

June 30, 2019

“The Parable of the Wedding Feast”
Matthew 22:1-14

FCF: How can this longing for God be met?

PROPOSITION: (anchor) The living God has invited us into His kingdom.
(magnet) We must respond in the right way.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

The fact of one thing can point to the reality of another. A child's hunger points to the reality of food. A duck's bent to swim points to the reality of water. Our romantic desires point to the reality of sex. Get the idea? What of our longings for things this world cannot satisfy? What does that point to? There is more beyond this world. This is the argument from desire. This longing we feel within points to the possibility of a relationship with the God who made us.

These longings point there. But how? How can we come to be in relationship with God?

SCRIPTURE READING: [Matthew 22:1-14](#)**PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION****SERMON INTRODUCTION:**

Jesus' ministry on earth was about the kingdom of God. His message and miracles, His words and works were all driving on this idea. Heaven has come down to earth. The future has invaded the present. While not yet in full, the kingdom has come. God's rule and reign have arrived. Jesus has ushered in the reclamation of what is rightfully His, the renewal and redemption of all things. This is what He proclaimed, the good news of the kingdom of God.

That in itself is astonishing. Now comes something else. Jesus calls us to participate in this, to be a part of it. He invites us to become citizens of the kingdom of God. Think about that for a moment. The living God has invited us into His kingdom. That's what this parable is about. The living God has invited us into His kingdom. We must respond in the right way.

What would that mean? We see that as we break down this parable. First, the context of the invitation. Second, the consequences of refusing. And, third, the conditions of acceptance.

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE INVITATION

First, let's look at the context of the invitation ([READ Matthew 22:1-4](#)). The imagery is from the ancient world - that of a royal wedding, a celebratory feast given by a king for his son.

A) Great Generosity

1. What is offered

There is great generosity on display here. All you could want - a fine meal, fascinating guests. There was an abundance of provision. And note this point. It was a great honor to be invited.

2. Free of charge

All free of charge. No payment to be made. Yours is simply to come, sit down, and enjoy.

B) Amazing Grace

There is great generosity on display here. And also, as the story unfolds, amazing grace.

1. Pursuing the stubborn

Notice the king's pursuit of the stubborn. This is not just provision but condescension. He truly longs for and sincerely desires their presence, even in the face of their hesitancy and resistance.

2. Welcoming the stranger

Going beyond that, as we look to the second act and beyond the stubborn refusal of the people, not willing to cancel this banquet, the king sends his servants out to invite as many as could be found. So much so that the "bad and good" were gathered and filled the wedding hall as guests.

This is the context of the invitation - the great generosity and amazing grace of the king.

Application:

What do we learn from this? At least two things. First, there is no room for boasting. If you find yourself at this feast, it's all because of the goodness of the king and not your own.

Second, not only is there no room for boasting but this is our sole hope for community. This is a pride-slaying message. And it is just what we need. For humble people tend to get along. The goodness of the King, His generosity and grace, is our sole hope for community.

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II. THE CONSEQUENCES OF REFUSING

But that brings us to the second point, the consequences of refusing (**READ Matthew 22:5-10**). Here we move from the imagery of a royal wedding to a king's rebellious subjects.

A) High Treason

1. Beyond rudeness

What we see here is high treason. The response to this invitation was beyond just mere rudeness. The mistreatment and abuse of his servants was clearly a personal affront to the king himself.

2. But an insurrection

This was deadly serious, the likely makings of a full scale insurrection. The obvious hatred and violence of these subjects were the clear signs of a coming rebellion, an uprising in the works.

B) Royal Wrath

It was high treason on display. And that is what leads to this expression of royal wrath.

1. Beyond wounded

This is what lies behind what otherwise sounds so extreme, what might look like out-of-control royal rage. But this is far beyond a paranoid cruel tyrant feeling insulted or sadly put out.

2. Necessary and just

In the context, what he does is necessary and just. He has to move in a decisive and resolute way. What he is facing is no light thing. This evil has to be addressed. It cannot be overlooked.

These are the consequences of refusal - the fact of high treason and reality of royal wrath.

Application:

This parable helps us to understand a couple of things. First, the reality of sin. Our sin is treason against the King, rebellion against the Lord on high. And so it is of eternal gravity.

That's the first thing. The second thing is the reality of hell. It's alluded to here. God is just. Which means He cannot overlook evil. He has to address it. He has to deal with it. And there's something else tied to this. Our choices count. They truly matter. If we spend our lives insisting on living apart from God, in the end, He really will give us what we want. Forever.

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III. THE CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTANCE

Which brings us to the last point - the conditions of acceptance. How can we be saved? (READ Matthew 22:11-14). In the midst of this wedding feast, we have a wedding crasher.

A) Outer Clothing

What is required for admission? For starters, we need the right kind of outer clothing.

1. The king's provision

There is evidence of an ancient custom in which kings would provide not only the meal but the garments for their guests as well. And everyone would be expected to wear what was provided. This fits the biblical theme of the Lord clothing His people with His righteousness - removing our filthy rags and giving us His royal robes. This is exactly what Jesus gives His disciples now.

2. This man's presumption

This man thought otherwise. In his presumption, he saw no need of all that and crassly assumed what he had was enough. The king begged to differ. And so the man's story does not end well.

B) Inner Drawing

The point is that we need this outer clothing. But also an inner drawing. We see this not so much in the story itself but in the summary Jesus gives of the story (READ Matthew 22:14).

1. A deeper knowing

To see our need of this outer clothing, we also need a deeper knowing. We need the work of the Holy Spirit to convince us of our sin and enlighten our minds to the gospel. Then we can hear it.

2. Gladly coming

And then, beyond even that, we need His work within us to renew our hearts, to do a deeper work of persuasion, to actually enable us to embrace the gospel. We need this inner drawing.

These are the conditions - the Lord's outer clothing upon us and His drawing within us.

Application:

This relationship with the Lord, from start to finish, is secured by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The King provides everything, absolutely everything. Which is grounds for everlasting thanks, the deepest trust, the highest praise, and the greatest hope.

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CONCLUSION:

Let me end with this idea of an "invitation." There are all kinds of invitations - to weddings, to graduations, to parties of various sorts. And there are all kinds of responses to these

invitations - bug eyed wonder or the eye roll of cynicism, the thrill of anticipation or the dread of expectation. With some invitations, we race to our calendars to see if we can make it. And with others, we do all we can to delay our reply. All kinds of invitations and all kinds of responses.

What drives our responses? What lies beneath them? The simple matter as to whether we want to be there. Does it sound appealing, worthwhile, even necessary? If it does, then we are in. Well, consider the invitation Jesus is picturing here in Matthew 22. Consider who it comes from - not some great earthly king but the King of time and space. And consider what we're being invited into. His kingdom. He has begun this work of renewal, reclamation, and redemption. And we can be a part of that - participating in the rolling back of the curse, making an impact upon the world around us not only in this life but forever. Think of this. Think of this.

It's quite an invitation. This is the great wedding feast for the Son of the Most High. The living God has invited us into His kingdom. We have but to respond in the right way.

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