

God Wants You!

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Matthew 22:1-14

God wants you – He wants you to come to his feast. In this parable Jesus uses the feast of an ancient king as a picture of God inviting us to partake of his grace. In the parable many would rather plow their fields than come to the party. So too many make excuses for ignoring the free gift of grace and forgiveness that God offers in His word.

V1-3 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.

The wedding feasts of those times were massive occasions lasting as long as a week, with food and wine and singing and just general celebrating. Especially when given by the wealthy. Here we have a King giving a celebration for his son's wedding. This would have been the grandest festival, and anyone who was anyone would have come. It was considered the highest disrespect to refuse a wedding invitation. So, the King sends out the invitation fully expecting many guests to come and join in this great celebration. Yet that is not what happens, but rather they

were not willing to come.

In those days they would send out two invitations, one to let people know there was going to be a feast and that they were invited. A second one to let them know that the feast was now ready and they should come. The king thinks perhaps they misunderstood, these men who would not come, perhaps they thought I was inviting them, but it wasn't ready yet. So, he sends the messengers out again carefully explaining:

V4-5 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." ' ⁵ "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.

But alas no they had understood and yet they wanted nothing to do with this feast. In the coming verses we are going to see that the king grows angry with them for this attitude on their part. We may think that his reaction is bit over the top. But these men are basically saying, we think so little of you and your son, that we would rather go home and work in our fields and go to the marketplace and work in our business than to come to your wedding feast. They view the marriage feast as a burdensome commitment that they would much rather do without.

Often, we take the same view towards the gospel. The king here has prepared the best of everything, the fatted calf, the oxen, the best which can be is there waiting for them. So too with the gospel. In His word the Lord offers us not just food for our soul but the best food. He offers the water of life and the bread of life, food that exalts the soul that is overburdened with work and laboring under his own sins and doubts and griefs. The Lord says here it is, a sumptuous fare for all. This is something our King has prepared for us every week.

Yet too often we say, “no Lord I am too busy. I have too many other worries to come and enjoy your feast.”

The Lord says it is all here, all ready for you, just take it and eat it. Fill yourself with this heavenly feast for it will give you the strength and the joy that you need. Even so the writer of the letter to Hebrews asks, **“How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation . . . Hebrews 10:29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?”** This is a feast which we cannot afford to miss, which we dare not despise, which we desperately need.

Yet some people go even farther, not only making excuses but being filled with anger

V6-7 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.

Yes, they hate this King so much and his invitation that they kill and murder those who bring the message and treat them spitefully.

Why would anyone hate this invitation so much? Why would anyone hate the gospel message so much. After all the Gospel message is freedom and it is free, it says come all you who do not deserve my kingdom and I give it to you anyway, free of charge, out of love, because of what Christ did. What is there to hate in this message?

The bible elsewhere warns us against this very thing. That the cross is condemnation to those who do not believe. The cross of Christ portrays what at all costs we do not want to hear or admit, the complete degradation of my sin. On the cross we see a God who is very serious about sin, who is deathly serious about sin, on the cross we see the wrath of God poured out upon our sin.

There are forms of Jesus that the world does not have a problem with. Jesus the man who teaches us to love one another, that is something that is easy for us to hear. Yep, we ought to love one another, I can do that I can learn that. Jesus the philosopher, who explains morality and talks

about the mysteries of God, that is something people find interesting. But Jesus who had to die for my sin, Jesus the man who suffered because I am evil and wicked, that cuts us to the core that portrays an image of ourselves that we do not like to see. So too often we try to throw away that mirror and go find another Jesus or another God that will make me look good.

But the Jesus who invites you to heaven is the same Jesus who died for your sin.

V 8-10⁸ "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.

What are they not worthy of? The trouble of inviting, the trouble of redeeming. The Lord says concerning those who make light of His call, those who disregard His word, who do not care that He has redeemed them that they were not worth the trouble of redeeming in the first place. Christ died for all men, yet for some He says they were not worth that price. Yet who is worth that price? Certainly not such sinners as we.

No certainly we are not. Yet the prodigal Son who returns

and says to the Father, **“Father I am not worthy”** is embraced by that same Father. And the publican who falls on his knees before the altar declaring, **“I am an unworthy sinner.”** He the Lord declares went home with his sins forgiven. **“A broken and a contrite heart these O God you will not despise.”** Certainly, no one is worth the price the Jesus paid for us, yet He declares us worth it. He decided to pay it for us anyway, why? Because of His great love.

So yes, the invitation goes out to the scum of the Earth, the homeless and the destitute. What about you? Do you consider yourself unworthy of being associated with such a crowd? Do you consider yourself above such a party? Or do you recognize the squalor in which you live and gladly take refuge in Christ’s invitation?

V 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.
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.' For many are called, but few *are* chosen." But few are chosen.

A bit of an overreaction on the part of the King? Is it really fair of him to bind this man and throw him into despair simply because he forgot to wear the right garment or maybe he couldn’t even afford it. It is interesting that the Lord tells this

parable at one other time much earlier in His ministry and at that earlier period he leaves out this last part of the parable. The Jews had repeatedly rejected Him as the Messiah, they had again and again rejected in the notion that they needed to be forgiven that they needed someone to die for their sins. They were the ones that thought that the garments that they currently wore were good enough for heaven. And Jesus is calling out to them as well as us, don't think it, don't try it. Without the righteous white robe that I give you, you will never be able to partake of the marriage feast which is to come. I alone am the way, and the invitation comes through me.

God wants you! He wants you to be a part of his feast and his kingdom. He has gathered you from your homelessness and wandering. He has prepared the greatest feast. Do not make excuses but confessing your sin receive the invitation and come to the feast of our king. Amen