

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

*You Must be Born Again!*

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Chapter 21 then ended this way:

## *The Gospel of Matthew*

*Many are Called, Few are  
Chosen*

*January 19, 2020*

**Sermon Text:** Matthew 22:1-14

**Scripture Reading:** Isaiah 25

We come now to this 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus has been telling parables, after using the fruitless fig tree as still another illustration, which are spoken against the Jewish leaders and unbelieving Israelites. Jesus said that they are like

- The son who told his father that he would go work in the vineyard but then did not go, and
- The wicked tenant farmers who refused to give the owner the fruit due to him

Mat 21:45-46 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them. (46) And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

Jesus does not back off. He did not follow a policy of appeasement when it came to evil, because evil cannot be appeased. Rather, He exposed it and these Jewish leaders knew they were being exposed for what they were. They wanted to arrest him and kill him, but His time had not yet come.

In fact, Jesus threw another parable at them! And here it is:

Mat 22:1-14 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.”**

We read Isaiah 25 earlier because it is most likely the OT background of this parable-

Isa 25:6 On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

The feast, the banquet, is of course a picture of the Kingdom of God. The King’s invitation initially represents the Lord calling the Israelites to come into the Kingdom and enjoy His blessings offered them, but they refused. The Jews refused to believe the Lord. They refused to obey His Word.

And the Lord was patient. In spite of this wicked slight, He sent His prophets to Israel repeatedly, inviting the Jews to repent, to believe, and to enter into the blessings of His kingdom.

But just like the invitees in this parable, the Jews beat and mocked and killed the prophets:

Mat 23:34-38 Therefore I send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and persecute from town to town, (35) so that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah the son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. (36) Truly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. (37) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! (38) See, your house is left to you desolate.

The parable tells the Jews exactly what they can expect then from the Lord and in fact they had already been experiencing His wrath for centuries. It would culminate in the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the people in 70 AD –

(22:7) 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.

Just as we saw last time, this is the judgment as the Lord takes the kingdom from the Jews and offers it to the Gentiles and all who believe the gospel:

Mat 21:43 Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.

Now, what we want to focus on this morning is the “punch line” of this parable of the wedding feast. In this case, that punch is given at the very end of the parable and it is this:

*“For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

Before we do so however, we need to learn what this part of the parable means:

(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.’

Who is this guy? I suggest to you that he represents the religious hypocrite who creeps in among Christ’s people but in fact was not one of them. Listen to William Hendriksen explain it:

“...by the command of the king and from his bountiful supplies, at the very entrance of the wedding hall a wedding robe had been offered to each guest. All except this person had accepted the robe. This one man, however, had looked at his own robe, had perhaps lightly brushed it off with his hand, and had then told the attendant, ‘My own robe is good enough. I don’t need the one you are offering me.’ Then in an attitude of self-satisfaction and defiance, he had marched to the table, where he was presently reclining; or, from which, when the king entered, he, along with the other guests, had now arisen.

Rev 19:6-8 Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, “Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. (7) Let

us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; (8) it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure”— for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

...The result is that the king orders him to be bound hand and foot and to be cast into a region of total darkness, a darkness that is in sharp contrast with the light that fills the wedding hall....Great emphasis is placed on the man’s own responsibility and guilt.”

[NT Commentary, The Gospel of Matthew, Baker]

We see then that many refuse the King’s invitation and never even bother to come at all. But there are some who attend, but do so on their own terms rather than on the King’s.

This man then is a picture of the religious hypocrite. He comes among us but does so on his own terms rather than from a sincere desire to know Christ, believe in Him, and obey Him. He is the man who insists that his own righteousness is quite sufficient to make him acceptable before God. Listen to J.C. Ryle:

“There will always be some false

professors in the Church of Christ, as long as the world stands. In this parable, as Quesnel says, ‘One single castaway represents all the rest.’ It is impossible to read the hearts of men. Deceivers and hypocrites will never be entirely excluded from the ranks of those who call themselves Christians. So long as a man professes subjection to the Gospel, and lives an outwardly correct life, we dare not say positively that he is not clothed in the righteousness of Christ.

But there will be no deception at the last day. The unerring eye of God will discern who are His own people, and who are not. Nothing but true faith shall abide the fire of His judgment. All spurious Christianity shall be weighed in the balance and found wanting. None but true believers shall sit down at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

It shall avail the hypocrite nothing that he has been a loud talker about religion, and had the reputation of being an eminent Christian among men. His triumphing shall be but for a moment. He shall be stripped of all his borrowed plumage, and stand naked and shivering before the bar of God, speechless, self-condemned, hopeless, and helpless. He shall be cast into outer darkness with shame, and reap according as he has sown. Well may

our Lord say, ‘there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Let us learn wisdom from the solemn pictures of this parable, and give diligence to make our calling and election sure. We ourselves are among those to whom the word is spoken, ‘All things are ready, come to the marriage.’ Let us see that we refuse not him that speaks. Let us not sleep as others do, but watch and be sober. Time hastens on. The King will soon come in to see the guests. Have we or have we not got on the wedding garment? Have we put on Christ? That is the grand question that arises out of this parable. May we never rest till we can give a satisfactory answer! May those heart-searching words daily ring in our ears, ‘Many are called, but few are chosen.’” [Ryle’s Expository Thoughts on the Gospels]

And that brings us then to, as we have already noted, the “punch line” of this parable: *Many are called, but few are chosen*. Just what does this mean?

Well, many had been invited to the wedding banquet, had they not? None of the initial invitees came. Not even after repeated invitations. Some of them even mistreated and killed the King’s servants who brought the invitation.

And then the King issues the invitation to others. To strangers. To the bad and to the good. Among these people there were those who responded, who came, and the wedding hall was filled.

But even among these, some (one in the parable) were not worthy. They crept in but their motive was evil.

So what do we see in the parable? *Many were invited.* The King's call went out to many, many people. But in the end, only a few were, as Jesus puts it, *chosen.*

What does this term mean? "Chosen?" He does not say, "few are found to be worthy." No. He says, "few are chosen." Few. This is a sobering thought:

Mat 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. (14) For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.

We considered this a few weeks ago – the true church is a *remnant*, remember? Not many, but few. And the only reason these few are in the kingdom of God is *because they were chosen by the King.* That is to say, there is no room for any of those

banquet guests to boast. They came freely, they accepted the invitation freely, but they did so because they were *chosen.*

Rom 11:5 So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace.

1Th 1:4-5 For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, (5) because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction. You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake.

We see then in this parable both man's responsibility to believe and respond in faith to the gospel, and the sovereign electing choice of God. No one will ever be able to say "well, I didn't come to the banquet because God didn't choose me." Nope. All are responsible to come. Yet all the credit goes to the Lord, not to us.

Rom 9:15-16 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." (16) So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

The Christian is a participant in the King's banquet. A guest and in fact as

we know from other Scriptures, *a child of the king!* We entered the banquet hall by faith in Christ, but the fact that we are in and heirs of all the privileges in Christ, is nothing we can boast about in regard to our own doing. This should make us very, very thankful. You are there because He chose you. Many were called, but YOU were chosen.

And this choosing is not like some scholarship whose recipients are chosen on the merit of their own performance and achievements. Nope. It is based entirely on God's sovereign will, for His glory.

Here are some more words from Hendriksen:

“The gospel call goes forth far and wide. It reaches ever so many. Most of them are like the man in the parable; they hear but do not heed. In comparison with those many that are lost, *there are but few that are saved*, that is, few that are chosen from eternity to inherit life everlasting. Salvation then, in the final analysis, is not a human accomplishment but the gift of God's sovereign grace.

**Joh 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

...The one thought of the parable, then, is this: ‘Accept God's gracious invitation, lest while others enter into glory you be lost. But remember that membership in the visible church does not guarantee salvation. Complete renewal [ie, you must be born again], the putting on of Christ, is what is necessary.’”

Let's conclude with these thoughts for our serious consideration:

- The gospel invitation to believe in Christ and be saved is issued to us *by the King*. And not just any king, but the King of kings. *God*. This is a great privilege. It is a great evil and inexcusable rudeness to refuse an invitation from their earthly monarch. How much worse to slight the invitation of God.
- To slight this gospel invitation is to show contempt for God's only Son whom He is putting on this kingdom feast in honor of. What do we think He will do to those who despise His Son?
- In this kingdom banquet to which He invites us, God has gone to infinite measures for our privilege and blessing. This invitation includes forgiveness of sins, freedom from slavery to the devil, eternal life, an eternal

home in the new heavens and earth and more. All these things are despised by those who refuse His invitation.

- And to repeat this vital point: “Of the many that are called to the wedding feast, if you set aside all those as unchosen that make light of it, and avowedly prefer other things before it; if then you set aside all that make a profession of religion, but the temper of whose spirits and the tenor of whose conversation are a constant contradiction to it; if you set aside all the profane, and all the hypocritical, *you will find that they are few, very few, that are chosen.* This is the narrow gate, and narrow way, and few find it.