

The Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:1-14

A Sermon for Children

With Study Questions

*Pastor Paul Viggiano
Branch of Hope Church
2370 W. Carson Street, #100
Torrance, CA 90501
(310) 212-6999
pastorpaul@integrity.com
www.branchofhope.org
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And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, ³ and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. ⁴ Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding.” ’ ⁵ But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶ And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*. ⁷ But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. ⁸ Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests. ¹¹ “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹² So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are called, but few *are* chosen” (Matthew 22:1-14).

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said (Matthew 22:1).

A Parable

Jesus taught in parables often. A parable is a story about something we already know that helps us understand something we don't know. The other night I made home-made pizzas and cinnamon roles for my four children. Since none of you were there, you don't know what it was like so

I might use a parable to explain it. I might say something like: 'Making pizzas and cinnamon rolls at my house is like a crazy circus. The baby was flying on the trapeze and my other three children were like wild clowns.' If you've been to the circus you have an idea what it was like.

The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son (Matthew 22:2)

Church is like a Wedding

Jesus is going to help us better understand the kingdom of heaven by comparing it to a marriage or a wedding. How many of you have been to a wedding? In many ways going to church is like going to a wedding. There was a king whose son was going to get married and the king was arranging the wedding. Since it's a parable, we need to figure out who the king is. Who do you think the king is? God the Father. Who do you think the son is? Jesus. And what is the wedding? The wedding is church.

and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come (Matthew 22:3).

Invited but Not Willing

In order to go to a wedding, you have to be invited. There were a whole bunch of people who had been invited by the apostles and other Christians to church. Who were these people who were invited?

During the time of Jesus, which was two thousand years ago, the church was a whole nation/country called Israel but most of them didn't believe in Jesus so God was going to close their church. Just because a building says it's a church, doesn't make it a church. What makes a church a church? (If they believe in Jesus.)

But just because God was going to close their church didn't mean He had given up on them. They were all invited to the wedding – to come to the new church where they could worship Jesus, but many of them didn't want to come. The king didn't give up that easily though.

Again, he sent out other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding” (Matthew 22:4).

Dinner Prepared by God

Some churches are not very faithful but that doesn't mean that God is not faithful. True churches, churches that believe in Jesus, are like amazing weddings with the best dinner prepared by God Himself. And the reason it is so wonderful is not just because of the food for our body but the food for our souls.

In church we eat the bread and drink the wine because it reminds us of what our souls need. Our souls need to be saved. Our sins need to be washed away so we can go to heaven. The greatest meal that God ever prepared was when He sent His Son.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16).

“Come to the wedding” the king says. The king is inviting people who go to a church that doesn't believe in Jesus to come to a church that does believe in Jesus so they can have their sins washed away.

But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶ And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them* (Matthew 22:5, 6).

Ignored and Killed

It's not very enjoyable when people make fun of you. But that's what happened to Christians who invited these people to church. They made fun of them and just ignored them. But some of the people who were invited got so mad at the Christians that they beat them up and even killed them. Sin is a terrible thing. People can do terrible things; even kill Christians who are just trying to love them.

But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city (Matthew 22:7).

God's Army

There comes a time when God has had enough. He was very patient with this church that had rejected Jesus. But when they started killing Christians, God put together an army and destroyed the murderers and their fake church.

The amazing thing about this is, the army God put together (which was Rome) didn't even realize they were doing what God wanted. What they were doing, they meant for evil. But God is so amazing that He takes what men do for evil and uses it for good.

God was still going to have a wedding for His Son but it wouldn't include people who were faithless and rebellious.

Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy (Matthew 22:8).

Not Worthy

When God says that certain people were not worthy for attendance at the wedding – or church – He's not saying that only perfect people go to church, otherwise churches would be pretty empty.

Worthy (axioi) means people try to be faithful Christians. It means we always know we need a Savior and we always try to do what Jesus tells us to do. And when we sin we tell God we're sorry and try not to do it again. Being worthy means we always trust in Jesus as our Savior (He saves us from our sins) and we always trust in Jesus as our Lord (we try to do what He says).

Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' ¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests (Matthew 22:9, 10).

Invite Everyone

Before Jesus the church was in just one place – the nation of Israel. And even though most of the first Christians were faithful Israelites who believed in Jesus, what we learn here is that all people should be invited to church – people we might think are good people and some who might appear bad.

We should always be inviting people to church. Mr. Harvey has a plan to go throughout the neighborhood and invite people to church. As Christians we should obey do what the king tells us to do and invite anyone who is willing to come to church.

But, as we're going to see, just going to church isn't enough.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹² So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴ “For many are called, but few *are* chosen” (Matthew 22:11-14).

Church Isn't Enough

My friends used to tell me that going to church no more makes you a Christian than sleeping the garage can make you a car. We might go to church and look like a Christian outwardly, but the Bible teaches that God **“knows the secrets of the heart” (Psalm 44:21b)**. When the king sees the guests at the wedding he knows their hearts. When people go to church, God knows their hearts – He knows what we're thinking.

Now this may be the most important part of the parable for us to think about. There is someone at the wedding who isn't dressed properly. When I go to weddings I always try to find out how people are dressing so I can be respectful to the people giving the wedding.

It wasn't uncommon in Bible times for kings to give people the right things to wear for a big event, like a wedding (Genesis 45:22; 2 Kings 5:22). So when this one guest wasn't wearing the proper wedding garments, it

wasn't because the garment was unavailable, it was because he chose to ignore it.

But do you think Jesus is so concerned about people's clothes that they would go to hell because they're not dressed right? Of course not. What do you think the clothing is in the parable? This may be hard to understand but the clothing is Jesus Himself. When we have faith in Jesus it's like we're wearing Jesus. The Bible teaches,

**For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷
For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on
Christ (Galatians 3:26).**

Putting On Jesus

So we put on Jesus by having faith in Jesus and baptism is a way we show outwardly what has happened inwardly. And the great thing about this is, when God sees us, instead of seeing our sin, He sees us as if we have no sin at all. It's like being covered in a big blanket. And it doesn't just hide our sin, it washes our sins away.

The important thing for us to know is that just going to church isn't enough. We all have to believe in Jesus in order to be saved from hell and go to heaven.

Jesus teaches that hell is an awful place; too awful for words to describe. But heaven is a wonderful place, too wonderful for words to describe. If we believe in Jesus and try to do what He says, we get to go, not only to the best wedding ever, but to heaven forever.

Questions for Study

1. What's a parable (pages 2, 3)?
2. In this parable who is the king? Who is the son? What is the wedding (page 3)?
3. If a building has a church sign on it, is it a true church (page 3)?
4. Who prepared the dinner at the wedding? What is the dinner (page 4)?
5. How did the Israelites respond to the wedding invitation (page 4)?
6. How did God respond to His people being killed (page 5)?
7. What does it mean to not be "worthy" for church (page 5)?
8. Who should we invite to church (page 6)?
9. Is going to church enough to go to heaven (pages 6, 7)?
10. What were the wedding garments in the parable (pages 6, 7)?
11. How do we put on those garments (page 7)?