

## Don't despise the King's wedding banquet.

Text: Matthew 22:1-14 for 10/25/2020 by Pastor Bolwerk

*Jesus spoke to them again in parables. He said, <sup>2</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup>He sent out his servants to summon those who were invited to the wedding banquet, but they did not want to come. <sup>4</sup>“Then he sent out other servants and said, ‘Tell those who are invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and my fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet!’ <sup>5</sup>“But those who were invited paid no attention and went off, one to his own farm, another to his business. <sup>6</sup>The rest seized the king’s servants, mistreated them, and killed them. <sup>7</sup>As a result, the king was incredibly angry. He sent his army and killed those murderers and burned their town. <sup>8</sup>“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>So go to the main crossroads and invite as many as you find to the wedding banquet.’ <sup>10</sup>Those servants went out to the roads and gathered together everyone they found, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. <sup>11</sup>But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. <sup>12</sup>He said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wearing wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king told the servants, ‘Tie him hand and foot and throw him into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ <sup>14</sup>For many are called, but few are chosen.”*

Have you ever been invited to the wedding of someone you did not like? Hopefully, this would never be the case, but if you really wanted to show your disdain for someone who was getting married, you could show up at their wedding dressed in a way that was completely inappropriate. You could dress in a dirty old t-shirt and sweatpants. Or if you really wanted to make a statement perhaps you could show up in a lime-green suit with a bright red bowtie. And depending on how you really feel about the person maybe you don't show up at all. Instead you send the R.S.V.P. back with a nasty note attached to it.

As Jesus tells his parable about a King's wedding banquet, he is describing a similar situation. The parable is actually about the kingdom of heaven, and Jesus is using his words to give everyone who is listening a wake-up call. If we paraphrase what Jesus is saying, we could say Jesus is telling us, ...

Theme: Don't despise the King's wedding banquet.

1. Do not refuse the King's gracious invitation.
2. Trust the clothing the King provides.

In Jesus' parable God is the gracious King, and he graciously invites all people to the wedding banquet of his Son. Yet, as Jesus points out, some who were originally invited refused the invitation. **Jesus spoke to them again in parables. He said, “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent out his servants to summon those who were invited to the wedding banquet, but they did not want to come”** (vs. 1-3). There was nothing keeping these people from coming to the wedding, and since the King sent his servants to remind the people to come, we know they did not simply forget. Instead, these people purposefully ignored the King's invitation.

What is surprising is the King's response. A “typical” king of that time would have destroyed these people outright for their disrespect. Yet this king is patient with those he

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invited. He graciously gives these people a second chance. **"Then he sent out other servants and said, 'Tell those who are invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and my fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet!'"** (v. 4). But this time the people do not just ignore the invitation, they openly rebel against the King. Jesus says, **"But those who were invited paid no attention and went off, one to his own farm, another to his business. The rest seized the king's servants, mistreated them, and killed them"** (vs. 5-6). While this is a gracious King, he is also a just King. He is not going to have his kindness abused. He is not going to tolerate hatred and violence toward his servants. So those who openly rebelled against him suffered the consequences: **"The king was very angry. He sent his army and killed those murderers and burned their town"** (v. 7).

Jesus parable is a reflection of something in this world. God gave his invitation for the wedding feast of his Son to the people of Israel. God promised Abraham, and his descendants the Israelites, a Savior who would free them from sin and open the doors to God's heavenly wedding banquet. God repeatedly gave that invitation through his prophets. Sadly, most of the Jews refused God's invitation. They refused to recognize and trust God's chosen Savior. Some ignored the invitation to chase after worldly desires. Others showed their hatred of God by mistreating his servants and killing his prophets. But in the end God's justice prevails. Anyone who rejects God's generous invitation is destroyed in the fires of hell.

We also have an invitation to the wedding feast of the King's Son. God invites us through the Good News of his gospel. That means Jesus warning is also for us: Don't despise the King's wedding banquet! Many Israelites ignored God's invitation because money and possession had become more important to them. How much greater is that temptation for us today! We have to ask ourselves, is money or worldly desires becoming more important than Jesus' wedding banquet? Don't let worldly things cause you to ignore your King's gracious invitation. And like some of the people in Jesus' parable, do not openly rebel against our great King by willfully sinning against him. God's servants, the prophets and apostles, call to us with an invitation to trust Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. It is an invitation to repent. It is an invitation to trust in the forgiveness found only in the King's Son. Yet when we purposely break God's commandments, we are willfully rejecting God's message. Rejecting God's message is rejecting his invitation. Don't despise the King's wedding banquet by refusing his gracious invitation!

If you have ever been invited to a wedding, you know that there is a certain way you are expected to dress. You typically do not see people showing up for a wedding dressed in every day, casual clothes. Instead you see people dressing in formal clothing: A tuxedo or a suit and tie, an elegant dress, or maybe even a gown. Those who are invited will wear such clothing to show honor and respect to the couple who invited them. That special clothing shows that you want to share your best during this joyous occasion.

This is equally as true when we come to the wedding banquet for God's Son. We will want to wear clothing that shows honor and respect to our heavenly King and his Son. We will want to wear our very best. Yet we know even our best is not good enough for such an occasion. But we do not need to worry about what to wear because God himself provides us with the perfect

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clothing for this wedding banquet. So, don't despise the King's wedding banquet. Trust the clothing the King provides.

Our gracious King provides clothing for everyone because he invites everyone. He tells his servants, **"Go to the main crossroads and invite as many as you find to the wedding banquet"** (v. 9). And this King does not discriminate. We are told, **"Those servants went out to the roads and gathered together everyone they found, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests"** (v. 10). Now the descriptions "good" and "bad" are to be understood from a worldly perspective. It is describing those who appear to be "good" or "bad" in an outward way. The "good" people are those who are nice for others or do "good deeds." Yet we cannot tell what is in that person's heart. The same is true for those the world calls "bad". In Jesus day the "bad" people were the tax collectors and prostitutes. Today we might think of convicts or gang members. Regardless of how the world views people, the invitation still goes out to everyone. Our King wants his wedding hall filled. The Apostle Paul says that, **"God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth"** (1 Timothy 2:4). The hall is filled by those who believe and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

The King not only provides the invitation, he also provides the wedding clothes. This would have made sense to Jesus' listeners because in his day wealthy people provided clothing for guests who came to their wedding banquets. They did this because wedding feasts went on for days. Providing clothing it made it easier on their guests because they would not have to bring extra clothing. They would always have clean, appropriate clothing to wear.

At this King's wedding banquet, a person's own "clothes" simply will not do. In the parable a man tried to wear his plain, everyday clothing into the wedding feast. This man's clothing was not only inappropriate, it was offensive. The King had graciously provided proper garments for this man, yet he refused them in favor of his own shabby clothing. The man knew what he had done was wrong, so when the king confronts him about it there was nothing he could say. The King said to him, **"Friend, how did you get in here without wearing wedding clothes? The man was speechless"** (v. 12). By refusing the King's clothing this man was refusing the King's requirements for the wedding banquet, and his refusal caused him to be thrown out.

Our "clothing" is also inappropriate for the wedding feast of our Great King. That "clothing" is the good works we try to cover our sins with. We try to "look good" before God, but our ragged clothing of self-righteousness is splattered with the filth of our sins. As Isaiah put it, **"All of us have become like something unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy cloth [...]"** (Isaiah 64:6). When we try to enter God's presence wearing these filthy rags it only brings God's anger on us for not accepting his clothing.

God provides us with the perfect clothing for his wedding feast. He provides us with the robe of Christ's righteousness. That robe, given to us by faith, makes us perfect in God's sight. And since this clothing is always perfect, we never need to change it. We never need to take it off and put something else on to look good to God. Trusting in Jesus' perfection we are perfect in the sight of our King.

So what does all of this mean for our Christian lives? God is telling us two things. First,

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don't ignore his invitation found in his Word. In Jesus parable some ignored the invitation by going off to their **"own farm, another to his business"** (v.5). Instead of going to the King's banquet they went back to earning a living. They let worldly wealth and pleasure control their lives. Jesus said, **"Many are called, but few are chosen"** (v. 14). God has called us into his Kingdom, and now he wants us to regularly gather as his believers to hear his word and celebrate and honor our gracious King and his Son. God wants us to regularly join him at his supper table so we can not only know his forgiveness, but so we can also share in his joy in this life. Let's not refuse our King's gracious invitation. Let's make sure we continue to hear, and trust, and rejoice in that invitation.

The second thing our King wants us to do is to trust the clothing he provides. God has clothed us with the perfection of his own Son. Yet Satan wants us to believe we don't need that clothing. The devil says that who we are, and what we think and feel and do, should be good enough for God. The problem is everything about us is covered with the stinking mess of our sins. Yet through the power of his gracious invitation God offers us everything we need to enter his holy wedding banquet. Our King washes us clean of our filth in the perfect blood of Jesus. Then he clothes us with Christ's pure and perfect garments. Don't take those clothes off just to enjoy some short-lived, sinful pleasure. Instead, wear those clothes with pride. They are the clothing of a King. And as you wear those clothes let others know of God's gracious invitation. Share with others the invitation to God's wedding banquet. It is an invitation God gives to everyone. And it will be a celebration of joy that goes beyond anything in this world.

We look forward to our King's wedding feast with joyful anticipation. Our King has given us his invitation: He has called us by the gospel to join him at the banquet he has prepared. He has given us the clothing we need for this great celebration: The perfect robe of Christ's righteousness. Jesus lived and died to prepare that robe for you. Through the saving invitation of the gospel, Jesus wraps his robe around your shoulders and warmly welcomes you to join him at his heavenly wedding feast. Amen.