

## Matthew 22:1-22 – “The Parable of the Wedding Feast”

---

Jesus is in this continued confrontation with the religious leaders here in Jerusalem. They’re looking to trap Him in their questions and find reason to convict Him. Jesus has shared 2 parables in Chapter 21 to expose their sin and hypocrisy. We come now to a third parable here in Chapter 22.

- Remember, these parables are stories that “are like wrapped gifts. The packaging of the story can either distract or captivate. But unless the package is opened, the gift itself remains unseen. Likewise unless one seeks the core of the parable—its truth and application—the lessons will remain hidden. Yet when discovered, these lessons prove extremely valuable.”<sup>1</sup>

The previous parable dealt with Israel forsaking their *responsibilities*. This third parable dealt with Israel forsaking their *privileges*. They were rejecting their place in God’s kingdom.

### Summary Statement:

Jesus gives a parable to communicate the wedding feast is made ready but the invitees are uninterested. Invitations are then given to a new group of people who get to receive this blessing. Jesus is then questioned further to try and trap Him.

### 1. Invited & Uninvited – 22:1-14

**22:1-3 - *And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said:*<sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son,<sup>3</sup> and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come.**

In this day marriages were very much arranged by the parents. I still really like this idea 😊. All the terms of the marriage were agreed upon ahead of time and then preparations would be made for the wedding. Also, in this day double invitations would be given. Just as the bride and groom would be betrothed, where vows were exchanged and they were legally married, but they wouldn’t consummate the marriage until the groom finished adding a place on to his father’s house for him and his bride. The bride in the meantime waited until her groom called for her to bring her to their new home.

---

<sup>1</sup> Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. (1997). *The Nelson Study Bible: New King James Version* (Mt 21:27). T. Nelson Publishers.

So too, the guests would be invited ahead of time, but they would have to wait until they were given word that everything was now ready. This is why we read that servants are sent out **to call those who were invited.**

Now in this parable the **king** is speaking of God. The **son** is His Son, Jesus. The people that were invited to this wedding celebration (representing the coming kingdom of God) was the Jewish people. They've long held the promises and prophecies of what God had in store for them in the kingdom age.

- **Isaiah 25:6–9**, *"And in this mountain The Lord of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees. <sup>7</sup> And He will destroy on this mountain The surface of the covering cast over all people, And the veil that is spread over all nations. <sup>8</sup> He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; For the Lord has spoken. <sup>9</sup> And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.""*

Israel should have been ready and waiting for that call when God had the kingdom prepared. A kingdom needs a king, and when Jesus came on the scene, things were ready to move into the kingdom age.

And this call went out to the house of Israel. But sadly we read: **they were not willing to come.**

How can this be? Who doesn't want to come and enjoy a party! Look at what we read in Isaiah, there's going to be fat things full of marrow, in other words, you're gonna eat well and get fat! Wine is going to be flowing. It's repeated twice in case you missed it the first time. There's going to be no tears or sorrow – it's all joy! Why would anyone refuse this?? We'll see momentarily.

**22:4-5 - 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." ' <sup>5</sup> But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.**

More servants are sent out to let them know that things are ready, it's time to come and enjoy. The first servant sent to invite the people in was John the

Baptist – the forerunner of Christ. He came to point people to Jesus. But people didn't respond to him, in fact he was eventually martyred.

Then the disciples were raised up to spread the gospel that the kingdom of God was at hand. They were sent to the lost sheep of Israel.

- **Matthew 10:5–7**, *"These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. <sup>6</sup> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. <sup>7</sup> And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"*

Everything was ready for Israel to experience this kingdom and the blessing of it. In this day, a wedding feast would last for days – up to a week. There would be much food, wine, dancing, music and entertainment. If someone of wealth was throwing the party, it was extravagant. This parable shows it was a king, it doesn't get any better than that! Who in their right mind turns this down? Many of these religious leaders did, along with many in the house of Israel. Why?

***They made light of it and went their ways...*** They were indifferent; complacent. They didn't really see their need for this. But also, they were pre-occupied with their own stuff. They had farms and businesses and they had more interest in those things than they did in what truly matters. They got their focus on temporal things rather than eternal things.

- Isn't this a danger we all run into and have to constantly fight against? It's so easy to get fixated on worldly stuff and fail to recognize we're not of this world. I'm not saying to go and quit your jobs tomorrow. But let's be certain that our jobs or our hobbies are not what we're finding our joy and contentment in. Let's be certain that our satisfaction and chief passion are the things of God.
- **Colossians 3:1–4**, *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory."*
- Jesus is our life! We're not going to find it through the things of this world. Don't settle for the temporal and the inferior. Jesus is our glory!

***22:6-7 - And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. <sup>7</sup> But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.***

Jesus speaks accurately and prophetically here. Some of his servants were seized, treated spitefully, some even killed. We saw that with Stephen in Acts 7. And because Israel refused to respond to the gracious invitation and carried out such horrible actions against the messengers, the king became **furios**.

- This becomes all the more maddening when there's really no rational reason for the rejection of this invitation. It's an invitation to blessing! The king only intends to do good and spoil you. It was irrational to refuse this but it was insanity to kill the people inviting you to this.

So as a result, judgment would come. An army would be sent and their city burned. This happened in 70AD at the hands of the Romans led by Titus.

- They're called his armies because God used them as the instrument of His judgment; just as He used the Assyrians and the Babylonians in the O.T.
- Not only was Israel dispersed from Jerusalem, and the temple destroyed, but it put an end to Pharisaic Judaism. Though there's still a lot of vain religion attached to Judaism today, the religious leaders of Jesus' day no longer had a platform to wield their power.

So here we reach a turning point in the parable.

**22:8-10 - *Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.'* <sup>10</sup> 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.**

Everything is ready to go, but the invited guests aren't wanting to attend. The king said, ***they were not worthy***. Their worthiness was not a matter of them doing right or making themselves worthy. Their worthiness was simply based on accepting the invitation. Nevertheless, because of their unworthiness, the invitation now goes out to an extended group – Gentiles! The rest of the world! Going to the highways means that the borders have been opened up. This was always the plan of God, but it was to come through Israel. Now God will put Israel on the sidelines and let them become jealous through new wedding guests enjoying the blessings that God has for them.

I love what we read here, that the servants invited ***both bad and good***. Nobody is excluded. All are welcome in! There's only one condition that needs to be met. That's shown us next.

**22:11-13 - “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. <sup>12</sup> So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup> 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.’**

The king comes in and notices one of the guests not wearing proper attire. It was not uncommon for the host of the wedding banquet to provide wedding robes for guests that didn't have anything appropriate to wear. The intimation here is that this guest couldn't be bothered to put on someone else's robe. He thought he would be just fine in his own clothing.

And the picture for us is clear. If we think we can get in without being clothed in what Christ provides for us, we're sadly mistaken.

- **Isaiah 64:6**, *"But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away."*

Many are thinking they're good enough. They're clean and acceptable on their own. And they come presenting themselves as though they're righteous. But we don't have a leg to stand on if we're relying on our own works and righteousness. It's as filthy rags. We need to be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. That's what it means to be saved.

- **Galatians 3:26–27**, *"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>27</sup> For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*
- To put on Christ means we're clothed in His righteousness. This is how I'm accepted before God.
- **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, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."*

Many think that when they stand before God they're just going to present all their goodness before God and if He doesn't accept it then they're going to have some words for Him. But everyone like this will be **speechless** when they stand before God and see His holiness and their sin. We'll have no defense.

We either stand in His righteousness by which we're accepted in Jesus, or we stand in judgment by relying on our own goodness.

The result is harsh. It's everlasting torment in hell. And God has provided a way out if you will simply come on His terms.

**22:14 - *“For many are called, but few are chosen.”***

It's shocking when you think that the gospel has gone out so freely, especially in our day where the medium to do so is so widespread, yet many do not accept this most amazing gift of salvation. Those that have tasted and seen that the Lord indeed is good can be left scratching their head at the fact that many do not receive Jesus as their Lord.

- This parable reminds us that many are too proud to accept the help of others and some are relying on their own works and goodness. They think they are in but are sadly missing it if they don't put on the righteousness that is only provided through Christ.

## 2. Questions and Conundrums – 22:15-22

**22:15-16 - *Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. <sup>16</sup> And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, “Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men.***

Here's the continued effort to find a fault with Jesus and hope to trap Him in something He says by which they can find a reasonable conviction.

So we see the Pharisees working alongside the Herodians in this effort.

The Herodians were a Jewish political party who sympathized with the Herodian rulers and in so doing showed their support of Roman rule.

This meant that the Pharisees and Herodians were usually enemies, they did not see things the same way. The Pharisees were the right wing kind of people who were very protective of their Jewish heritage. The Herodians were more left wing type people who were more liberal.

- Yet here they are joining forces over a common enemy. They both despised Jesus, and so they collaborated together to try and take Him down.

Listen to how this group is talking to Jesus. Makes you want to puke. Because it's totally fake! If they really believed that Jesus was true, then they wouldn't be examining Him as they are and trying to come up with a fault against Him. If Jesus is teaching the way of God as they profess, then why aren't they listening to Him? It's so hypocritical.

When they say that He doesn't **care about anyone**, it's not that Jesus is cold, calloused and lacking compassion. They all know that's far from the truth. But what they've seen is that Jesus isn't trying to be a people pleaser. He's not trying to fit in and be accepted. He's not showing favoritism to certain people.

Now they think they've got a perfect question that however Jesus answers, He will offend someone and they'll have a reason to accuse Him.

**22:17-18 - Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"<sup>18</sup> But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?"**

They're not interested in finding truth. This question isn't a dilemma for anyone. They just want to have something against Jesus.

- If Jesus says they should not pay taxes to Caesar, then the Herodians will be able to charge Jesus with insubordination and treason against Rome.
- If Jesus says they should pay taxes, then the Pharisees will say He's turning against His people and being a traitor to the Jewish nation.

They think they've got Him in a corner. But they're dealing with the Son of God. And Jesus calls them on this. He knows this is all a test to trap Him. They're being hypocritical with these platitudes.

**22:19-22 – "Show Me the tax money." So they brought Him a denarius.<sup>20</sup> And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription is this?"<sup>21</sup> They said to Him, "Caesar's." And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."<sup>22</sup> When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way.**

A denarius was a silver Roman coin that was worth a day's wage and was used to pay the poll tax. It had an image of Caesar on it and was a constant reminder to the Jew that they were under Roman authority.

Jesus answers this so wisely. I mean, He's God, you're not going to stump Him with anything. So Jesus asks them, **whose image and inscription is this?** And of course they'd be familiar that Caesar was on that coin. So Jesus wisely says, *give to Caesar's what is his and give to God what is His.*

- They may not have liked having to give to Caesar, but they benefited from what they brought (ie. better roads, protection and peace, etc.). So they needed to do their part for this.

But on a higher plane they also needed to be careful that they were taking care of their responsibilities before God. He was the One in charge of all. And all men are created in the image of God. Just as the coin had an image of Caesar, and they needed to give back what was his, we have a responsibility before God as those created in His image! He has entrusted us with much and we should be giving back the things that are His – namely ourselves!

- If these Jews had been doing that in the first place, they wouldn't be in the situation they are now.

Are you rendering to God the things that are God's?

**1 Corinthians 6:20**, *"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."*

With two parties shot down, along comes another religious party – the Sadducees. They come now with their question about the resurrection.

#### Points to Ponder:

1. Do you understand the incredible blessing of being invited to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb?
2. Have you put on Jesus Christ as the means of your salvation? Are you clothed in His righteousness alone?
3. Have you considered that you are not your own? You are God's and you are meant to live for His glory. This is where true joy and blessing stems from.