

Matthew 22:1-14 The Parable of the Wedding Feast

This morning our focus is on verses 1-14 of Matthew chapter 22. Notice at verse 1 of this chapter, **And having answered, Jesus again spoke to them in parables, saying.** That is our introduction for this chapter. Jesus again spoke in parables in answer to something in Chapter 21. He spoke to them in parables, notice it is plural. This is now the third parable in a row that Jesus is speaking to them in.

Back in Chapter 21 verse 28-32 we had The Parable of the Two Sons. You remember Jesus said that a man had two sons and he said to the one son, "Go out and work in my field," and he said, "No, I'm not going to go." Then later regretted his decision and went anyway and worked in his father's field. He told the second son to go and he says, "I'll go," but he didn't go. He wound up not going at all. So in Chapter 21 He asked the question, "Which one of these two sons did the will of the father?" And they said, "Well the first one, the one that said, 'I won't go,' but then eventually did go. He's the one who did the will of the father." Jesus said that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God before you, meaning the Pharisees and Scribes. **"For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him. But the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed. And you, when you saw it, you repented not afterwards in order that you might believe him"** (Matthew 21:32). So you are that son that saw the evidences before you that said that you represent God, but you didn't respond when John gave the call.

In verses 33 to 46 of chapter 21 He gave a second parable about a householder who built himself a vineyard, put a hedge around it, put a winepress in the vineyard, built a tower so guards could stand watch; and he was leaving the country, so he rented his vineyard out to farmers. And as was customary the payment was crops. It takes up to five years for a farmer to come in and plant a vineyard for it to start producing fruit. So after about five years the owner sent his servants to collect his fruits from these farmers as payment for rent of the property. When they saw the servants come, they beat some, they killed some, threw some out. So the homeowner next sent a larger group of servants and they did the same thing to them. So he says, "I'll send my son. They will reverence my son; they are not going to do anything to him." And so when his son came the farmers saw him and said, "Look, here is the one who is going to inherit all of this. If we take him and kill him, we will get the inheritance." So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. So then Jesus asked the question, "Therefore the Lord of the vineyard what is he going to do to these farmers?" And they said, "He's going to severely destroy those farmers and he is going to rent out his vineyard to other farmers who will produce the fruits in its seasons and give it to the householder." And Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you the kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."

And so verses 45 and 46, the last two verses of chapter 21 says the chief priests and the Pharisees when they heard these parables, they perceived that Jesus was talking about them. But when they were seeking to lay hands on Him, they feared the crowds because the crowds took Jesus to be a prophet.

That opens up our chapter now - Matthew 22 verse 1, **And having answered.** What is He answering to? He is answering to the fact that they now realize that Jesus is talking about them. That judgment is coming on them. And so Jesus, again He spoke to them in parables. So now we have a third parable here in Chapter 22. It goes with the other two.

He spoke to them in parables saying, "The kingdom of Heaven has been like to a man being a king, who made a wedding feast for his son. Some of you might have English translations that say, "who made a wedding for his son," but the word in the Greek text has to do with all of the festivities and ceremonies dealing with the wedding feast: the ceremony, the feast, the gathering together. So the *wedding feast* or *celebration* is a word used to describe a week-long activity. Traditional wedding feasts can last as long as seven days. And if you are a king and you are putting on a wedding feast for your son, it could last 14 days or even weeks longer, as long as the king wants to make it. He's the king if he wants to celebrate in that way.

So we are in The Calling of the Wedding Feast.

Verse 3, **And he sent his slaves to call the ones who had been invited.** Please notice here if you're taking notes, he sent his slaves out to call the ones *who had been invited* to this wedding feast. They had already been invited. They have received their invitations, now they are getting the call. "Okay, the wedding feast is ready, it's time to come."

And they were not desiring to come. They didn't want to go. It wasn't like it took them by surprise. They had already received the invitation. And this is a king. You don't tell a king, "Yeah, I don't feel like it." There are consequences. No desire to come.

Verse 4, **And again, he sent forth other servants (or slaves) saying, "Tell the ones who had been invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner.'"** It is not like they had refrigeration in those days. The dinner was all ready. When you get the call you come.

"My oxen, and my fatted cattle have been killed, and all things are ready; come to the wedding feast." That is no longer an invitation that is a command: Come to the wedding feast.

Verse 5, **But the ones having disregarded it.** They didn't care. They didn't care whether dinner is ready or not. **But the ones having disregarded it went away, the one indeed to his own field.** He says, "I've got chores to do on my farm," and the other says, **and the one to his own business.** The Greek word is where we get our word *emporium* from. It's a business, a merchant. He says, "I've got business to do."

Verse 6, **And the ones remaining, having seized his slaves, they mistreated them and killed them.** This is the second group.

Verse 7, **And when the king heard this, he became angry.** You can imagine. Sort of running parallel to the other parables.

And having sent his armies, he destroyed those murderers and he burned their city. Just the fact that he killed them and burned their city showed that we are talking about multiple city leaders from multiple cities that the king had invited. So we are not talking about the local neighborhood who decided, "I don't want to go." This is a very official invitation and dinner for a lot of people. This is the king's son who's gotten married and he's got this wedding feast prepared. So he became angry. He went out with his army, sent his armies into these cities, took these leaders and killed them and burned their cities. Pretty drastic but he was pretty angry.

Here is The Compelling. We've had The Calling in verses 1 to 7. Now, we've got The Compelling in verses 8-10.

Verse 8, **Then he says to his slaves, "Indeed, the wedding feast is ready, but the ones who had been invited were not worthy."** Notice we are not talking about self-worth. Not talking about whether they were personally worthy or not to come to the feast. They were invited and they were called to come. It is because they rejected the call - they were invited but they rejected the call - that is what made them not worthy. The only person when they stand before the Lord who will not be worthy to enter in is the person who has rejected the Lord. Not because of self-worth because Jesus died on the cross for all of our sins and paid that penalty and suffered that punishment, so that when we stand before Him, we are worthy in the Lamb; but not worthy if we reject Him.

Verse 9, **Therefore go onto the crossroads of the highways.** This would be the intersections, outside of the city where the roads break off from the main highway, and the roads go up into the city. Go down to the crossroads where the travelers are.

And as many as you might find, call to the wedding. No requirements. Just tell them, "There is a wedding feast. The guests didn't respond [and] the wedding feast is ready, so you're invited to come. Just come as you are."

Verse 10, **And those slaves having gone out into the highways, gathered all, as many as they found, both bad and good.** Literally both *evil* and *good*. Everybody. No requirements there. There was no regard for any ethnic differences. Didn't say you had to be Jew. Didn't say you had to be Gentile. It didn't matter about social status. It didn't matter about economic status. Just come. All you have to do is respond and not reject.

Both the evil and the good. The *good* in Greek would designate *God's people*. Both the evil people and God's people all mixed together, invited to this wedding feast without any requirements in order to respond to come.

And the wedding feast was filled *with* reclining guests. By *reclining guests* - it is because they didn't sit at the table, they *reclined* at the table. They laid out with their feet facing outward and they would be resting on one arm and with the other hand they would be taking food from the table. That is how they ate. So they would be reclining around the table. That's why in the Gospel of John it talks about John leaning back on the breast of Jesus and asking Him a question. It wasn't that he was sitting next to him and wanted to cuddle with Him. It's that he

was laying down and he leaned back to ask Jesus a question because Jesus was reclining right behind him. So that is the only way he could actually turn and ask Him a question.

In verses 11-14 we have The Confrontation.

Verse 11, **And when the king had come in to view the ones reclining, he saw there a man not having been dressed in a wedding feast garment. And he says to him, "Friend, how did you enter here, not having a wedding feast garment?" But the man was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, "Having bound his feet and hands, take him away and throw him out into the outermost darkness. There shall be weeping and the gnashing of the teeth."** No requirements for the people to come, but as we find out the king has a wedding feast garment to put over your clothing. It is a custom of some to do, others did not, but that's what happened with this man. Everybody who came - didn't matter how they were dressed, didn't make any difference about their economic status, whether dirty or clean - but the king gave them a robe, a wedding garment, a white wedding garment to wear at the wedding feast in honor of his son.

He says to him, notice back in verse 12, he says *friend*. This does not have to do with calling him *buddy* or *BFF*. This phrase in the Greek text is used to address someone when you didn't know their name. "Hey friend, what are you doing?" Or, "Hey friend." It is used four times in Matthew and all having to do with enemies. So he didn't mean it in a friendly way, only in a way of, "I don't know your name but how did you get in here? How did you enter in here not having a wedding feast garment?" And he held his peace. He couldn't talk. He couldn't answer because he didn't have an answer. He didn't have an excuse. He didn't have a reason other than the fact that he rejected the wedding feast garment.

Now this whole wedding feast scene is presented to us to be the final banquet to be held with the Lord. Not like a regular feast like we know of. In this parable the king has special clothes for those guests to wear. This man refused to wear the white robe. The king provides the clothing; and they should have known this in the parable because the Jews held very highly the prophesy of Isaiah 61:10, where it says, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride clothes herself with her jewels." So the Hebrew Jewish people looked forward to that final banqueting with their Messiah when He would be wrapped in the robes of righteousness and salvation. This was all fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross. In II Corinthians 5:21 it says, "For He has made Jesus to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." We are clothed in Christ's righteousness. When we stand before Him we will be clothed in His righteousness not our own, which will give us entrance into the feast.

In Revelation 7:14 there is a group of saints standing in heaven and the question was asked, "Sir, I don't know who these people are. You know." And He said to me, "These are they which came out of the great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Interesting the blood of the Lamb made their robes white. You can see this is applicable spiritually; obviously, blood is not going to make a white robe white.

This all becomes realized in Revelation 19:7-8. We see that all have been clothed with white robes, white robes of the righteousness of Christ. It says - Revelation 19:7 - "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." The wife being, of course, the people. Verse 8, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Clothed in white linen at the marriage feast and marriage supper of the Lamb.

We are called to put on Christ. In Romans 13:14 it says, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts or desires of it." So put on Christ.

In Colossians 1:27 it tells us that the great mystery that is being shared amongst the Gentiles "is Christ in you, the hope of glory." The only hope anybody has of sitting down at this banquet - the final banquet with the Lord in heaven - the only chance, the only requirement is the person be in Christ. Christ be in them. Not they believe in Him, but Christ be inside of you. As a matter of fact Paul, in II Corinthians 13:5 he says, "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves. Don't you know your own selves how that Christ is in you except you be disqualified?" If Christ is not in you, if you have not experienced that spiritual birth where Christ is born in you, then you have not put on Christ.

In verse 13 of our text it says that the man was to be removed. He is to be thrown into *the outermost darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*. This is an expression used in the Scriptures several times for *the final resting place of torment awaiting those who have rejected Christ*. Be cast into outermost darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth and anguish. A terrible place to go to.

Then verse 14 says, **For many are called, but few chosen**. Well, in our parable everybody got called. Everybody responded. But not everybody got chosen. What does that mean? Well number one, you must respond to the invitation. Everybody gets the invitation. There is no such thing as a person not getting the invitation. There is a chance a person would not respond to the call. But even if someone doesn't reject the call and responds to the call; if they refuse to surrender to Christ, if they refuse to submit to Him, if they refuse to put on Christ, then they are rejected. They are removed.

So basically the reason why the man was sent away and removed is because he responded to everything except for the proper clothing. Only those who get invited, only those who are called, and only those who put on Christ are chosen. Everybody else is not chosen. You have to experience those three things. Everybody is automatically experiencing one, that's the invitation. But then there's the calling, that is the preaching of the gospel to come. The wedding feast is prepared, getting ready. But then people who want to get in - maybe just want to sit in church or Bible study or some type of religious activities or some type of religious system to participate in - but not want to receive Christ, not want to put on Christ, that person will not be chosen. Only those three things for a person to enter in to be a part of this wedding feast.

So you can imagine that the people listening to this, they are the religious leaders. Not just religious people, they are religious leaders who are participating with the Old Testament and with old Judaism and religious ritual of their day. Yet Christ said, "If you don't put Me on, if you

don't surrender to Me, you will not sit at that wedding feast." It does matter if you're Jewish or not, do you have the robe on? That's the question. You see the Hebrew people, the Jewish leaders said, "If we are Jewish, we are automatically in. We automatically are looking forward to that feast beginning with Isaiah 61's prophecy and on." They believe, "We will be at that feast," and Jesus is telling them, "No. This is for everybody, Jew and Gentile alike." If you don't put on Christ, if you are not in Christ, as Paul said in II Corinthians 13:5, "You are rejected."

Let's close with prayer.