

## **The Gospel Feast**

### **Matthew 22:1-14**

Good morning,

If you haven't looked at your bulletin or the screens this morning, we are taking a break out of the Book of Mark.

We will be in the Book of Matthew, in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Chapter with a passage known as, "The Parable of the Wedding Feast."

While preparing for this message last week, I took to Google to look up various royal weddings.

I found out the biggest wedding of this year was back in June when the Crown Prince of Jordan got married to a wealthy and prominent woman from Saudi Arabi.

Maybe you already knew this, but this was my first time reading about this wedding.

The people in attendance ranged from Kings and Queens to the First Lady of the United States.

The wedding was said to have been one of the most extravagant of the last decade with one website saying it cost nearly 75 million dollars.

Now, imagine if you were in the position of being invited to this wedding.

What if you were told there would be the best food, best music, best everything?

What if you were invited and knew you were going to receive many expensive gifts?

In other words, just by attending, you were going to be given multiple costly gifts.

Better yet, what if the invitation and your attendance made you a member of the family and you got to enjoy these gifts forever, as you became royalty as well.

Keep that in the back of your mind as we looked at this morning's passage.

So, if your Bibles are open, look with me at Matthew 22, Verse 1.

## **I. Jesus using parables.**

We are told Jesus spoke to them again by parables.

The two stories recorded prior to this passage in Matthew are also both parables.

And, in fact, depending on who you ask, there are around 35 parables told by Jesus in the four Gospels.

It seems parables were preferred by Jesus as His method of teaching.

But why?

### **Why parables?**

There are multiple reasons, but here are a couple that I think are very relevant to today's passage and to you specifically this morning.

Jesus used parables to illustrate a truth. A parable could be described as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

A long analogy, so to speak.

Jesus would take something that we can relate to, like a wedding in today's passage, and then apply a kingdom message.

David Jeremiah said, "By teaching in parables, Jesus both illuminated the hearts of the spiritually sensitive and frustrated the minds of the spiritually blind. The same parable could be a blessing or a curse, depending on the mind of the person who was listening. And the same is true today. The

greatest temptation when we read the stories of Jesus is to read them as entertainment. But they are so much more.”

All of Jesus’ parables were given to convey a valuable spiritual truth.

We also read in Matthew 13 that the disciples, themselves, asked Jesus why He spoke in parables.

Hear Jesus’ response in **Matthew 13:11**:

***“He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.”***

We actually see this in today’s passage, as the religious leaders are told a powerful parable by Jesus, which should have revealed a valuable spiritual truth to them, but their spiritual eyes had been blinded.

**Pray**

## **II. Invitations Declined**

### **Verses 2-8**

An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son.

*David Guzik said a wedding was (and often is today) the most significant social event of a person’s life.*

And remember, like the story we started off with about that extravagant wedding, this is not a normal wedding.

This is a wedding for the king’s son, and the wedding has been arranged by the king, himself.

The wedding of a prince would be a spectacular event, and an invitation would normally be prized. – David Guzik

But the servants went out and invited the guests, but the guests were simply not willing to come.

If you declined the invitation to the royal wedding I spoke about earlier, do you think the king of Jordan would send out another invitation?

I don't think so.

I think of any wedding I have ever been invited to, and all only sent me one invitation regardless of if I RSVP'd or not.

After all, it's on me to accept the invitation, right?

But the people decline the first invitation,

But, here, the king sends out other servants with a second invitation.

This time he has the servants go into more detail about the wedding ceremony, making it even more attractive than just the fact that it is a royal wedding.

Tell the people we will have a great feast.

There will be a dinner prepared.

The fatted cattle have been killed.

We will have ribeye steaks....

You will dine with royalty.

All things are ready. Come to the wedding!

Yet, Verse 5 tells us they made light of the invitation.

Or as the NASB puts it, “<sup>5</sup> But they paid no attention and went their *separate* ways, one to his own farm, another to his business...”

These are the same people who were not willing to come to the first invitation.

Invitations declined, plural.

They seem to be nonchalant or just indifferent to the invitation.

They just go back to their own lives, seeming to never think about the invitation again.

After all, why worry with going to the wedding when you have your own life to take care of?

The first invitation came and perhaps they thought, "I'd respond to the invitation and accept it, but maybe later, not now."

Then the second invitation came, and the king said, "Now is the time. All things are ready. You must come to the wedding now!"

You see, an invitation from a king would not only have been considered an honor and a privilege, but it would have been viewed as a command.

But, now faced with the reality of having to make a decision, they simply pay no attention to the invitation.

Possibly, they think they just didn't make a decision. Possibly, they thought they would make the decision later.

But, hear me, to not make a decision or to not pay attention to the invitation is to make a decision.

You have made the decision to not attend the wedding.

They are indifferent to the invitation, just as some are indifferent to the call of the Gospel.

Where some are indifferent, others are all out against it.

They are openly antagonistic, aggressive or unfriendly towards the servants who are trying to invite them to a wedding feast.

In fact, some are so against this invitation that they are murderous.

They seize the servants, persecute them and even kill them.

But the king will have none of this.

He sends out his armies, destroys the murderers and burns up their city.

An earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

Because there is more to this.

### **III. Who is everybody?**

Who is this king?

Who is his son?

Who are the servants and the people who refuse to attend the wedding?

-The King is God.

-His Son is Jesus.

-This invitation is the Gospel, so the servants are the ones sharing the Good News.

-But Israel declined the invitation.

Verses 1-8 have a national emphasis here, regarding Israel rejecting the Gospel.

Now, if we go to the OT, we see prophets being sent to Israel and they are treated spitefully and even killed.

We are also told in the OT that Israel would reject Jesus, Himself.

#### **Isaiah 53:3**

*He is despised and rejected by men,  
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.  
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;  
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*

#### **Psalm 118:22**

*The stone which the builders rejected  
Has become the chief cornerstone.*

Fast forward to the NT.

### **Acts 4:8-12**

*<sup>8</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: <sup>9</sup> If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, <sup>10</sup> let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. <sup>11</sup> This is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ <sup>12</sup> Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”*

That stone which the builders rejected was Jesus.

And look who Peter is talking to here.

He is speaking to the Jews.

And if you keep reading in that passage, the religious leaders even recognize that Peter had been with Jesus, but they still do not repent turn to Jesus.

They rejected Jesus.

### **John 1:11**

*<sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.*

But salvation was first offered to the Jews.

### **Romans 1:16**

*<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek.*

But Jesus already knew all of this, as He is speaking about it here before it even happened!

Warren Wiersbe said this of this parable,

*“The period described in this parable must be after His resurrection and ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit.”*

So, here is Jesus speaking about Israel rejecting the Gospel, prior to Him even taking the cross and being raised again.

He knows they will deny, but in His grace, mercy and patience, he sends more messengers with more invitations.

He sends believers filled with the Holy Spirit to invite people to the wedding.

Believers like Stephen in the Book of Acts, and what do the Jews do to him?

### **Acts 7:57-58**

***<sup>57</sup> Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; <sup>58</sup> and they cast him out of the city and stoned him.***

They had rejected God, they had rejected His Son and they had rejected the Holy Spirit.

So, we come to Verse 7 where the king gets word that not only are his invitations being denied, but they are also seizing and killing the messengers.

Look with me again at **Verse 7**.

*“After Christ had been rejected and crucified, God waited for some forty years for Israel to repent, but they would not....God permitted the Roman armies to invade the land of Israel and destroy Jerusalem.” – Henry Ironside*

Jesus further prophesied about this taking place in **Matthew 24:2**.



*<sup>2</sup> And Jesus said to them, “Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.”*

So, imagine this. You sent out a wedding invitation, but the person declined.

So, you sent it again.

This time they paid no attention, ignored your invitation and then even decided to kill the mailman who delivered it.

Would you keep inviting them to your wedding?

But what does God do?

#### **IV. Will there be guests?**

##### **Verse 9-10**

Israel had rejected, so the Gospel went out to the Gentiles.

Listen to what Paul said when dealing with this in **Acts 13:45-46**:

*<sup>45</sup> But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. <sup>46</sup> Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles.*

But, let me be clear in this, God is not done with Israel, and Paul, himself was a Jew.

If you think God is done with Israel, go read Romans 11 and get back to me.

But, in God’s foreknowledge, He knew the Jews were going to reject, so the message went out to as many as the servants could find in Verse 9.

Not some, not a few, not only the men or only the women, not only a certain class of people, not only the rich or only the poor, but as many as you find.

Go tell everyone that the wedding is ready, both bad and good.

And the wedding hall was filled with guests.

See, God arranged this wedding for His Son, Jesus.

It was for His joy and for His glory, so the message went out again and again.

Like I said earlier, there was and is a national emphasis, regarding the Gospel being rejected by Israel and being sent out to the Gentiles.

But, there is also a personal application, as you have to accept the invitation for yourself.

This entire parable also shows God's grace in that none of us are truly worthy.

You see, Verse 8 said those who were invited were not worthy, so the message went out to the Gentiles, to you, to me.

But, are we worthy?

There is only one way to be worthy.

## **V. The proper clothing**

### **Verses 11-14**

It was custom then for the host, in this case the king, to provide the wedding garment for the guests to wear, so everyone was properly attired.

So, this man comes to the wedding hall, but he does not accept the wedding garment.

When I first read this, I envisioned this man being in rags or tattered clothing.

And that was the reason he stuck out to the king.

He was completely out of place, as he was sitting around royalty, but he was dressed in old, worn clothes.

But the more I thought about it and studied this passage, I gained a new perspective, which I want to offer to you.

I believe this man was well-dressed.

I see him in his brand new, recently purchased suit.

He's got on a nice, gold watch and gold cufflinks.

His tie is new and his leather shoes are shined.

I envision him walking into the wedding and the servants stopping him at the door and offering him the wedding garment to be worn.

But this man did not accept the wedding garment. He chose to attend the wedding in his own clothes.

I can see him offering the servants an explanation as to why he did not need the wedding garment.

I've got my own suit. I'm well-dressed. I'm good to go on my own.

But, notice when the king came in and asked him how he got in there without a wedding garment, the man was speechless.

I bet he had many reasons as to why he had not accepted the wedding garment, but he was speechless when confronted by the king.

You see, when confronted by the king in all his majesty, glory and splendor, he quickly realized that he was not worthy to even be in the king's presence.

There is a big picture here that I pray you are following.

Listen to what the Prophet Isaiah said in

**Isaiah 64:6**

*But we are all like an unclean thing,  
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;*

This man was like many who say today, “I do not think I am so bad. I do not need a Savior; I am good enough as I am.” – Henry Ironside

You thought you weren’t that bad.

You thought your good works and giving to charity would be enough.

You grew up in a Christian home and have been going to church for years.

Perhaps, you’ve been baptized even.

But you’re here today in your own clothing without the wedding garment.

To trust in our own clothing as this man did is to trust in our own righteousness.

And trying to stand before a perfect, holy God in our righteousness will just not work, and you will be left speechless as you realize you are not worthy.

So, what is this wedding garment?

**Isaiah 61:10**

*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,  
My soul shall be joyful in my God;  
For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness...*

Remember, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.

God, in His grace and mercy, continues to send out invitations to this wedding.

The wedding is a picture of believers placing their faith in Jesus and accepting His free gift of salvation.

It is the great exchange found in **2 Corinthians 5:21:**

***21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.***

That is that we might be clothed in the garments of salvation, the robe of righteousness.

We, through faith in Jesus, put on the wedding garment because it has been revealed to us that we cannot attend the Gospel feast in our own filthy rags.

And there is coming a time when it will be too late for you to change clothes and you'll be asked the question, "Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?"

Many are called, but few are chosen.

Remember Verse 8, those who were invited were not worthy.

Well, neither was I, neither are you.

What can a sinful man do to be worthy in the eyes of a Holy God?

Recognize your need for a Savior, repent of your sins and call upon the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Many are called, but few are chosen.

So did God choose me or did I choose God?

Yes.

What do I have to do to be a chosen one?

Answer the call..

This verse deals with the cooperation of the choosing of God and the choices of man.

All have the opportunity to accept the wedding garment, but you must accept it for yourself.

You cannot wear my wedding garment.

But today, you have an opportunity to put on the wedding garment.

Today, you have an opportunity to accept Christ.

There is coming a time when you will not be able to respond to the invitation.

Notice, it does not matter whether you are indifferent to the Gospel, antagonistic to the Gospel, murder the messengers or are just unchanged by the Gospel like the man without the wedding garment, they all face the same fate.

They do not get to attend the Gospel feast.

They will not be in Heaven.

But the Gospel feast is here and now. Receive Jesus and enjoy the feast.

Love, joy, peace, hope, abundant life, here and now.

But you cannot have the then and there (marriage supper in Heaven) without having the here and now (Jesus as your Lord and Savior).

There is an application for the believers in the room as well.

Notice, the servants or messengers **went out** and invited people to receive the Gospel invitation.

The people refused.

They **went out again** and the people refused.

They went out again and the wedding hall was full.

**Go out and share** the Good News. Invite people to the Gospel feast.

God is Almighty and He is sovereign.

We do not know who will receive Him and who will not, but we are called by the King to go out and tell people about Him.

Be obedient and leave the **results** up to Him.

But remember the story I started with.

Imagine you are invited to a royal wedding and were in the position to attend.

By attending, you would be given many gifts and would even become a member of the family and would enjoy this abundant life forever.

Why would you decline such an invitation?

Today, you are invited! And there is no logical reason for you to decline.

What about you?

**Have you heard the Gospel? 1 Cor 15**

## **VI. Will you be there?**

*“When sinners come in repentance, trusting in Christ, then He clothes them with the garment of salvation, with the robe of righteousness. This is the wedding garment that makes one presentable at the marriage supper.”*  
– Henry Ironside