Growing Christians Ministries
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TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

The Parable of the Wedding Feast and the Invited Guests

Matthew 22:1-14

"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."

Background Notes

This parable of the wedding feast and the invited guests is the third parable in a sequence that started back in Matthew 21. These three parables were given in the last week of our Lord's public ministry. They were spoken in the Temple courts, and were specifically addressed to the chief priests and leading Pharisees who were trying to trap Jesus and find a way to arrest Him.

Look back at Matthew 21:23-24, *"Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" [24] But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you*

tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: [25] The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?" They wouldn't answer the Lord's question about John the Baptist's ministry, because they would have condemned themselves if they had answered. So the Lord refused to tell them by whose authority He was carrying on His ministry: "*So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."* The "these things" mentioned by the Lord were specifically His cleansing of the Temple and His healing miracles in the Temple courts on the previous day.

The Lord continued to address the self-righteous chief priests and Pharisees with three convicting parables – the parable of the two sons and the father's vineyard (Matthew 21:28-32), the parable of the landowner and the wicked tenants (Matthew 21:33-46), and the parable of the wedding feast and the invited guests. In all three parables, it's easy to see that the Jewish leaders were being condemned for their rejection of the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. In fact, these leaders knew that the Lord was directing these parables against them! Look at Matthew 21:45 - "*Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them."*

Notice the specific details of this third parable at the beginning of Matthew 22. This parable is not exactly the same parable that the Lord gave in Luke 14. In that parable, a large dinner was given and those who were invited made excuses and didn't come. That parable is similar to this one, but it was given on a different occasion. The parable before us is not just a big dinner given by "a certain man," but a wedding feast given by a King for His Son.

Doctrinal Points

1. **The kingdom was rejected by most Jewish people.**

Although the Lord didn't give the interpretation of this parable as He did with some of His other parables, the overall interpretation is not difficult. Notice, first of all, that it is a parable of the kingdom of heaven. Remember, the kingdom of heaven in the gospel of Matthew is not heaven, but the form of the kingdom **now**, between the two advents of Christ.

The kingdom that was promised and predicted in the Old Testament prophetic Scriptures was offered to Israel at the first coming of Christ. In the parable, the wedding and marriage feast represent that Messianic kingdom, prepared by God the King for His Son the Lord Jesus Christ. The offer of this kingdom was made to Israel, but the nation of Israel rejected the kingdom and the Messiah – they refused the invitation to the feast.

Notice that the invitation to the feast is in two stages. The first stage (v3) was when John the Baptist, and the twelve disciples, and also seventy other disciples (Luke 10), were sent out with a message that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

That offer was refused. Israel's rejection came to a climax with the crucifixion of their Messiah.

The second stage of the invitation (v4) came after our Lord's resurrection. The gospel went out to the Jewish people first (Romans 1:16), but most of the Jewish people continued to reject the King and His kingdom. Some of the Jewish people just ignored the message (v5), but others persecuted the early Christians and even killed many of them (v6). Read the Book of Acts in this connection.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD by the Roman legions under Titus is seen in verse 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.*" In 70AD, most of the Jews living in Jerusalem were killed. The Temple was destroyed and Jerusalem was burned. Notice that the Roman armies are seen as "God's armies" in the parable: "…*And he sent out his armies…*" In what way were the Roman armies, God's armies? God used the Roman military machine as His instrument to deal with the people of Israel who had rejected the kingdom.

Most Jewish people rejected the Kingdom, and sadly, most Jewish people today continue to reject the true Messiah. However, we know from prophetic Scripture that a day is coming in the future -- maybe the near future! -- when there will be a great spiritual awakening among the Jewish people. At the present time, however, most Jewish people still reject the kingdom.

2. **The kingdom has been received by many Gentile people.**

In Matthew 21:43, the Lord Jesus said to the Jewish leaders who refused the kingdom, "*Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*" In the parable, the gospel that is now going out to the whole Gentile world is seen: "*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.*"

The second stage of the invitation continues in the book of Acts. There the invitation to the Jewish people transitions to the general invitation to the Gentiles. Acts 13:44-52, "*On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. ⁴⁶ Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us: "' I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'" Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.*
⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. ⁵⁰ But the

Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. [51] But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. [52] And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit." The gospel has gone out to the Gentile world and many Gentiles have received an invitation.

But what about the last part of the parable? Who does "the man without a wedding garment" represent? In those days, the host supplied robes for the wedding guests to wear, so the man in the parable must have refused the robe that was offered to him. His rejection of the robe was not a matter of ignorance – this man had an opportunity to accept the appropriate garment from the King, but clearly he thought his own garment was just fine. This man represents a person who only professes to be a believer. He thinks his own good works will save him.

There are many "Christians-in-name-only" in the kingdom today. In Matthew 13 the Lord said that the kingdom in its present form would have both the wheat and the tares (weeds) until the harvest (when the Lord returns). Then the tares, the weeds that only resemble good wheat, will be separated out and be burned. The same truth is taught in this parable. False professors may look and talk like true believers, but they don't have the "wedding robe" – the robe of Christ's righteousness. Therefore their eternal destiny is hell, a place of outer darkness. "*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.'*

Notice from this parable that hell is not one huge party of unbelievers having a great time together. No, it is a place of "outer darkness" -- and weeping -- and gnashing of teeth! I trust that you are part of the great company of believers who will be present at the wedding feast of the kingdom. Many Gentile people have received the kingdom.

Practical Application
Have you received the robe of righteousness?

The wedding robe in the parable is the "robe of righteousness." You **must** wear it to get into the King's feast! You must wear it to be part of the kingdom. You can't buy it, and you can't make it! You must receive it from the Lord Himself. He bought it for you with His own life when He died on the cross for your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."*

Have you received the robe of righteousness by accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior? If you have, you can say with Isaiah 61:10 "*I will greatly*

rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness…"

Matthew 22:14 says, *"For many are called, but few are chosen."* Have you responded to the call of our Lord? Have you responded to His invitation to "come to the feast"? Have you received the robe of righteousness?