

## A Seamless Garment

There's a wonderful connection between the heartbeat of our parable and our circumstances today.

After all, what's going on in this parable?

It starts out when all the "best people" in town, (who know they are the "best people," who have thrived on the idea of being the "best people,") are suddenly taken by surprise by the gracious invitation to come to the King's party.

I wonder if perhaps the King's party is a metaphor for joining a community where everyone has enough, where everyone is equal, where everyone is cared for?

And if it is, do we grasp the irony when all the "best people" beg off?

Do they beg off because they aren't really interested in that kind of life?

Are they stuck on (or stuck in) the way things are?

Is that why they busy themselves getting on with life as it is?

The hustle and bustle of business?

The marvelous vacations?

The worship of pension plans and new cars?

The “best people” reject the invitation, “making light of it and going away, one to his farm, another to his business...”

Others among the invited go even further.

Like the Neo Nazis marching through Charlottesville shouting “Jews will not replace us!” or the Proud Boys proudly announcing their slogan “we will kill you” — the other proposed guests of the King “seize his slaves, mistreat them, and kill them.”

It’s remarkable how our current situation is a mirror of this parable told so long ago.

We are so many of us shocked and dismayed at the unending vitriol of racism, misogyny, and just plain old hatred that seems to have infected our nation — like a foreign plague.

And yet, the harder question is: “**who** says this a foreign plague — a thing alien to who we are as a people?”

It’s us!

The “good people.”

I’m a card carrying member of the “good people!”

You can’t be a white male of a certain age, having received so many institutionalized benefits solely by virtue of being a white male, not to be among “the good people.”

But there are many among us who are not shocked or surprised by what they see and hear today.

Talk with those at the margins.

Listen to people of color.

Listen to those who are indigenous to this land.

To those on the economic fringes.

If you sit with them, they will tell you that little has changed.

That the vitriol and hatred and misogyny is something that they have lived with every day of their lives.

For Black people, since 1619.

For Native Americans, since 1492.

In short, so many of us who have lived the privileged life are very much those who, every day, reject the King's invitation to join in a different kind of life.

We prefer holding onto the status quo.

Completely oblivious to the pain, struggle, and injustice that assaults so many of our neighbors — everyday — for so many years.

We are weeks away from a momentous election.

There is no question that the decisions made by our fellow citizens on November 3 will impact our future.

And yet, how many of us long for a return to "the way things were" before 2017?

But isn't today's gospel saying that returning to "the way things were" is not at all what God has in mind?

That what God has in mind is imagining an entirely new kind of society?

A society where the least, the lost and the left behind — take center stage?

A society in which we, "the good people", who feel so entitled to the best seats at the table — that we take a step back?

That we give up our seats?

That we repent?

All of these musings came to me as I was struggling with what it means to be the man who is thrown out of the party — because he's not wearing the proper wedding garment.

Jesus isn't being literal here.

The wedding garment is really a metaphor.

Scripture is full of clothing as a stand-in for a life wrapped up in faith and trust.

So St Paul encourages the Galatians to "put on the baptismal garment of Christ."

He implores the Colossians to clothe themselves "in compassion, kindness, mercy and patience."

And then there's the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of God "clothing Israel with righteousness."

While St Peter encourages his small community "to be clothed in humility."

It's a way of reminding us that faith that fails to change us — is no faith at all.

Our faith, if it's alive, **will** change us.

And change we must if we wish to wear the wedding garment of the kingdom of God.

It is a garment sewn not with hands, but with hearts.

And there is this about a wedding garment.

It is a single piece of cloth.

It cannot be divided.

Like Christ's garment that the soldiers gambled over, at his crucifixion.

The seamless garment tells us something about who we are to be at the wedding feast of God, and who we are to become as we journey to that place.

We are to be seamless.

With one another.

And with God.

The student asks: "How are we to treat others?"

And the teacher replies: "There are no others."

We are called to embrace a unity of spirit.

A sense that all people, all things, all creation, and all that is uncreated, is intimately connected.

Interwoven.

Indeed, a seamless garment.

We see evidence of this in the very structure of nature — in something called “fractals.”

Fractals are patterns that repeat themselves everywhere in nature.

Patterns like leaves on trees.

Spots on leopards.

Snowflakes — and the myriad designs on butterfly wings.

Patterns that range from the huge, like mountain ranges and galaxies, to the microscopic, like dividing cells.

An infinite variety of patterns.

Each distinct pattern, identical.

If all of life is fractal, reflecting in miniature the everliving Creator of all things, then can we come to see that the divisions we create are not only fruitless — but just plain dumb?

I leave you with these words to ponder.

The fractal is that  
Repeating pattern everywhere in nature  
On leaves  
Snowflakes  
And tiger stripes.

Take it large and fractal is the Multiverse...  
The never ending existence of a billion trillion Universes

In which we each exist

In which

we each live out every possible life experience

Love

Loss

Culture

Color

Gender

Race.

What if in one such world

Blacks enslave whites

Women rule over men

And hetero sex is the oddball sex?

What if every experience that

Could ever be felt

Is felt

in full

By each and every one of us

In a dazzling array of lives that may see me as

fat and old

In one

Beautiful and young

in another

Married

Once,

Twice,

Many times,



or

Never.

Dying young, then in another,  
spending years beneath white hair?

Not the successive lives

Of reincarnation

But the simultaneous lives

Of fractal?

If we, in this infinity of lives,

experience

all experience

Does it contribute to the

Unifying whole?

Making each of our Fractal lives priceless beyond measure?

Is it then that

God brings

Everything together?

Will we at last know

As we are known?

Will we see

As we are seen?

Will we love

As we are loved?

Or, as Jesus says:

'When you make the two into one,  
and when you make the inner like the outer,  
and the outer like the inner,  
and the upper like the lower,

and when you make male and female into a single one,  
so that the male will not be male nor the female be female,  
when you make eyes in place of an eye,  
a hand in place of a hand,  
a foot in place of a foot,  
an image in place of an image,  
then ... you will enter the Kingdom."  
-Gospel of Thomas, logion 22.

Today, Jesus invites us to become a seamless garment.

Are we ready to accept his invitation?

+amen