

**28th Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
**Is 25:6-10; Ps 23; Phil 12-14, 19-20; Mt 22:1-14**

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Everyone likes to eat! Thus a banquet, where one's appetites both for food and for company and joy are satisfied, is one of the principal images of the "kingdom of God." Jesus himself can perhaps be most characterized as hosting festive meals, where the hungry and the outcast—those who were excluded from table-fellowship by more observant, "proper" Jews—were welcome. Bible passages about the "Good Shepherd" are found not only in Jn 10, but in Ez 34: God, through his servant David (the Messiah), will heal the sick sheep and make them lie down to feed. This scene is perfectly fulfilled in Mk 2:15-17, where Jesus is lying down with sinners, as was done in festive Jewish meals. He justifies his behavior against critics by pointing out that he is a physician to the sick.

Our first reading from Isaiah has been considered one of the most important background passages for this practice of Jesus. It is from a late section of Isaiah, added to the book when "messianic" expectations were high. It prophesies about the End Time of salvation, when death will be no more, when the veil—of ignorance, sin, oppression—which hangs over all peoples will be destroyed, and all tears will be wiped away. It is then that those who held out and never lost hope in the Lord will see their fidelity rewarded: they had not hoped in a God who did not help, but in a God who would save "in the fullness of time" (see Mk 1:15; Gal 4:4-7).

Ps 23 is known to all: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." But we should associate it with the hope for the Messiah in Ez 34. There Yahweh confronts bad shepherds who feed and dress off the lambs entrusted to them (cf. Mk 12:38-40). This is why Jesus in the Good Shepherd discourse in Jn 10:8 calls all those who came before him "thieves and bandits." In the messianic age, there will be one sole good shepherd, "my servant David," Ez 34:23-24; 37:24-28.

The parable in the gospel is another recount of Israel's history: the prophets who were sent were ignored, mistreated and killed. God's invitation to join him in the banquet

of the kingdom loses out to more worldly pursuits. (The man who is thrown out probably represents an invitee (“called”) who has not “put on” Christ; see Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14.)