

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

All things are now ready. Nothing is lacking. It is finished. Creation is restored. God has made peace with man. He has given His Son to us. He has ushered in the age of life by His resurrection. And still He gives. He gives His Body and His Blood, broken and shed on the cross, for you to eat and drink here in time for the forgiveness of sins. All things are ready. There is nothing to add. God has made a Sacrifice. The Temple is torn down. It is no longer needed. There is nothing to wail about at those ruins. God has removed His wrath.

Yet still men make excuses. Poor babies: this is their only day to sleep in; golf is really important; Church is boring and they don't like to be bored. They'll make extreme efforts to get to the doctor or to a family wedding because those things are important. They'll wait in line for hours of boredom to see Star Wars at the end. But don't ask too much effort of them to come and be fed by God. That is pretty shallow. Their excuses are thing. But which of us has not sat in this very room and wished it were over already? Which of us has not been bored in church and daydreamed not just of lunch and appointments for the week, not just of fame and fortune and dreams come true, but sat in this very pews and dreamed of evil? Even plotted to sin? We've lusted and coveted, lied and blasphemed within sight of the altar while the Word of God was read and His great love proclaimed. It is not just those who are missing who are guilty. Excuses are cheap and plentiful.

Thus do proud and arrogant men think that they can prey upon the generosity and patience of God. Like the wife of Hosea they seek to take advantage of and abuse His grace and good will. Who hasn't wanted the best of both worlds – the pleasures of the flesh, honor among men, luxuries, freedom, and constant amusement AND the joys and peace of heaven? Who is ready to lose his job, his family, his reputation, and his wealth for the Kingdom of God? We promised that at confirmation. Did we really mean it? Our debts are evidence that we do not like to wait. Do not think that you can enjoy the forbidden fruit now and grasp heaven for cheap when it is more convenient. Do not be like a crazed day traders living by the world's wisdom: "Buy low and sell high. Maximize profits. Seize the day." The irony is that such vanity blinds men so they never realize how cheaply they're selling their souls.

Repent. Hear the warning. God says: "None of those who were invited shall taste of My Supper." He will not be mocked. Now is the hour of salvation. Tomorrow may never come. No one buys a piece of land without seeing it first. No one buys oxen without first testing them. God is not fooled by superficial acts and lip-service, by going through the motions. He is not appeased by excuses. He desires mercy not sacrifice. He desires the circumcision of the heart. Stop playing games with your fate, planning to sin now and repent later. Stop posturing before men and spewing lies like David pretending to be a noble hero for bringing the war-widow Bathsheba into his house. Stop thinking that your sins are reasonable and bring no guilt or that you have some special relationship to God where He indulges your sins. Repent. Repent now. There is but one case of death-bed repentance in all of the Scriptures, so that while no man should despair and think it is too late, neither should any one presume. The invitation is not for tomorrow. It is for today. It is right now. All things are ready.

God has done all things for you. He has taken up your flesh, lived and suffered, died and rose for you. He has endured Hell's fury and fire. He has left the enemy spent and dead on his own sword. He has crushed the serpent's head and dissolved the chains of guilt and shame that held you. He has flung open wide the gates of heaven and removed the guards. The flaming sword of Eden has been quenched in the Blood of the Lamb. The angel of death passes over. You are safe. There is no one to accuse you, no one to keep you out, nothing to stop you from this victory and joy given for free from on high. God Himself, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit loves you and beckons you to come to the feast. He wants you.

Do not be afraid. Do not be sad. Do not think yourself unworthy or dwell upon your past sins. They are gone. They are forgiven. Come: weak and weary, heartbroken and lonely, trembling sinners wracked with guilt and uncertainty. All things are ready. Come to the feast. It has been made ready for you. The greatest and the least, the outcasts and losers, the popular athletes and scholars, the druggies and rehab cases, the divorced failures and the wealthy execs, come. One and all, come to the Feast! Leave behind these temporary things. Get lost in the love of Christ that has loved you beyond all telling, that has forgiven every single flaw and sin and makes you new in Him. Lose yourself and find your life. Eat and drink without money or cost. Be satisfied to the very depths of your soul and never thirst again. You belong to God. His Name is upon you. You are Baptized and He abides in you. You are His Temple. These highways and hedges are not your home. He brought you here this day to His House and to His Feast. Come. Be wrapped in perfect, selfless love. Eat His Body. Drink His Blood.

All things are ready. Nothing is lacking. He desires that you call upon Him and rest in Him. He wants you here. Whatever you've done, whatever evil things you've dreamed and thought, whatever lies you've told and slander in which you've engaged, no matter what, God has paid for it all in His Son. You are clean and worthy of the Bridegroom. He wants you to feast, to be washed clean and reunited again with Him, to be full and satisfied, to be again at peace. He wants reconciliation and justification for you. And thus does the Spirit declare that what is Father's and the Son's is yours. Come. All things are ready. He is waiting.

In +Jesus' Name. Amen.