

The Wedding Feast

Matthew 22:1-14

Introduction

1. In His conversations with the Jews Jesus gave many parables that illustrated Jews' relationship with God and how that affected their citizenship in the kingdom.
2. The Parable of the Wedding Feast is one such parable. It depicts the attitude many have toward the gospel as well as God's opinion of them.
3. As we consider this parable, let us think on our own attitude toward God, toward religion, and toward service to God.

Discussion

I. The Invitation

A. The Invitation was given first to the Jews.

1. While Jesus was on the earth His message was for the Jews only.
2. When a Greek woman asked Jesus to heal her daughter in Mark 7:29 He answered her, "*Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs.*" This was not to insult her, but to show that He came to help Israel first, not the gentiles.
3. When He sent His disciples among the people to preach He instructed them saying, "*Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*" (Matt. 10:5-6).
4. Jesus' sending out the twelve in this passage is exactly what He was depicting in His parable: the king sending out His servants to call on those who were invited.
5. The Jews represent the group initially invited to the wedding feast.

B. The first group called a second time.

1. Just as the king in the parable did not give up at first, even so God tried several times to call the Jews unto repentance.
2. For three years Jesus preached the gospel among the Jews.
3. He sent His servants out at least twice before His death; first the twelve (Luke 9:1ff) and then the seventy (Luke 10:1ff).
4. We also know that after Christ's resurrection the apostles went about preaching the gospel to the "*Jews first*" and then to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:17; Acts 13:46).
5. Therefore, just as Jesus depicted in His parable, the Jews were invited multiple times, but few of them heeded the invitation.

C. The second group called.

1. In the parable, after the first group rejected the King's invitation, He was still determined to have guests at His wedding feast.
2. He sent His servants out to the rest of the people in the land.
3. These were not the usual people that a king would invite, for kings most commonly invite the other noble and rich of the land to feast with them.

4. But, as Jesus said, this King invited those who just happened to be on the highways. He said that the servants *“Gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.”*
 5. Who could Jesus have been referring to?
 - a. When Jesus sent out the twelve He first instructed them to go to the Jews only, but He said that they would soon preach among the gentiles also (Matt. 10:18).
 - b. Concerning the gentiles, Paul wrote in Eph. 2:11-12, *“that at that time you were without Christ...having no hope and without God in the world.”*
 6. Jesus was referring to how the gospel would be preached to the Gentiles after it was preached to the Jews. These were the ones who, to the Jews, seemed the most unlikely for God to bring into the kingdom.
 7. But as much as the Jews rejected the gospel, Jesus said that this second group would receive it and enter into the wedding feast.
- D. We should consider closely the four types of responses that Jesus depicts in His parable.

II. The Four Responses

- A. *“They made light of it”* (vs. 5).
 1. Many do not take the gospel seriously.
 2. Even though it was an invitation from the King, they still refused Him. Even so, many reject the invitation of God as if it were nothing.
- B. *“The rest seized His servants and treated them spitefully.”*
 1. Some are actually offended at the gospel and become violent.
 2. The book of Acts shows many accounts such as this.
 3. Even today in most countries people zealously persecute Christians for the message that they preach.
- C. *“They gathered all whom they found. And the wedding hall was filled with guests.”*
 1. Yet, there are some who answer the call. God’s faithful, those who believe in the gospel and obey its call.
 2. These are the ones who enjoy the blessings of the King of kings.
- D. *“He saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.”*
 1. Finally, there are some who heed the gospel call and who associate with the people of God.
 2. But they are distinct from all the rest.
 - a. In any society it is appropriate for a person to dress a certain way when attending a wedding or a wedding feast.
 - b. In some cultures there are specific types of garments that must be worn to these wedding feasts. It brings honor to the one for whom the feast is given.
 - c. But this man was not wearing such a garment. He wanted the benefits of the feast but he did not prepare himself and he did not strive to honor the bride

groom. Therefore he did not present himself in such a way that was appropriate for the event.

3. Though he was in attendance he was still reject for his character.
4. As we consider this we need to ask ourselves, what is my attitude toward God?

III. The Attitude of Those Who Respond

A. Those who “make light” of religion.

1. We understand that many in the world easily brush the gospel aside as if it were nothing.
2. But notice the man in the parable who came to the feast, who was among those enjoying the presence of the king, but was not dressed appropriately for the event.
3. *“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless” (Matt. 22:11-12).*
 - a. This man did not blatantly reject the gospel as the first group of people did.
 - b. He was not violent toward the King’s messengers, nor did he brush them off.
 - c. He actually took the time to heed the invitation of the king and to show up to the feast.
 - d. But he was rejected. Why?
4. He did not take the situation seriously enough to prepare himself.

B. Our attitude and God’s expectations.

1. God does not accept one into His kingdom based on race, social status, intelligence level, lineage, or wealth.
2. None of these things were factors in Jesus’ parable.
3. Rather, it was the character of those who were invited.
4. The man who heeded the invitation but did not take it seriously enough to put on the proper attire was rejected just as much as those who refused the invitation all together.
5. When we think of how this parable relates to the kingdom, we should understand that it is not our physical garments that Jesus is looking at, but the condition of our hearts—our spiritual garments if you will.
 - a. There are certain spiritual garments we must wear in the kingdom, for we are told *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal. 3:27).*
 - b. *“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Col 3:10).*
 - c. But not all who have come to Christ have put on Christ.
 - d. Not all who come to His wedding feast are wearing garments appropriate for that feast.
6. As a person who is invited to a wedding feast is called to give honor to the bride groom, so are Christians called to give honor to the Lord.
 - a. Those who call themselves Christians but do not take their spiritual life seriously are in great danger.

- b. Those who think lightly of their responsibility toward God, toward their service to God and toward their spiritual lives are in the same situation as the man who did not put on the wedding garment.
- c. We may be in attendance, but we are not giving honor to God.

Conclusion

1. If you want salvation, if you want to enjoy the wedding feast as one who is accepted by the King, then put off the cares of this world, turn your hearts over to God and devote your life to Him.
2. By putting on Christ—His character, His devotion, and His righteousness—we will bring glory to our King and enjoy all the blessings God has to offer.
3. You are invited. Will you come?

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