Let us pray,

Lord, give us the wisdom to take your gifts seriously. May we learn to receive graciously and with gratitude.

Amen.

Have any of you watched the Apple TV show Ted Lasso?

If you haven't, you gotta!

Just saying, you can get a free 30 day trial, watch ted lasso and then just cancel.

Its worth it.

Well, Tricia and I just finished the final episode of Season 4 this past week.

And I obviously don't want to spoil much, and I wont.

But there was this fable that they brought up that I found compelling.

Its about the scorpion and the frog.

Did you ever hear that fable?

A scorpion wants to cross a wide, rough river.

The scorpion cannot cross the river on its own, because it would drown.

Therefore, the scorpion asks a frog for help crossing the river.

The frog is hesitant at first, because the frog is concerned that the scorpion will sting him.

The scorpion then says, why would I sting you, because if I stung you then we both would die crossing the river.

The frog agrees with this logic, and agrees to help the scorpion cross the river.

But halfway through crossing the river, the scorpion stings the frog.

The frog says, why did you do that, now both of us are going to die.

The scorpion replies, I couldn't help it, it is in my nature.

And they both drown.

The moral of the parable is that some people, either for their whole lives or just a part of their life, are just vicious and destructive.

They cannot help it, and because they are unable to change their nature, they have a tendency to drown others with them.

But one of the characters in Ted Lasso, adapts the story.

And she says,

It may be in the nature of the scorpion to sting, but it is in the nature of the frog to help.

Why should the nature of the scorpion effect the nature of the frog.

Essentially, don't let bad natured individuals effect your good nature.

I think this is an important lesson for all of us.

The world can be a brutal, unfair, and evil place to live in sometimes.

Things outside our control, effect our lives all of the time.

We have scorpions making decisions for us and our lives, that make us drown along with them.

We have politicians, making decisions for the nation that effect all of us, in positive and negative ways.

Sometimes the scorpions win and sometimes the frogs win.

Ill let you decide who the scorpions and frogs are.

And maybe we have some scorpions closer to home.

Maybe some of our family members are scorpions.

They have a way of bringing other people down with them, even if they don't mean it.

Or maybe you are the scorpion.

If so, what are the implications of that.

But either way, we are connected whether we like it or not.

And the decisions that we make, and that our leaders make, are not made in a bubble.

All of us are effected.

All of us can cross the river together, or we can all drown together.

_____

But what does any of this have to do with the Gospel story today?

Well we see a bunch of scorpions rejecting the grace of God.

A bunch of people who feel like they are too good for God.

That they don't need God.

That life is going just fine without God.

And therefore, God lets them.

God doesn't try to change their nature.

God just moves on, and instead of cancelling the feast, God decides to invite others.

God invites those on the margins.

Those who are both good and bad.

I think that is an important to emphasize.

Good and bad people were invited.

God calls all of us to God's table.

The frogs and the scorpions.

No matter what natured creature we are, and that can change throughout our lifetimes, God still calls us in.

Because the reality is, all of us are frogs and scorpions.

As St. Paul says, I do the very thing that I don't want to do.

And yet he is Christianity's greatest theologian and one of the greatest proclaimers of the Gospel.

It is in our nature to be sinners.

It is in our DNA to not follow God.

But it is also in our DNA to follow God.

And as two natured beings, God does not hold our nature against us anymore.

God has decided to accept us as scorpions and frogs.

And has extended an invitation to all of us, no matter what we have done or who we are, because our sinful nature, will not effect God's loving nature.

Sometimes I think that we think we have more power over God than we do.

Sometimes I think we make ourselves into these super important people.

Thinking that God has this magnificent plan for my individual life.

But lets be honest with ourselves.

Most of us are not going to be king David or Mother Mary.

And that is ok and good.

Because God's magnificent plan is not for the individual, its for the collective.

God invited all to the banquet.

God did not single out people, God chose the good, the bad, the marginalized, the rich, the poor, the free, the slave.

God chose them all.

Because the promise, the mission, the goal of life is not for self promotion, or being the best.

Its about participating in the banquet of God's wedding feast of creator and creation.

The reason why the king in the parable today got so mad that one of the guests wasn't wearing a wedding robe.

Was because he showed up to the feast, was given a wedding robe, and decided that he was too good to wear the wedding robe.

Therefore, making himself stand out and look more important than the rest of the guests.

Ego is the death of our souls.

It was why the first group denied the kings invitation and was the reason the wedding guest chose not to wear a robe.

And may we learn that each of us are natured for good, and for bad.

That we both sting and save.

So that we may learn to put ourselves amongst one another, stop holding others to unrealistic expectations, and stop holding ourselves to unrealistic expectations as well.

We don’t have to be perfect to get to heaven, we don’t have to be the best to get to heaven, we just have to want to be a participant at the banquet.

Amen.