection are all poured out from the font of the eternal cross.
 - d. “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” - *Rev. 19:9*
- D. A Dowry
1. Traditionally something given by the bride’s family to the bridegroom for taking on the financial burden of caring for their daughter.
 2. The Church has always seen a dowry coming with our entrance into heaven.
 - a. When we receive our bodies back in the resurrected life, we will be *endowed* with certain capacities.
 - b. The body will be subject to the soul, it will be in harmony, the soul will be manifested through the body perfectly
 - i. At present the soul is fractured and cannot be seen as it once was when Adam first saw the woman.
 - ii. Adam saw the whole woman
 - iii. We see only the body separate from soul. In this world, the body doesn’t perfectly manifest the soul.
 - c. To move like the angels, with respect to our thoughts.
 - i. If an angel was here in this particular parish of mine want to be in London, well he thinks about London.
 - ii. We could have that capacity. To be where we think.
 3. We will be clothed in the “Lumen Gloria”, the light of glory.
 - a. The Grace that will be given us, to be able to behold the face of God.
 - b. Extra grace has to be given us to even be able to receive it, for God is not imaginable.
 - c. For now, St. Thomas says, we see the whole of Him without seeing Him wholly.
 4. The endless journey into the infinity of God, to behold him, all of these endowments, are given to us by the Father, it is the dowry.
 - a. This is confusing because dowries traditionally come from the father of the bride.
 - b. Understand that by virtue of baptism the Father of the Son is also now the Father of the daughter, the bride, the Church.
 - c. We can say *Our* Father who art in heaven.

- d. He throws this feast for His Son and He endows His bride with gifts of grace.
- E. “And sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come.” (traditionally refers to the chosen people, Israel)
- F. “Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner,’”
 - 1. A double invitation - after telling the guest about the feast, those invited are told everything is now ready and everyone would come.
 - 2. “My oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.”
 - a. Christ himself is the marriage feast, not oxen.
 - b. In the resurrection now He can offer this to us in the Mass, as one, unbloody, perpetual, sacrifice. A gift of Himself to His bride.
- G. “But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business,”
 - 1. To make light of such an invitation, infinite love poured out in flesh and blood...
 - 2. Not that they don’t leave for great things, just for the ordinary.
 - a. Apathy and Indifference
 - b. Usually it is only ordinary things that are chosen over following Him.
 - c. It is a refusal to relinquish something lesser for something greater.
- H. “...the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.”
 - 1. Why a response of anger?
 - a. A very disproportionate response.
 - b. They are unwilling to relinquish the lower for the higher.
 - i. To come to this wedding feast is to never return to the present life.
 - ii. This invitation isn’t for a day; it is for the marriage itself.
 - iii. To accept this invitation is to *be* the bride.
 - c. What is described here is a bride who refuses the proposal
 - i. In order to have the illicit marriage that she wants, she destroys the messengers that come to hand her the invitation.
 - ii. She even destroys the Son Himself.
 - Maybe if she slaughters him she can have the inheritance, without ever having him
 - How perverse and crooked.
- I. “The king was angry, ... ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go...and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good...”
 - 1. That is the nature of Catholicism.
 - 2. In this parable, Matthew is revealing the foothold of the kingdom of heaven on earth, the Church, so it is a kingdom that is both in this world and the next.
 - a. By virtue of Baptism, we come in to the Church on earth and become part of the bride.
 - b. We are re clothed in Christ, as we saw Christ clothed before His entry into Jerusalem.
 - c. We are clothed in a wedding garment.

- d. Fathers of the Church say that we are clothed in Divine Love and sanctifying grace dwells in us.
- 3. many come in, many are called, different persons, the good and the bad,
 - a. Like the net cast into the sea
 - b. Like the wheat and the weeds
 - c. This is the reality of the Church on earth.
 - d. At the wedding feast, the Holy Mass, we will be bumping shoulders with persons who have garments on and persons who don't.
 - e. If you don't have a garment on, the place to go is the confessional, to be clothed in Divine Love again.
- J. "But when the king came in... he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' ... 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; ... For many are called, but few are chosen.'"
 - 1. It seems to be a very harsh response.
 - a. Understand that those invited have the nature of being part of the bride.
 - b. The wedding hall is also the name for the wedding chamber.
 - c. No one goes into the wedding chamber but the bride and the bridegroom.
 - 2. "...cast him into the outer darkness."
 - a. The same words are used in the rite of excommunication.
 - b. To be cut off because we are found to be imposters, not clothed as the bride.
 - c. We can get in even if we're bad but we can't stay unless we become the bride.
- K. "...friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?"
 - 1. One of the 12
 - a. Was with our Lord when this wedding fest began at the Last Supper
 - b. Had received the invitation
 - c. Had accepted the call to come.
 - 2. But as the lamb was being prepared, in the Garden of Gethsemane, there this one comes to betray our Lord, to hand him over.
 - a. Our Lord says the same words, "Friend, how is it that you've come here?"
 - b. Indeed he was a friend; they walked together in harmony in the house of the Lord.
 - c. *It is you, my own companion my intimate friend... -Psalm 55*
 - d. This friend gives Him a kiss, and can do so because he is part of the bride.
 - 3. In this case our Lord continues with the preparations of the wedding feast and is himself bound hand and foot and cast into the darkness, the darkness that covered the entire earth on Good Friday.
 - 4. Then upon his rising, the other apostles, friends of the bridegroom would go out and extend the invitation to the whole world.
 - a. For many are called but few are chosen.
 - b. To be chosen, "eklektōi." (Eclectic - our Lord's taste is very eclectic, He calls us from every corner of the world to be part of the bride.)

III. "Then the Pharisees went and took counsel how to entangle Him.

- A. “Teacher, we know that you are true, and teach the way of God truthfully, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men.”
 - 1. ‘Tell us ...Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’
 - 2. Jesus, aware of their malice, asks them to show Him the money for the tax.
 - 3. He takes the coin and He looks at the inscription and asks, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They respond “Caesar’s”.
 - 4. He said to them, “Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”
 - a. Render to God what is God’s; you were created in the image and likeness...
 - b. You will be re-created with the image and likeness of the triune God and the inscription will be “written on their foreheads” (*Rev 14:1*), you belong to God.

IV. The Sadducees and the Resurrection “Teacher,

- A. Moses said, ‘If a man dies, having no children, his brother must marry the widow...’
 - 1. They try to trap him by discussing all the many, many husbands that this one woman had, and then asking ‘whose wife will she be?’.
 - 2. Our Lord says, “...you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God.”
 - a. The power of God which is necessary for understanding of Scripture is given to the church.
 - b. The power of the Holy Spirit
 - 3. “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”
 - a. This does not mean that we will not have bodies in heaven.
 - i. We will have bodies; to be without a body is an unnatural state for us.
 - b. But like the angels that do not need support or procreation, neither will we in heaven and it is for these that marriage was given us.
 - c. In heaven we will enter into that one marriage between the bridegroom and the bride.
- B. “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?”
 - 1. Not *I was*, but *I am*, present tense.
 - 2. “He is not God of the dead, but of the living.”
 - a. The crowd was astonished at his teaching.
 - b. The Pharisees heard that he had silenced (muzzled) the Sadducees, they came together.”

V. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

- A. Love makes you grow in likeness to that which you love.
- B. Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
 - 1. To be clothed as the bride.
 - 2. What we see now is the vision of faith; we shall see Him face to face, love Him and so take on his likeness.
- C. “This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

1. “On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.”
2. These two commandments are wedded together so that we might have practical ways in which to love our Lord by virtue of loving our neighbor.
 - a. If you do not love God, you will not love your neighbor and will destroy him.
 - b. If you love him too much, you will make him an idol and destroy him.
3. St. John of the Cross says, like bees, we extract from every created good the love that God places within them and we cross pollinate, we empty that love into every created good that we come across.
4. First we receive it from Him and then by nature it pours out of us.

VI. Jesus asks the Pharisees, “What do you think of the Christ? Whose Son is he?”

- A. “The Son of David.”
- B. “How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord?
 1. In his human nature he is the Son of David.
 2. His father ultimately is the eternal Father. So He is also the Son of God.
- C. “No one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did any one dare to Him any more questions.”
- D. He stops their questions by asking them a question which reveals to them the infinite mystery of His person and they don't have an answer to that.