

Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

You Must be Born Again!

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Christmas 2020

The Banquet of the Lord

December 20, 2020

Sermon Text: Assorted

Scripture Reading: John 14:1-14

This morning I we are going to spend some time on a subject that is fitting for the Christmas season. As you have heard me say many times before and this time in “Christmas” terms – the master theme of the Bible is *Immanuel*. God with us. God’s determination to create a universe in which He dwells among His people and we with Him.

This divine plan is already in effect – *already but not yet*. Begun but not fully consummated in all that it is going to be. The Kingdom of God, the new creation, is among us but it will not come into its fullness until Christ comes again. God is with us in that *He is in us*. We are His temple. He has made us new creations. We have access into the holy

of holies. But the new heavens and earth are still under construction. The kingdom of the evil one, this fallen world and the wicked men in it, still war and rail against Christ:

Psalms 2:1-12 ESV Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying, (3) “Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.” (4) He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision. (5) Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying, (6) “As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.” (7) I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you. (8) Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (9) You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” (10) Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11) Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with

trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

As theologians have pointed out, the Christian today lives between D-Day and V-Day. Christ's invasion has begun and victory is accomplished, but the enemy has not been fully destroyed yet.

But let's turn our thinking now to V-Day. I have been seeing quite a few digitized Christmas music videos online which depict beautiful scenes of log cabins or even log mansions, snow outside, a huge stone fireplace inside by a big, decorated Christmas tree. When I see those scenes, I want to be there and more, I want all of my friends to be there – everyone having their own space (it's a really big house) and some central rooms where everyone can gather together in the evenings, and a big dining room with a huge table with room for everyone at each meal.

God has the same desire, only of course, far greater than any of my thoughts. *The Lord has resolved to live with His people.* So determined is this resolve and so motivated by unmerited love for us, He was even willing to give His own Son on the cross so that it

would all be possible. This is why the day of Pentecost followed closely upon Christ's death and resurrection.

Acts 2:33 ESV Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

But this is only the down payment. It is the guarantee of the whole package that is coming:

John 14:1-3 ESV "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

There are two particular aspects to this plan of God to dwell with us and we with Him which I want us to think more closely about. They are:

- The mansion – His house, the Temple
- The banquet hall in the mansion

You see these two themes increasing in clarity down through the Bible storyline. Here is just one example:

2 Samuel 9:1-10 ESV And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2) Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant." (3) And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet." (4) The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lodebar." (5) Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lodebar. (6) And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant." (7) And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you

shall eat at my table always." (8) And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?" (9) Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. (10) And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

David gives us a picture in this of his greater Son, the Messiah. The king invites the lame man into his palace and to his dining table. *He shall always eat at my table.* Simply because of the king's desire to show kindness and to have Mephibosheth in his house.

The Palace of the King

One of the reasons that the Bible mentions *hospitality* as a requirement for the office of elder in the church is that Christians, and their leaders in particular, are to evidence the character of Christ. And Christ is the most hospitable King of all. When we come into His presence, we come into His

mansion and that mansion is the *temple*.

You see the temple modeled in earthly terms in:

- Eden – the Lord would come and walk in the garden with Adam and Eve
- Tabernacle in the wilderness
- The Jerusalem Temple

And then it takes on a more perfect form-

- The Lord Jesus who was Immanuel, God with us.
- It becomes the body of Christ, the church. God IN us. Closer and closer he comes.
- It will be the entirety of the New Creation

But always, always, always you will find in the Bible *terms or covenant by which man can enter into God's presence*. That entry as we have said becomes closer and closer and closer as the plan of redemption progresses until ultimately the whole new creation is the palace/temple of the King. And then:

1 Corinthians 13:12 ESV For now we

see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

1 John 3:2 ESV Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

And so those warm Christmas scenes of snow falling (will there be snow in the New Creation???) and of warm firelight shining through the windows of a big log mansion where all of our real family and friends will live together – turn out to be not so fictitious after all. It is this longing for *home* in us that will be ultimately satisfied *there*.

Encompassed in this subject of living in the palace of the king with His people, is the subject of *the church*. To the degree that it is possible, we are to ensure that the local church of which we are a part *models and evidences the temple of the Lord*. People in this world are to be able to see Christ's household and family in us. This is not an option. Therefore:

- Unrepentant evil and sin is not to

be permitted to be among us

- We are to love one another and we WILL if we are born again
- The church is to be a body of people who genuinely love the Lord and obey Him
- Any form of false god is to be fled from
- The Lord is to be worshipped and praised and exalted, *not man*.

Ephesians 4:17-24 ESV Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. (18) They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (19) They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity.

(20) But that is not the way you learned Christ!— (21) assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, (22) to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, (23) and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, (24) and to put on the new self, **created after the likeness of God in**

true righteousness and holiness.

I hope that by now you are realizing that the majority of local churches fail miserably in these things and the reason is because *you must be born again!* Anything else is not a new creation of Christ, it is not the body of Christ, it is a counterfeit. Christ's true church is always present in this world, but it is the remnant and it is not therefore the majority of what claims to be of Christ.

So this morning, in this Christmas season, let's understand these things and be thankful. We are in the temple. We are in the house of the Lord, in His palace. And there is more –

The Banquet

All through the OT there are pictures and future glimpses of the dining hall of the Lord –

Isaiah 55:1 ESV “Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

Isaiah 25:6 ESV On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all

peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

Jeremiah 31:11-12 ESV For the LORD has ransomed Jacob and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. (12) They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall be like a watered garden, and they shall languish no more.

Matthew 22:1-10 ESV And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, (2) “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, (3) and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. (4) Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ (5) But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, (6) while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully,

and killed them. (7) The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. (8) Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. (9) Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ (10) And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

And then of course you have this great culmination of the banquet scene given in Revelation:

Revelation 19:6-10 ESV Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (7) Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. (9) And the angel said to me, “Write this: Blessed are those who are

invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” And he said to me, “These are the true words of God.” (10) Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

This is the fulfillment of David’s declaration:

Psalms 23:5 ESV You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

There is much more in this Revelation passage than the dining table and banquet, but this is our focus. Having been justified and finally glorified, Christ’s people are portrayed as clothed in fine linen bright and pure as they come to the marriage supper.

Any time a king or some other notable person gives a banquet, there is a guest list. Invitations are issued. No one is going to get in who has not been invited. Think of that Day when we all stand before the Lord and your name is searched for on the guest list – will it be

there? This is worthy of very sober and serious reflection by each of us. The old hymn writer put it this way:

*Lord, I care not for riches, neither
silver nor gold
I would make sure of Heaven, I would
enter the fold
In the book of thy Kingdom, with its
pages so fair.
Tell me, Jesus, my Savior, is my name
written there?*

If Christ is your Savior, if you are in Him, then YES, your name is there on the guest list. Only you aren’t a guest! You are a family member.

Here then, and more, is what is found in the name, Immanuel. God with us. And we with Him. In His palace temple, at His banquet table. Welcomed. Known. Purified. These are the things to be remembered at Christmas.

Isaiah 7:14 ESV Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The Communion Hymn that we sing when we meet together ends with these things in mind-

*We proclaim Christ will come again!
And we'll join in the feast of heaven
Around the table of the King*

Isaiah 9:6-7 ESV For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (7) Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.