**Introduction**

There were always the four weeks in Advent. The Advent wreath with its 4 candles is a practice that depending upon your source began either in 1839 in a Hamburg, in the 16th century in Lutheran parishes of the Reformation, in Scandinavia a long time ago as part of St. Lucy’s day and her candle crown, or I’m sure there are several other origins available. Those are just the ones I researched. Probably each time someone felt like they wanted a different meaning assigned to each candle.

Had a parishioner at one time whose doctrinal understanding of the Lord’s Supper was essentially “eh, who really knows.” But about the meaning of each candle on the advent wreath they were dogmatic. To the point that they almost left the congregation when I suggested that the pink candle has been both the 3rd and the 4th in different places. It could be Gaudete – Rejoice – Sunday, typically Advent 3, or Mary’s Sunday, typically Advent 4. And either one was fine depending upon local practice. Only having 2 of these midweeks this year, and trying to be a bit frugal, we used some remaining covers – so you have the 4th week – usually there isn’t a 4th midweek so you have them left over when ordering the set. These covers took on the Hope, Peace, Joy, Love meanings. All fine theological virtues that usually have a warm candle glow to them.

Probably the first stab at something like this piety practice was something called the 4 last things: which were death, judgement, heaven and hell. There are middle ages treatises and sermons on each of those in order. It is always interesting to me to contrast piety practices or themes of different ages. And if ultimately not useful, I get a chuckle out of the metal 800’s peasant coming to hear about judgement, while the modern ponders Joy.

**Text**

But the theme LCMS Worship wants us to consider – Rejoice! The Marriage Supper of the Lamb has Come. – is more akin to one of those last four things – Heaven.

We long for, we hope for, we await the coming of the New Jerusalem. Today, we have downpayments. We have the indwelling Spirit. We have the Lord’s supper. We have the forgiveness of sins. We have these things in reality. But we also await their fulfillment. We have a sacramental reality. Christ truly present under the bread and wine. It is not simple water only, but the water with the word. Which is easier to say, your sins are forgiven, or get up and walk? But the man walked that we might know. That sacramental reality is real. But it is given to faith. And one day faith gives way to knowing.

And knowing Heaven in the bible is described as a wedding feast.

The passages we read always give me pause in one way. Imagine not wanting to go to a wedding party. According to Aristotle every Comedy ends in a wedding. The tragedy ends in a funeral that brings unity of purpose, but the Comedy in a wedding. In the parable God is calling the world to the Comedy. Come to the wedding. And they all respond with unity of purpose – “we’ve got real business to take care of.” So much so that they killed some of the messengers. And it all ends in death. “He sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.”

**Application**

The world wants us to have unity of purpose. Keep your heads down and working on important things – fields, businesses and the like. Temporal things. Things that even now are passing away. The world invites you to a tragedy.

But you have an invitation to a comedy. Something happy. Where all your cares are met. The fattened calf with all the sides. The band is playing. Everyone in the their finest. The wedding feast. Rejoice! You have an invitation to the happy ending. With the God who loves you.