

## **The Kingdom of the Son** **Matthew 22:1-14**

Reading through Matthew one chapter a day gives us the opportunity that is intended by parables; time to think things over.

*Joshua 1:8 - This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it....*

*Psalms 119:97 - Oh how I love your law! It is my meditation all the day.*

*Colossians 3:16 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*

### **Introduction:**

The key to Matthew's Gospel is understanding the kingdom. The Jews are very aware of all the kingdoms around them.

- They were in captivity in Egypt
- They have been vassals of Assyria
- They were in Babylonian captivity
- The Romans rule them
- The Pharisees and Sadducees oppress them

### **First: Matthew and the Kingdom of Heaven**

Against all those kingdoms, Jesus comes preaching his kingdom and it is unlike any of those. Matthew 5 – It is a kingdom of poverty of spirit, mourning over sin, meekness, hungering for righteousness, mercy, peace, right living, joy in sorrow and persecution, and living to influence others with all these qualities.

It is an inner kingdom, a kingdom of the heart before it is an outer or physical kingdom.

The *basileia* (Greek = kingdom) of God is the hope of God's people.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray,

Matthew 6:1 - *Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

### **Second: God's Kingdom in the Old Testament**

The OT presents God's kingdom as a time and place in the future where God's will is perfectly done and all human hopes will be fulfilled according to God's purposes

**Micah 4:1-7** - *It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and it shall be lifted up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, <sup>2</sup> and many nations shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide disputes for strong nations far away; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and no one shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken. <sup>5</sup> For all the peoples walk each in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever. In that day, declares the LORD, I will assemble the lame and gather those who have been driven away and those whom I have afflicted; <sup>7</sup> and the lame I will make the remnant, and those who were cast off, a strong nation; and the LORD will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time forth and forevermore.*

**Daniel 7:13-14** - *I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.*

### **Third: Truths about Parables**

a) A parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life but most often with a twist that leaves the hearer wandering – In the *Good Samaritan*, the priest and the Levite are as bad as the robber and the Samaritan is the hero

b) Parables are intentionally unclear

"Why isn't Jesus more clear?" Because he doesn't want to do all your thinking for you. Because he wants you to think about it. In this, the parables demonstrate who and who is not in the kingdom.

Its intent is to leave the hearer wandering about its application so that it requires thought.

c) Jesus told several kingdom parables painting a picture of his kingdom using phrases like, "the kingdom is like..." or "the kingdom is not like..."

d) Kingdoms of the first century meant slaves and masters and stewards given responsibility for the land but accountable for its yield to shadowy and whimsical absentee landlords.

e) All of Jesus's parables have common themes:

- Great reversals – *the last shall be first*
- Progressive growth and transformation over time – *small seeds become great trees*
- ‘Finding’ joy over possessing joy – *lost coin, lost sheep, lost son*
- Mixing ingredients & sorting – *weeds among wheat, dregs among fish*
- Unresolved tension – *the elder prodigal*

And that brings us to the parable of the wedding feast -

**Matthew 22:1-14** - And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, <sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, <sup>3</sup> and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. <sup>4</sup> Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ <sup>5</sup> But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup> while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. <sup>7</sup> The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. <sup>8</sup> Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ <sup>10</sup> And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. <sup>11</sup> “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. <sup>12</sup> And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ <sup>14</sup> For many are called, but few are chosen.”

### Sermon

#### **First: Jesus interests his listeners with a common theme – 1-3a**

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, <sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, <sup>3</sup> and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast,

The king is God the Father, and the son who is being honored at the banquet is Jesus.

#### **Second: There is an immediate twist – 3b**

*but they would not come*

Christ, who “came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” (John 1:11). Israel held the invitation to the kingdom, but when the time actually came for the kingdom to appear (see Matthew 3:1), they refused to believe it.

### Third: The Patience, Persistence & Generosity of the Host is emphasized – 4

- a) *Patience* - Again he sent other servants, saying,
- b) *Persistence* - 'Tell those who are invited,
- c) *Generosity* - "See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready.
- d) *Come to the wedding feast.*"

### Fourth: The Inexcusable Excuses - 5

*But they paid no attention and went off,*

- *one to his farm,*
- *another to his business,*

The host is a king.

- The farmer is a tenant and
- the businessman is an employee

There is no excuse.

Note that it is not because the invited guests *could not* come to the wedding feast, but that they *would not* come (see Luke 13:34).

Jesus demonstrates this in 22:15 - *...render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.*"

Mark 4:19 - *but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful.*

Luke 4:18-20 - *But they all alike began to make excuses.*

- The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.'
- <sup>19</sup> And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.'
- <sup>20</sup> And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.'

It is

- a) Highly insulting the guests do not accept the invitation.

In Jewish society, the parents of the betrothed generally drew up the marriage contract. The bride and groom would meet, perhaps for the first time, when this contract was signed. The couple was considered married at this point, but they would separate until the actual time of the ceremony. The bride would remain with her parents, and the groom would leave to prepare their home. This could take quite a while. When the home was all was ready, the groom would return for his bride without notice. The marriage ceremony would then take place, and the wedding banquet would follow. Word about the wedding feast has undoubtedly circulated for some time so that people could 'save the date.'

- b) Highly unlikely that anyone in this time would not attend a feast and especially a feast that includes meat

This, of course, is an illustration of God's historic patience, persistence, and generosity with Israel. They have repeatedly ignored his invitations, so God has sent multiple prophets.

This is like Matthew 21:33-41 - *Hear another parable. There was a master of a house [God] who planted a vineyard [Israel] and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and built a tower and leased it to tenants, and went into another country. <sup>34</sup> When the season for fruit drew near, he sent his servants [prophets] to the tenants to get his fruit. <sup>35</sup> And the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. <sup>36</sup> Again he sent other servants, more than the first. And they did the same to them. <sup>37</sup> Finally he sent his son [Jesus] to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' <sup>38</sup> But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' <sup>39</sup> And they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. <sup>40</sup> When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' <sup>41</sup> They said to him, "He will put those wretches [Israel] to a miserable death and let out the vineyard to other tenants [Gentiles] who will give him the fruits in their seasons."*

#### **Fifth: The Mistreatment of the Servants - 6**

*...while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.*

Many prophets, including John the Baptist, had been murdered (Matthew 14:10).

#### **Seventh: The King's Response. - 7**

*The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.*

The king's reprisal against the murderers can be interpreted as a prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction in A.D. 70 at the hands of the Romans (cf. Luke 21:5).

More broadly, the king's vengeance speaks of the desolation mentioned in the book of Revelation. God is patient, but He will not tolerate wickedness forever (Obadiah 1:15). His

judgment will come upon those who reject His offer of salvation. Considering what that salvation cost Jesus, is not this judgment well deserved (see Hebrews 10:29-31)

### **Eighth: The King's Generosity - 8-10**

*Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup> Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' <sup>10</sup> And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.*

### **Ninth: The Misclothed Guest - 11-14**

*"But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. <sup>12</sup> And he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup> Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' <sup>14</sup> For many are called, but few are chosen."*

- a) Some guests did not come at all
- b) One guest did not come as bidden

It would be a gross insult to the king to refuse to wear the garment provided to the guests.

Spurgeon – The wedding garment is Christ's righteousness. This man decides that clothing of his choice is sufficient. This is unrighteousness.

*The guests were bidden to come to the wedding to show their respect to the king and prince; some would not come at all, and so showed their sedition; this man came, and when he heard the regulation, that a certain garment should be put on, comely in appearance and suitable for the occasion, he determined that he would not wear it. In this act of rebellion, he went as far in opposition as they did who would not come at all, and he went a little further, for in the very presence of the guests and of the king he dared to declare his disloyalty and contempt. Alas, how many are willing enough to receive gospel blessings, but they are still at enmity with God and have no delight in the only Begotten Son. Such will dare to use the forms of godliness, and yet their hearts are full of rebellion against the Lord. The wedding garment represents anything which is indispensable to a Christian, but which the unrenewed heart is not willing to accept, anything which the Lord ordains to be a necessary attendant of salvation, against which selfishness rebels. Hence it may be said to be Christ's righteousness imputed to us, for alas, many nominal Christians kick against the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of the Saviour and set up their own self-righteousness in opposition to it.*

– Charles Spurgeon

<https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-wedding-garment/#flipbook/>

Just as the king provided wedding garments for his guests, God provides salvation for mankind. Our wedding garment is the righteousness of Christ, and unless we have it, we will miss the wedding feast. When the religions of the world are stripped down to their basic tenets, we either find man working his way toward God, or we find the cross of Christ. The cross is the only way to salvation (John 14:6).

### **Conclusion:**

To summarize the point of the Parable of the Wedding Feast, God sent His Son into the world, and the very people who should have celebrated His coming rejected Him, bringing judgment upon themselves. As a result, the kingdom of heaven was opened up to anyone who will set aside his own righteousness and by faith accept the righteousness God provides in Christ. Those who spurn the gift of salvation and cling instead to their own “good” works will spend eternity in hell. The Parable of the Wedding Feast is also a warning to us, to make sure we are relying on God’s provision of salvation, not on our own good works or religious service.

The self-righteous Pharisees who heard this parable did not miss Jesus’ point. In the very next verse, “the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words” (Matthew 22:15).

### **Community Groups:**

- 1 – What did you celebrate this week?
- 2 – What made you sad this week?
- 3 – Where did you see God work this week?
- 4 – What can we pray about for you?
- 5 – Read the text
- 6 – Talk about God’s kingdom in Matthew
- 7 – Discuss the elements of a parable
- 8 – Why did Jesus speak in parables?
- 9 – Define the characters in this parable.
- 10 – Why is so shocking the guests would not attend the wedding feasts?
- 11 – What suggests the guests’ refusal isn’t a matter of timing?
- 12 – What suggests the guests could really have come to the feast?
- 13 – How does the king response to the guests’ refusal to attend?
- 14 – What textual clues indicate this parable is about Israel and Gentiles?
- 15 – Discuss the king’s response. How is it defensible?
- 16 – Talk about the king’s generosity in verses 8-10
- 17 – What is the big deal about clothing?
- 18 – What does a miscllothed guest imply about the guest?
- 19 – How do we apply this parable?