

Wednesday in Advent 2 12/11/24
Revelation 19
Rejoice: The Lord Is at Hand

So, how was your Thanksgiving? Inquiring minds what to know: how was Pastor's Thanksgiving, so I guess I'm bound to tell, right. We had turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, green beans, and washed it all down with a couple pieces of pies smothered with mounds of whipped cream.

But, what was so wonderful about Pastor's Thanksgiving was not the what we ate, but where it was and who I was with. We were at Eric's house, Christian & his family were there, so we got to be with all our grandchildren.

I'm going to venture a guess that your Thanksgiving was not all that different. You had turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, and pie. And it was all very good. But, what made your Thanksgiving "Thanksgiving" was where you were and who you were with. I hope that Thanksgiving gave you the opportunity to be with family, friends, for a day of pure joy.

My Friends, our Advent worship is focusing on "Rejoice: The Lord Is at Hand". Tonight, our worship focuses on "Rejoice: The marriage supper of the Lamb has come". It is important for us, My Friends to always remember that God is with us in Christ. As we looked at last week, Christ has literally set up His tent to dwell with us. We must never forget that. Let me give you a reason why.

The school year had just started – I mean literally it was like the first day of classes. My roommates – fellow members of my high school class - were sitting in our dorm room when the telephone rang to tell us that another classmate was dead. He was dead because he went into his

garage and hung himself. One of my roommates was quite a good friend of his, so he left -- **just left**. Came back some time later to tell us that he had walked to one of the campus ministry churches. And, he told us, it was empty. God wasn't there.

Well, My Friends, I don't care whether you are 19 or 91, you are not prepared for that phone call. It is easy for us in the darkness of this valley of the shadow of death, with the world pressing in on us, with one step between us and the grave, to ask, "Where is God?" Our reason and senses tell us, in the midst of our tears and despair, God doesn't care. You've heard that. In fact, maybe you've said that yourself.

Tonight, our ears of faith hear the words of Revelation 19:

"The Lord our God the Almighty reigns ... for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready" ... "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."

Like the season of Advent, the book of Revelation is a forward-looking book. The words of our lesson look forward to the time after the last day, the day Jesus comes in all of His glory to judge the living and the dead. There is no reason to be afraid as we look forward to that last day. No, for the Child of the Heavenly Father, it is a glorious day, which is why we pray, "Thy Kingdom Come," for it to come. For on that wonderful day, Jesus is coming as the King of Kings to rescue us from all the curse of sin. That means no more loneliness, sadness, despair; no more misery.

Jesus will reign and we will reign with **in** Jesus and **with** Jesus. The Bible pictures heaven as an eternal marriage feast, a time of pure joy and happiness, a time of plenty.

Maybe we can think of it this way. You know those words of the Good Shepherd Psalm, "He makes me lie down in green pastures". You

know those words, Little Lambs, so I ask you: What do they mean? They mean this: Sheep are ruminants. Ruminants are not like us; they have four chambers to their stomachs. So, they chew their food to mix it with saliva and then swallow it. It goes through a couple of the chambers of their stomachs. *{Bad timing, I shouldn't be mentioning this right after you've eaten, right}* Then, the food is regurgitated and re-chewed and swallowed.

Here's the POINT: In order for sheep to eat, they must dwell in perfect peace. Safety. They must rest. That's what the Bible says awaits us. Perfect peace. Rest from all of our earthly struggles and labors. The hymn writer said it so well: "We now not oh, we know not what joys await us there" (LSB 672:1).

That is **where** we feast at the marriage supper of the Lamb. And, how we rejoice and give thanks for **WHO** will be there. At the marriage feast of the Lamb we will be with the "angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven." "All the company of heaven." That's your loved ones, and mine, who have died in the faith. The marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven means we will see them again. We will dwell in the house of the Lord forever with them. And, nothing, especially not death, will ever separate us again.

At the marriage feast of the Lamb in heaven, they in glory shine, but for today, we feebly struggle. The Good News for us is that we have the marriage supper of the Lamb right here, right now; a foretaste of the feast to come.

On the cross, Jesus did indeed win the forgiveness of sins for us. His Easter resurrection proves that God the Father accepted His death on the cross as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all the world. And, His Easter

resurrection has brought life and immortality to light for you and for me,
Dear Friends.

And, He gives us the forgiveness, life, and salvation He has won for us in His marriage supper. At His table, under the bread and the wine, He feeds us with His true Body and Blood.

“Everything is ready,” for us and for our salvation. We can come to that blessed feast because not only has God prepared the feast for us, but He has given us the white garment of Christ. In Holy Baptism, we put on the righteousness of Jesus, the white pure, righteousness the Savior. The Bible says it this way, *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Ga 3:27)*.

That’s where it is, but don’t overlook the “Who”. Who we eat and drink at that marriage supper with – our brothers and sisters in Christ. When you eat and drink at that marriage supper, you are taking upon yourself the joys and **burdens** of your brothers and sisters in Christ. So as Christ has carried your burdens, you bear your neighbor’s as your very own. There, Christ is, with us, doing His work in us, so that He can do His work through us.

Rejoice, My Friends in Christ, the marriage supper of the Lamb has come. And that means we find God exactly where He has promised to be found – at the marriage supper in heaven. And for today, He is with us in the marriage feast of His life-giving Body and Blood, so that He comes to abide with us, to be one with us that we may be one with another, today and forever.

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