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“Be like servants who await their master’s return from a wedding” (Luke 12:35).

Eph 2:12-22; Luke 12:35-38.

Chapter 12 of Luke encourages late first century pastors and their churches waiting for the *Parousia*, Jesus’ second coming. One detail in today’s Gospel is interesting and deliberate. The master the servants await is returning from a wedding. This image appears often in Jesus’ parables. His mission will culminate in a celebration of the nuptial covenant between God and his people, a theme central to the Hebrew Bible and that concludes the New Testament in *Revelations*.

The wedding metaphor makes God’s plan of salvation a love story. The bond between heaven and earth is like the union of husband and wife, so intimate it makes two into one. Jesus, who is both human and divine, reveals this union in himself as the Incarnate Word. Heaven came to earth in the person of Jesus, whose mission was to heal the estrangement of sin that separated humanity from God.

Today’s first reading from Ephesians describes how Jesus reunited a broken humanity by his death on the cross. All people are made one in him in both flesh and spirit. The distinctions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male and female are erased: “In Christ Jesus you who were once far off have become near by the Blood of Christ” (Eph 2:14).

St. Paul insisted that Grace had replaced the Law as the source of universal salvation. Jesus’ death and resurrection ushered in the New Creation, restoring God’s image through Jesus, whose risen body shares with us his Incarnation.

Baptism incorporates us into Christ, making us members of his body, the new humanity destined for divine life.

This is the wedding the master is returning from. His servants are waiting to share his love story. As they wait, they show their faithfulness by loving one another. Every Eucharist we attend is a nuptial celebration of the Communion Jesus made possible by his death and resurrection. Standing around the altar, we rehearse the unity Jesus wants for us, then go forth to draw others into the love story of God for the world.

We long for a culmination that is both here and not yet. Luke ends the story by promising that faithful servants will experience the master's arrival at every hour. In the second and third watch, Jesus will appear to serve his church. He invites us to table and waits on us, nourishing us with himself so that we will become like him. In gradual transformation, our human lives reveal our divine destiny, God's image in us. "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant, ready to open immediately when he comes and knocks."

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