

Session Ten · The Great Invitation

Great Banquet · Wedding Banquet · Ten Bridesmaids · Sheep & Goats · Wicked Tenants

WHAT WE FOUND

The series closes where the Kingdom is headed: a wedding feast. Ten weeks began with “the Kingdom is at hand” and end with the doors of the hall opening. The banquet parables press an uncomfortable point, that the invitation is refused not by people preferring evil but by people preferring good things, a field, oxen, a marriage, over the one thing that finally matters. And the wedding garment, as St. Augustine read it, is charity: one can be present at the feast without truly belonging.

The Ten Bridesmaids taught that readiness, the oil the Fathers pondered, cannot be borrowed at the last moment; it is a life cultivated now, during the delay. The Sheep and the Goats, a vision of the Last Judgment more than a parable, set the criterion at mercy to the least. And the Wicked Tenants ended not with the killing but with the cornerstone: even the rejected Son becomes the foundation. The end of the story God is telling is joy, and the warnings are serious because the joy is real.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) In his Sermon 90 on Matthew’s Gospel, the wedding garment is charity: to accept the invitation without putting on love is to be at the wedding without truly belonging there.

St. John Chrysostom (347–407) In his Homilies on Matthew (Homily 50), he warns against honoring Christ’s body at the altar while ignoring Christ in the hungry, the stranger, and the imprisoned. The works of mercy are not optional.

St. Gregory the Great (540–604) In his Forty Gospel Homilies (Homily 10), the oil is a life of love cultivated over time; the wise cannot share it because that kind of readiness is not transferable.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) In the Summa Theologiae (II-II, q. 32, a. 1), the works of mercy are acts of charity: not add-ons to the Christian life but the way faith’s charity becomes visible in deed.

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Choose one specific work of mercy and make it a regular practice, with a time and a frequency: an hour at the food pantry, a monthly visit to a homebound parishioner, a weekly meal for a family in need. Begin it this week.
2. Take all ten sessions together and name the one parable the Lord has pressed into you most insistently over these weeks. Take it as the parable Christ is asking you to live this season. Pray it, carry it, become it.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

Copy it out this week and carry it with you: **Matthew 25:40**

WHAT STAYED WITH ME

One line, an image, or a question from tonight that you do not want to lose:

CARRYING IT FORWARD

For the road: Keep your ten Take-Home sheets together as one guide to the parables. Return to the one that marked you most, and read it beside its Gospel text through the coming year.

Catechism: CCC 1027, 1038, 1040, 1042