

PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

BIBLE TEXT : Matthew 22 :1-14

LESSON 198 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage" (Matthew 22:9).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Matthew 22:1-14

¹ And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,
² The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
³ And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.
⁴ Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.
⁵ But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:
⁶ And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.
⁷ But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.
⁸ Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.
⁹ Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.
¹⁰ So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.
¹¹ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:
¹² And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.
¹³ Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I The Marriage Feast and the Unappreciative People

1 A certain king made a marriage for his son, Matthew 22:1, 2;

Luke 14:16

¹⁶ Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

Revelation 19:7-9

⁷ Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

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.

⁹ And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

2 The servants unsuccessfully called the invited ones to the wedding, Matthew 22:3;

Mark 6:12

¹² And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

Luke 14:17-20

¹⁷ And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

¹⁸ And they all with one *consent* began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

¹⁹ And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

²⁰ And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

3 Other servants were sent, Matthew 22:4-6;

Proverbs 9:2-6

² She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.

³ She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city,

⁴ Whoso *is* simple, let him turn in hither: *as for* him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him,

⁵ Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine *which* I have mingled.

⁶ Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Isaiah 25:6

⁶ And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

Acts 5:40

⁴⁰ And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

1 Timothy 6:10

¹⁰ For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Hebrews 2:3

³ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and

away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

¹⁴ For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

4 The king's wrath caused him to destroy the murderers, Matthew 22:7;

Luke 14:24

²⁴ For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Luke 19:27

²⁷ But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

Daniel 9:26

²⁶ And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof *shall be* with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.

II The Marriage Feast and the Appreciative Guests

1 The king invited all who could be found, Matthew 22:8, 9;

Luke 14:21

²¹ So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

Acts 13:46

⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

2 The wedding was finally furnished with guests, Matthew 22:10;

Luke 14:22-23

²² And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

²³ And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled.

III The Unworthy Guest

1 A guest was found without the wedding garment, Matthew 22:11, 12;

Revelation 3:4

⁴ Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

Revelation 16:15

¹⁵ Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Zephaniah 1:7-8

⁷ Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD *is* at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests.

⁸ And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel.

2 He was bound and cast into outer darkness, Matthew 22:13;

Matthew 8:12

¹² But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

3 "Many are called, but few are chosen," Matthew 22:14;

Matthew 20:16

¹⁶ So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

NOTES:

The purpose of this parable was to teach certain truths about the Kingdom of Heaven, using the picture of guests at a wedding feast, and showing the need for a wedding garment, which is the preparation that is necessary for all who would attend the feast.

The Marriage Feast

God is referring, in this parable, to the Gospel feast to which all are invited. The Jews were familiar with the Old Testament passages that pictured a close, personal union between God and His chosen people, because that fact was taught to them over and over. Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son." So we can easily see the truth being taught here, that God had sent His servants to call them which were bidden to the wedding. But the parable tells us that they would not come; and we have only to look through sacred history to see how this has already *been* fulfilled in a great number of instances.

The prophets were among the first of these servants who were sent out to proclaim the Gospel and to call the people to the feast. Isaiah said: "In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined" (Isaiah 25:6). We are told: "Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2).

God has likewise sent other messengers to the world of sinners that He might bring them all to Himself. What an all inclusive invitation God has given! If it had been to an earthly royal marriage no one would have refused it, but they do refuse that which is infinitely greater — an invitation to the Gospel feast.

Invitation Rejected

We read that those who were bidden to the feast made light of **it** and went their own ways. Some wanted to live a quiet life on the farm and did not intend to be disturbed by the great event. Others were too busy with their mercantile trades, and they had no time to come. Cares of life kept many from accepting the invitation; but with some their refusal to come was merely through their own neglect, carelessness, or indifference. On the other hand, we find that some were hostile and even persecuted the servants who brought the invitation. All who refused the invitation made their excuses for not attending the wedding feast. They all preferred earthly things to heavenly blessings.

The Wrath of the King

The parable states that when the king heard of the refusals by those who were bidden, he was wroth and sent his armies and destroyed them and burned up their cities. Just a few years after Jesus spoke this parable this literally took place, so far as the Jews were concerned. Titus with the Roman army, in A. D. 70, completely destroyed Jerusalem and many of the Jewish people. They were bidden, but they were not worthy. How could they be worthy, since they had affronted the heavenly King by their treatment of His gracious invitation?

The king then commanded his servants to go out into the highways and as many as they could find bid to the marriage. The servants went and gave the invitation to all alike. They did not make any distinction between the morally good and the open sinners. The wedding was furnished with guests. God has told us to do the same, for He said, **"Go ye** into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

The Wedding Garment

Among the orientals, long white robes were worn at public festivals, and those who appeared on such occasions with any other garment were deemed worthy of punishment. The person who invited the guests prepared the garments; and they were given to all the guests upon application to the ruler of the feast.

When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on the wedding garment. This teaches us that there will be an individual inspection of each guest. The king said, "Friend, how tamest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" The man was speechless, being self-condemned. He had nothing to say in defense of his neglect. A garment was provided, but he neither applied for it nor put it on. His conduct was insulting in the highest degree.

Then the king said to his servants: "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Such is the fate of those who fail to put on the wedding garment.

Think what it must have meant to this man, after seeing the bright lights of the wedding feast, hearing the joyous music, and seeing the happy throng, to be cast into outer darkness! He would have no time nor place then to repent. He should have availed himself of the means provided for his welfare while he had opportunity.

God has said: "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. 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" (Revelation 19:7, 8). We see here that the real wedding garment is the righteousness of the saints. The wedding garment is provided by God Himself, through the death of His Son on the cross. How foolish not to accept the wedding garment that is offered us! It is free, without money or price. We also read in the Bible: "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord GOD: for the day of the LORD is at hand: for the LORD hath prepared a sacrifice, he hath bid his guests. And it shall come to pass in the day of the LORD'S sacrifice, that I will punish the princes, and the king's children, and all such as are clothed with strange apparel" (Zephaniah 1:7, 8).

"Many are called, but few are chosen." The call is universal. The servants were to go out into the highways and bid all they could find, both bad and good, to come to the marriage feast. All who responded were offered a wedding garment. It is the failure to receive what God has for us that afterwards brings the weeping and wailing. The Bible warns of the impending danger to those who neglect so great salvation. You are chosen when you accept the call of Christ to the marriage supper. Have you answered the call?

"All things are ready,' come to the feast!

**Come, for the table now is spread;
Ye famishing, ye weary, come,
And thou shalt be richly fed."**

QUESTIONS

- 1 What marriage feast does this parable represent?
- 2 Who were the first servants sent out?
- 3 Who sent the invitation? Were only the good called?
- 4 How did the people respond to the invitation?
- 5 When the king came in, how did he find one man?
- 6 What kind of wedding garment did the king provide?
- 7 Why are few chosen?