

Offered to All?
April 9, 2017
Allen Power

Matthew 22:1-14

Opening discussion: Did you have any mishaps on your wedding day? Anyone you expected to come that did not show? What's a "wedding crasher?"

In the time of Jesus' earthly ministry a Jewish wedding was a big deal that could last a week or more. When a king was throwing the wedding it was a MAJOR event and a coveted invitation only given to special people. Rejecting a king's wedding invitation wasn't just rude; it could bring down the king's wrath.

The relationship between Jesus and those who follow Him is pictured as a bridegroom loving and protecting His bride forever. God is planning the ultimate wedding feast when Jesus welcomes His "bride" at the end of time. Sadly many reject His invitation, and some come as "imposters" posing as real wedding guests. Only those who are clothed in Jesus' righteousness are welcome.

Big Idea: God's wedding invitation has been extended to ANYONE, rich or poor, good or bad, Jew or Gentile -- ANYONE. We only need to come on His terms.

- It's the middle of the week of Jesus' crucifixion. The Jewish leaders feel threatened by Him and are questioning His authority in an effort to destroy Him. Jesus responds with three parables. The third is all about a wedding.

Matthew 22:1–14 (ESV)

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

22 And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ² "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³ and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been

slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”⁵ But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business,⁶ while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.⁷ The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.⁸ Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.⁹ Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’¹⁰ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.¹¹ “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.¹² And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen.”

- Let’s ask our three questions of Bible study: What does it say? What does it mean? How should it change us this week?
- Jesus compares this wedding story to the “kingdom of heaven.”
- **Kingdom of heaven** [is] synonymous with “kingdom of God.” Both expressions refer to the time when God’s rule would be enacted on earth as it is in heaven.¹ The figure of **a wedding banquet** here portrays the Millennial Age (cf. 9:15; Isa. 25:6; Luke 14:15).²
- **Who is the king; the son; the special invited guests; the servants?**
- **Verse four: The king extends a second invitation. Significance?**
- **Verses five and six: How did the invitees respond? Symbolism?**
- God prepared a wonderful “feast” for His chosen people, Israel. Though they ignored His invitation, He patiently gave them second chances.
- When His patience ran out there was a heavy price to pay.
- Verse seven: ⁷ The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. **What historical event in the life of the nation of Israel does this describe?**

- God had made plans for His Son's millennial reign and the invitation had been extended. But the preaching of John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples had largely been ignored. The nation would even kill those extending the offer. Finally in a.d. 70 the Roman army would come, kill most of the Jews living in Jerusalem, and destroy the temple.³
- The king didn't cancel the wedding. He had all this fabulous food and the decorations were in place. His son and the bride deserved a celebration.
- **So, what did the king instruct his servants to do? What is the symbolism of "invite as many as you find" "both good and bad?"**

Romans 1:16 (ESV)

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

- Wiersbe: When we study the first seven chapters of Acts, we discover that the message is going out to none but Jews (Acts 2:5, 10, 14, 22, 36; 3:25; 6:7). "To the Jew first" was God's plan (Acts 3:26; Rom. 1:16). How did the nation's leaders respond to the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles? They rejected the Word and persecuted the church. The same rulers who permitted John to be killed, and who asked for Jesus to be killed, themselves killed Stephen! Later, Herod killed James (Acts 12:1ff).⁴
- When the Jews (as a people group) rejected Christ, "in Acts 8 we read that the message went to the Samaritans, and in Acts 10 we read that it even went to the Gentiles."⁵
- Truth: God's free gift of eternal life is available to anyone regardless of nationality, race, social status, and especially to those who think they are not "good enough."
- Wait a minute! If we invite just anyone off the street to this wedding, what if they don't have any wedding clothes? The king made provisions for that.
- **Have you ever shown up for an event in the wrong kind of clothes?**

- Men, ever been to a fancy restaurant where they required a jacket and a tie but you didn't come dressed that way? **What do they do?**
- In this story, the host is a king. Any self-respecting king cannot tolerate someone in a tank top and flip flops coming to his son's wedding.
- The king is generous and compassionate. He realizes if he invites people off the street to the wedding, they can't afford the right clothes!
- We're told at weddings in ancient times, the host would provide wedding garments so the guests would not be embarrassed or under-dressed.
- **How does this picture salvation through Christ?**
- If the host has provided the wedding clothes, no one should be under-dressed or out of place. Everyone has the opportunity to come to wedding the right way.
- But, you know people! Whenever you throw a wedding, there's always someone who ignores the "dress code." They want all the celebration but they refuse to come on the host's terms; they come on THEIR terms.
- **What is the symbolism of the guest who isn't dressed correctly?**

Isaiah 61:10 (NLT)

¹⁰ I am overwhelmed with joy in the Lord my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness.

I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels.

- In Philippians 3:9 Paul writes: *"...not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith"*⁶
- I cannot come into the presence of a Holy God unless I am clothed in the righteousness He provided through Jesus.
- First we saw the REJECTORS (the Jewish leaders.) Then the ACCEPTERS (the motley crew that gladly put on the wedding garments.)

- Now we find an IMPOSTER. He's not a "crasher" because he was invited. He just refuses to come on the host's terms. He's attending but he won't be allowed to stay unless he puts on the right clothing.
- The man without a wedding garment pictures those who think [they will] be accepted in their own righteousness rather than the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Rom. 10:1–3; Isa. 64:6; Phil. 3:9.⁷

Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 7:21–23 (NLT)

True Disciples

²¹ "Not everyone who calls out to me, 'Lord! Lord!' will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Only those who actually do the will of my Father in heaven will enter. ²² On judgment day many will say to me, 'Lord! Lord! We prophesied in your name and cast out demons in your name and performed many miracles in your name.' ²³ But I will reply, 'I never knew you. Get away from me, you who break God's laws.'

- The IMPOSTER was speechless. The king graciously provided the garment (the righteousness of Christ) so there were no excuses for not putting it on!
- Being underdressed at THIS wedding carried a high penalty: *"Bind him hand and foot and throw him into outer-darkness. That place where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*
- Jesus used this description multiple times. It's hell, the ultimate alienation and separation from God's presence. The weeping and gnashing are the ultimate regret for rejecting God's gift of salvation.
- In verse 14: Jesus summed up the sad reality of this parable: *"...many are called, but few are chosen."*
- John Wesley put it this way: *"Many hear; few believe. ...many are members of the visible [church], but few of the invisible Church."*⁸

So, What's the Takeaway?

- God's wedding invitation has been extended to ANYONE, rich or poor, good or bad, -- ANYONE. We only need to come on His terms.
- If anyone hasn't accepted the free gift of salvation, the time is now.

- If we are already clothed in our wedding garments as followers of Christ, we need to help others get ready.
- The clock is ticking. The bridegroom could arrive at any time! Is everyone you care about dressed and ready? Is that the “Wedding March” I hear?

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). *Faithlife Study Bible* (Mt 3:2). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

² Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 71). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

³ Barbieri, L. A., Jr. (1985). Matthew. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 71). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 78). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁵ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 79). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

⁶ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Php 3:9). Wheaton: Standard Bible Society.

⁷ Brooks, K. (2009). *Summarized Bible: Complete Summary of the New Testament* (p. 13). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

⁸ <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/wen/matthew-22.html>