

The Invitation of the King

A Five-Day Devotional
from Pastor Chris's Sunday Message

October 12 - October 16, 2026

Jesus' parable of the wedding banquet is both a beautiful invitation and a serious challenge. A king prepares a celebration for his son, sends out the invitations, and makes everything ready. Yet some invitees are too busy to come. Others reject the invitation entirely. Still, the king continues sending his servants out, determined that the banquet hall will be filled. At the center of the story is the son.

The invitation matters because the son matters. The celebration is not simply another event on an already crowded calendar; it is an opportunity to share in the king's joy and honor the one he loves. In the same way, Jesus calls us to consider how we respond to God's invitation. Do we receive Christ with gratitude and joy? Do we keep putting Him off because life feels too busy? Or have we grown so comfortable with the invitation that we have forgotten how extraordinary it really is?

This week, we will move through Jesus' parable and consider what it teaches us about grace, repentance, forgiveness, welcome, and transformation. God's invitation is incredibly generous. The table is prepared, the doors are open, and there is room for people we might never expect to find there. But grace is never meant to leave us unchanged.

As you spend time with these Scriptures, ask God to show you where you have become distracted, where you need to receive His mercy again, and where He may be calling you to extend His invitation to someone else. Above all, remember that Christianity begins not with what we have done for God, but with what God has already prepared for us through His Son.

Monday, October 12 Matthew 22:2–4

Everything Is Ready

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son...”

Jesus describes a king who prepares a wedding feast for his son. Everything has been arranged. The food is prepared, the tables are set, and the celebration is ready to begin. The guests are not being asked to create the feast; they are simply being invited to come and enjoy what the king has already provided.

That is an important picture of grace.

So much of life teaches us that we must earn our place. We work for recognition, approval, achievement, and acceptance. Yet the Gospel invitation begins differently. God has acted first. Christ has come. Forgiveness has been offered. The table has been prepared.

The invitation is also significant because the celebration honors the king’s son. Ignoring the invitation is not simply missing a party; it is treating the Son as though he is not worth rearranging our lives for.

That challenges the way we sometimes approach worship and discipleship. Faith can slowly become one more item squeezed into an already crowded schedule. We may ask, “Do I have time for church?” “Do I have time to pray?” “Do I have time to serve?” But Jesus turns the question around. If Christ truly is Lord, Savior, and the beloved Son of God, what deserves greater attention?

God is not inviting you into another obligation. He is inviting you into communion with Christ, into joy, forgiveness, purpose, and life. Everything is ready. The question is how we will respond.

Reflection: What would it look like for me to respond to God's invitation with joy instead of obligation?

Prayer: Gracious God, thank You for preparing a place for me before I could ever earn it. Forgive me when I treat time with You as something optional or allow other things to become more important than Your Son. Give me a heart that responds to Your invitation with gratitude and joy. Help me honor Jesus with my time, attention, and life. Amen.

Tuesday, October 13 Matthew 22:5–6

When Other Things Come First

“But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business...”

The invited guests' response is surprising. Some openly reject the king, but others simply return to their farms and businesses. Nothing about farming or business is inherently wrong. Their problem is not that they are doing terrible things. Their problem is that ordinary things have become more important than the king's invitation.

That may be one of the most uncomfortable parts of Jesus' parable because it can look very familiar. Most people do not wake up one morning and deliberately decide that God no longer matters. More often, faith is slowly crowded out. Work gets busy. Activities multiply. Phones fill every quiet moment. Weekends become packed. Prayer gets postponed until tomorrow, and tomorrow becomes next week.

Eventually, what we repeatedly choose shapes what we love. Our calendars can become a kind of spiritual mirror. They reveal what receives our attention, what receives our energy, and what we are unwilling to miss. Jesus is not condemning ordinary responsibilities. He warns us not to let good things take the place that belongs to God.

Repentance begins when we recognize that something has become disordered and turn back toward Christ. It is more than feeling guilty. It is allowing God to rearrange our priorities so that Jesus is not simply included somewhere in our lives but becomes the center around which everything else is ordered. Sometimes the first step is remarkably simple: stop, listen, turn around, and come back to the feast.

Reflection: Think honestly about what most easily pushes prayer, worship, Scripture, or service to the side. It may not be something bad at all. It may simply be something that has become too important.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, so many things compete for my attention. Some are important, and some are simply distractions. Forgive me when I continually put You off or allow other things to become more important than my relationship with You. Help me seek Your kingdom first. Reorder my priorities and teach me to give You not only what is left over, but the best of my heart and attention. Amen.

Wednesday, October 14 Luke 23:34

Mercy from the Cross

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Jesus' parable speaks of a beloved son who is dishonored. The Gospel eventually leads us to another scene involving God's beloved Son—the cross.

Jesus is rejected, mocked, and crucified. Yet in the middle of that rejection, He prays: “Father, forgive them.” Those words reveal something extraordinary about the heart of Christ. Jesus does not pretend that sin does not matter. The cross actually shows us how seriously God takes sin. But it also shows us how far God's mercy is willing to go to rescue sinners.

Paul writes in Romans that God demonstrates His love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God's love did not begin after we cleaned ourselves up. Christ came for us while we were still far from Him. That means we do not come to God's table because we have impressed Him. We come because Christ is merciful.

Sometimes we believe forgiveness in general but struggle to believe it personally. We remember something we have done, replay a failure, or carry guilt long after we have confessed it. The cross reminds us that God's forgiveness rests not on the strength of our feelings but on what Jesus has done. And those who receive mercy are slowly taught to become merciful.

Forgiving someone does not mean pretending that hurt never happened or calling wrong behavior acceptable. It means refusing to allow anger and resentment to have the final word. The One who prayed for His enemies now teaches His followers to become people of grace.

Reflection: Bring before God something you still carry—perhaps guilt over your own failure or resentment toward someone who hurt you. If I truly believe Christ's mercy is greater than my sin, what burden can I stop carrying today?

Prayer: Jesus, thank You for meeting my sin with mercy and for giving Yourself for me on the cross. Help me trust Your forgiveness completely. And where I carry anger toward others, begin changing my heart. Teach me to extend the mercy I have first received from You. Amen.

Thursday, October 15 Matthew 22:9–10

There Is Room at the Table

"Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find."

When the original guests refuse to come, the king sends his servants into the streets. They are told to invite anyone they can find. Jesus even makes a point of saying that the servants gather both the "good and bad." Suddenly the banquet hall is filled with people who probably never imagined receiving an invitation. That is a powerful picture of God's grace.

God's kingdom is not a private gathering for people who have impressive résumés, spotless histories, or perfect reputations. It is filled with people who were invited because the King is generous. That includes us. Remembering this changes the way we see other people. It becomes much harder to divide the world into people we think deserve God's grace and people we assume do not. Grace destroys those categories.

The person who irritates you, the person whose life looks completely different from yours, the person with a complicated past, and the person you have quietly decided would never be interested in God are all people Christ loves. And notice something else in the story: the king sends servants to carry the invitation. Those who have received God's grace are also called to share it.

Most of us will not do that by standing on a street corner issuing formal invitations. We carry God's invitation through ordinary acts—welcoming someone who feels left out, inviting someone to worship, sharing a meal, listening to someone's story, offering encouragement, or simply telling someone why our faith matters to us. We are guests at God's table. And we are also messengers sent from it.

Reflection: Think about someone you might unintentionally overlook or assume would not be interested in faith. Who might God be asking me to see differently because His invitation is wider than my assumptions?

Prayer: Generous God, thank You for making room for me at Your table. I know I am here because of Your grace, not because I deserved an invitation. Forgive me when I judge who belongs or assume someone is beyond Your reach. Give me Your eyes for the people around me. Use my words, actions, hospitality, and kindness to help others see the welcome You offer through Jesus. Amen.

Grace That Changes Us

“Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?”

The final scene of Jesus' parable can feel uncomfortable. The king enters the banquet and finds someone who has come without the appropriate wedding garment. Jesus is reminding His listeners that responding to God's invitation involves more than simply showing up. Grace welcomes us exactly where we are, but grace also begins changing us.

Paul uses similar clothing imagery in Colossians when he tells believers to “clothe yourselves” with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and above all, love. These qualities do not earn us a place in God's kingdom. They are signs of what begins happening in people who belong to the King.

Following Jesus means surrendering the idea that we can receive Him while keeping every other part of our lives completely untouched. Christ begins changing the way we speak, forgive, spend, serve, think, love, worship, and treat others.

None of us does this perfectly. Christians are not people who have completed the process. We are people who have placed ourselves in the hands of the One who is transforming us. That is why repentance remains part of the Christian life. We continually ask God to show us where our lives are drifting away from Christ and then trust Him to lead us back.

The week began with an invitation. It ends with a question: What kind of life grows from saying yes to that invitation?

May our answer increasingly be a life that honors the Son—not because we are trying to earn God's love, but because we have discovered just how great His love already is.

Reflection: Consider one part of your life that God may be asking to reshape—a relationship, a habit, your priorities, your generosity, your attitude, your words, or the way you use your time. Where is Christ inviting me not simply to believe differently, but to live differently?

Prayer: Gracious God, thank You for welcoming me through Jesus. Do not let me become satisfied with a faith that never changes the way I live. Clothe me with compassion, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love. Show me where I need to repent and give me courage to follow where You lead. May the words of my mouth, the thoughts of my heart, and the actions of my life honor Christ. Amen.

A Little Encouragement to Share

If these devotional reflections have encouraged you, challenged you, or helped you see God's Word in a new way, consider sharing this booklet with a friend, family member, neighbor, or someone who might need a little encouragement this week.

Sometimes a simple word of faith can make a difference.

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