

Parable of the marriage feast

Part 1

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Note: This text is a computer generated transcript of the sermon. In some cases it may contain errors.

[00:00:00] The return to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 22.

There's a background previous to this parable. In the previous parable, in chapter 21, we read of a master of a household hiring certain servants and letting his vineyard out to these servants.

And when the time came when they should have produced the fruit and given it to him, he sent his servants and these husbandmen rejected them. They refused to have anything to do with them. In fact, they threw them out and actually killed some of them. Finally, he said, I'll send my son. And so he sent his son and they said, this is the heir, come let us kill him and the inheritance will be ours.

[00:01:06] And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. Typical of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God coming at the right time. The Jews had been given the vineyard, the Jewish leaders, and what had happened? Instead of giving some response to God for the grace God had shown them, they absolutely refused it.

Now, it was required. After all, he was the owner of the vineyard and they ought to have paid their dues. When the dues came due, but however, they rejected it.

This is a picture of what mankind is everywhere.

That is, under law, man is told you have to do something. You have to be obedient. Does man listen to that? Well, he doesn't. He rejects it.

[00:02:04] And so here, God, instead of demanding something from the Jews, is found in this parable just the opposite.

He is giving to them.

But there's one thing very important in regard to what God gives. And that is that he loves his son.

And he is going to honor his son.

And he expects men to honor his son. If he is giving, he is giving in connection with his son.

The one who has the Son of God is blessed with the greatest blessing you could ever imagine. You

can have all kinds of natural blessings from God's hand for nothing.

God gives them. He gives all kinds of natural things. [00:03:02] But when it comes to spiritual blessings, you can only have them in receiving the giver.

The only way. You have to have the giver. And when you get the giver, you get Christ, you get absolutely everything God has to give. But we'll read the parable, verse 1. My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. [00:04:06] But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth. And he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good. And the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

Then said the king to the servants, [00:05:01] Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called, but few are chosen. Everything depends upon what a person thinks of Christ.

God thinks a great deal of his Son. God here is shown in honoring his own Son by making a wedding feast for him. And he expects it.

And that is certainly perfectly right, that everyone under heaven should honor him. But here he makes the wedding feast, and it's made for his Son, do you notice?

We don't read who the bride is here. Don't read a thing about her. Usually when you go to a wedding, the most important subject is the bride, isn't it? But not so here.

When it comes to the wedding of the Lord Jesus, the one who is really important is Christ himself. [00:06:07] And it's for his Son he makes the wedding. Now, of course, there's going to be a marvelous wedding feast in the glory, and this is not the same. In the glory, the Church of God, the bride, will be linked with Christ there for eternity. And there will be a wonderful wedding feast then, for believers. But here, this is a wedding feast that is taking place right now, in view of the wedding. But right now is the time that you are invited to this wedding feast. In fact, first of all, it's not actually Gentiles who are invited at all. Because, notice, it says here, verse 3, "...he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, and they would not come." Who are the ones who are bidden? Invited. [00:07:02] The Old Testament tells us Israel is invited.

All the Old Testament prophecies speak of the coming of the Lord Jesus, the one who is God's chosen King, and the one who is going to have a bride, an earthly bride, too, as well as a heavenly bride. But, however, he is the one whom God has chosen to honor and to exalt.

And, therefore, when the Lord Jesus came, the time had come for the message to go forth. "...and he sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding, and they would not come." This took place at the very time the Lord Jesus was here on earth. He had come.

What a marvelous thing! The Son of God had come into his own creation and not recognized.

His servants went and preached the gospel, [00:08:03] and people would not listen.

They refused it.

They would not come.

Why is it a person is not saved? Because his will is set against God.

He won't be saved.

He doesn't want to be. That's the real reason for him. If you really want to be saved, you can be saved. There's no doubt ever about it. But here, they would not come.

Well, at the end of verse 3, you can put a cross.

Because this is just what took place. When the first servants had been sent, the disciples of the Lord Jesus here on earth, they rejected them, and they rejected Christ as well. Christ is seen here as having died.

[00:09:01] Now, it's not mentioned here in this chapter. It's mentioned elsewhere. But it's involved in this fact, because it's mentioned almost immediately afterwards. Again, he sent forth other servants, not the same ones. And, of course, amongst those would be such as Stephen and Philip, and there are many others in the book of Acts, who were sent forth by God to preach the gospel of the grace of God. But you notice what it said, what their message is. Tell them which are invited.

The message is to the same people. Tell them, Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage.

The first message was not that. This was the second message. Why? [00:10:01] Because, typically, Christ has died. My oxen and my fatlings are killed. It speaks of the sacrifice having been made. And so the sacrifice has been made now. And Israel is given a second chance.

I don't know how many chances you've had to be saved. I know I had a great many. I knew that I didn't listen to what I was told in the first place. And it took a great deal of real work from the Spirit of God to break down my stubborn heart, my resistance. But, thank God, he sent a second message to Israel. God was not willing, and he should perish, but all should come to repentance. When they rejected his Son, gave him a cross and a grave, wouldn't it have been perfectly just for God to have just cut them all off? Right then?

Perfectly righteous, that God is a God of grace.

And he gave them another opportunity and urgently desired that they should be saved. [00:11:04] And the message, when it goes forth now, comes forth from a heart longing to see other souls brought to Christ. You see, the way it's put. Behold, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my falcons are killed. All things are ready. Come unto the marriage. Everything is perfectly ready now. So come.

Now, that's the message to Israel. And I understand that word, come, is in the imperative form, which means I'm not giving you any other alternative.

The thing to do is come.

You know, I've heard some people say, I remember one man in particular, telling people, turn or burn.

Well, I don't say that.

I say turn.

That's what God says. He doesn't give them an opportunity to do the other. [00:12:02] He's not giving them an alternative.

God is telling you to be saved. God is telling you to accept Christ and be saved. You certainly don't want to say to a person, were you a preacher of the gospel, take it or leave it.

I hope you never tell them that. Tell them, take it.

If you don't, you're the one who is absolutely to blame. And that's the important thing. We want to see souls saved and saved for eternity. So here, come unto the marriage. So that come, as I said, in the imperative form, as though God is brooking no opposition to it. He wants everyone to be saved.

Whose fault is it then if people are not saved? God's whole heart is in it. God is urging men to come.

If men refuse, who is to blame?

[00:13:03] You know perfectly well. The person himself is to blame. It's always the case. Have you been saved?

Everyone here in this room, honestly, are you saved?

Can you say from the depths of your heart, yes, I know, thank God. My sins are forgiven. I know that I belong to the Lord Jesus. Now, if you don't know that for sure, if you don't have a verse that persuades you that you're saved for eternity, don't you rest until you have that verse to depend upon, to be absolutely certain that your sins are forgiven, that you're on your way to glory. Now, these are the Jewish people, then, that this message was given to. But, verse 5, they made light of it and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

[00:14:04] What a sad, sad comment on the hearts of men who today, and they're the same today as they were then, who today just think nothing of what God has to say. What difference does it make anyway? Do you know, people are so absolutely blinded, not realizing the extreme horror of refusing the wonderful grace of God.

Now, it's serious enough to deliberately disobey the law of God.

That's bad.

I hope we all understand that.

But how much more serious to reject the gift of God, when God is giving freely, without money, without price. In fact, here, you come to the wedding feast, [00:15:01] you don't expect to have a collection at the door, do you? If someone invites you to a wedding, they're not asking you for money when you come, they're not charging you for what's on the table, no price tag in every dish in the table, for instance. And people have an idea that God is like that, that God is charging for everything they get, because that's the way their own hearts are. We like to charge everybody else for everything that they get from us. Well, God is a God of infinite grace.

What's on the table?

All kinds of dishes.

One important one, forgiveness.

And if they're free, absolutely free.

Do you want to be forgiven? I remember coming to the home of one man on one occasion, he had gone through a real trial, a struggle. And he was...

He met us at the door, we talked to him, [00:16:02] and he said something about forgiveness. He said, that's what I want, forgiveness! He was an old man, and thank God he got it.

His life had been a very bad one, and he confessed it.

He said how terribly bad his life had been. But he confessed his guilt to God, and he was forgiven. You need to be forgiven, too. Is everyone here absolutely certain that you're forgiven?

Now, it's important to be certain of that matter. There is also justification.

And that's another one of the dishes on the table. What does it mean to be justified? It means more than forgiveness. That every true believer is forgiven, and he is justified, too.

What does justified mean? Being cleared from absolutely every charge of guilt, [00:17:03] and not only that, counted righteous before God.

If you know something about bookkeeping, you know there's a debit side of the ledger, and there's a credit side.

On the debit side are your debts. On the credit side are the things that are to your credit. How much do you have, by nature, on the credit side of your ledger?

How much do you have?

A great big zero.

Isn't that right?

How much do you have on the debit side? Such a tremendous debt that you could never think of paying it. Terrible debt.

When the Lord Jesus suffered on the cross, gave himself for our sins, what did he do? He paid that debt completely, [00:18:04] so that on the debit side of your ledger, there is a zero now, as for a believer.

He is justified.

But on the credit side of the ledger, he is given something that he never expected.

God counts the believer righteous. Righteousness on the credit side of his ledger. God says to you, yes, this person is righteous in my sight.

Well, that's a wonderful exchange, isn't it? A marvelous thing that the grace of God accomplishes. And this is for every believer. Now, those are only two of the blessings. Redemption, for instance, do you understand what it means? To be redeemed?

And all believers have that dish on the table too, absolutely freely to partake of it and enjoy it. [00:19:01] What does it mean to be redeemed?

It means to be brought back from a state of slavery and bondage, and set free.

The Lord Jesus has done that for believers. He's taken you out of that state. You understand what I mean, don't you?

He that committeth sin is a slave of sin.

We've all been slaves to sin. Tried to get free of it and couldn't. Tried to stop ourselves from sinning, and the harder you try, the worse you get embroiled in it. Isn't that the way you found it? I'm sure most of you here have found something like that. But then to find the deliverance from it is a wonderful thing. Christ is the one who redeems, sets the believer completely free. No longer is he under that bondage. Now that's another one of those dishes on the table, if you will. [00:20:04] And there are so many more. Eternal life, sanctification, reconciliation, peace with God.

And those are only a few of them. There are many other blessings. Dear friends, if you receive Christ, you will have infinitely more than you can even imagine you have.

It's there free on the table for anyone who will come in and partake of the marriage peace. Well, but these men, these people here, in verse 5, made light of it. They went their ways. One is farm, another is merchandise. And that's very characteristic of the Jewish nation today. The first thing to the farm. I think some of you are farmers here, aren't you? Aren't there? You know what that means. That means a lot of work.

[00:21:02] Well, work is fine.

But if you think you're going to work your way to heaven, that's a different thing. You're not going to do that. Israel is going about to establish their own righteousness by their own works, works of law.

What good are they? They're not going to save them. Far from it. And there are thousands of people who are following their footsteps to today. They think they're going to be saved by doing good. You're not. Absolutely not.

So they'll say, instead of choosing the gospel, say, well, I think I should be working instead. I'll work my way to heaven. Well, you go ahead and work your way. Where?

Where?

You think to heaven?

You work your way, and you find out you're working your way to hell. That's what happens.

[00:22:04] But the others go to their merchandise. And that's another characteristic of the Jewish nation. They want to make money. And they're capable of doing it. God has given them a character that enables them to be really remarkably capable and able to accomplish wonderful things.

But, however, if they decide they're going to just make money instead of having Christ as Savior, they'll tell you, well, I've got too much to do. I've got too much. I have to take all my time to make a living.

And they make a living pretty well. But, however, now, what about it?

Does money mean more to you than Christ, the gospel and grace of God? Well, I certainly hope not.

[00:23:03] In fact, the Jews were so capable of making money that when they were banished outside their country, scattered everywhere, many went to Rome.

And when they got there, they started working, and the Romans found that they were making so much money that they were getting very alarmed that Jewish people were progressing better than the Romans were. And so they passed an edict that the Jews from henceforth were not allowed to engage in any business but the second-hand business.

And that's the way in which the second-hand business became so profitable.

It's when the Jews started taking it over. They knew how to make a great profit out of that business, too. You see?

So that's what men are by nature. But would you like to be that?

Or would you rather have Christ? [00:24:03] You see, there are all these things that are so influencing men. But the king heard this.

In fact, it mentions one other class, too. And that is, the rest of them took his servants and treated them spitefully and killed them. And so we know there were some of the servants of the Lord who were killed in the book of Acts. You know some of them. And that's the way the Jewish people treated them. Up to the end of chapter 7 in Acts, God was still pleading with the Jewish nation to turn to Christ.

They would not.

All right, what happened? Verse 7.

When the king heard thereof he was wroth, he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.

[00:25:03] Now, you know the city was burned up, the city of Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus prophesied this long before that took place. It took place in the year 70 A.D.

So it was around nearly 40 years after the Lord Jesus prophesied this.

Now, do you remember what happened to Rome?

Titus the Roman general came in and the Jews were resisting him.

And he told his men, though they did burn the city, but they told him one thing. He told them one thing, not to allow the temple to be touched at all. But one soldier disobeyed orders and he threw a lighted torch into the temple [00:26:03] and it began a fire and it caused a great deal of destruction in the temple. In fact, the temple was very badly damaged so that a little later on, the emperor Julian decided that he was going to restore the temple. Why? Because he had once embraced Christianity and then he turned against Christ and became the man known as Julian the Apostate because he turned against Christianity entirely. He decided, I'm going to have the Jews go back and rebuild that temple so that it will completely thwart the prophecy of the Lord Jesus that said not one stone was going to be left upon another in that temple.

The Lord had said that. So the Jews went back to rebuild the temple. And when they looked it over, they thought it was so badly damaged [00:27:03] that the only thing to do was to tear it down and rebuild. They tore it down and not one stone was left upon another and they were stopped from rebuilding it. So Julian actually only defeated his own purpose and actually fulfilled the Lord's words when he wanted to thwart them.

However, you know, men are determined to fight against God. Don't be like that.

Don't fight against God. You'll always come out at the wrong end. Every time.

You need Christ.

You absolutely need to be saved. Well, then the Lord Jesus, we're told here the King in verse 8, that Lee says, to his servants, the wedding is ready. They which were bidden were not worthy. [00:28:02] Go therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

Here is another class of people entirely. We've tried twice with these Jews and they won't come.

All right.

The wedding is ready. Christ has died.

The sacrifice has been made. Salvation is available for tremendous numbers. And those who were first invited refuse it. What do we do?

Go into the highways.

And of course, this means Gentiles. Go everywhere. As many as you shall find, invite to the marriage. Now, that's the wonderful gospel of the grace of God today. It's being sent out everywhere. As many as you find, invite them. Now, it doesn't take a great deal to invite somebody.

Just tell them to come. [00:29:01] Come to Christ.

You don't have to say a great deal. I'm sure every believer, every believer, can be an evangelist in this respect.

He can do evangelical work.

He might not be gifted as an evangelist, but he can do good work.

If he just talks to one soul about Christ, you might be surprised at the results. If you'll just talk to one soul about the Lord Jesus and pray for that soul, really be concerned about him. But all they're told to do here is, as many as you find, invite to the marriage. Did they do precisely that? Look at the next verse. Verse 10.

So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all as many as they found, [00:30:02] both bad and good.

That wasn't exactly inviting them, was it? And you know, sad to say, dear friends, that is what has happened in Christendom, all over Christendom today.

Even the Lord's servants have gone out and gathered together people, as many as they can find, and haven't really invited them to trust in Christ as Savior. They would like to bring them all under a church roof, make them members of a church, without inviting them to be saved.

Don't do that.

I hope you don't want a lot more people here to link themselves with the brethren, unless you know they're saved.

What you can do is invite them to Christ. See, if they receive Christ, if they accept Christ in their souls, if they decide, yes, [00:31:01] I'm going to receive Christ, then fine, that's good work. But just to make them members of a denomination doesn't make them Christians.

They need something more than that. They gather them all together with the result that when the king comes in to see the guests, what does he see?

Now, I hope you believe fully and absolutely the Lord is coming. Do you believe in the Lord's coming? I hope so.

It's a very real thing.

He's going to come and those eyes are going to pierce every individual. You're going to see him face to face. How will you meet those eyes?

Everyone here is thoroughly certain that all is well? You're going to look into those eyes with deepest thanksgiving and thank the Lord Jesus that he has saved you for eternity?

[00:32:04] Look, if the Lord Jesus suddenly appeared in this room right now and looked you in the eyes, how would you feel?

That would be something, wouldn't it? If you're not saved, I can imagine you wouldn't be very happy about it, would you? I should say not.

If you're saved, then of course you have the right to be as happy as can be for the Lord is coming. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment.

And he asked him, friend, how did you come in here having no wedding garment?

What did he answer?

He didn't.

He didn't have an answer.

[00:33:01] I know one boy who told me when he heard about this, maybe he didn't have enough money to buy one. Do you know he didn't have to have enough money to buy one? Because weddings in that eastern country, when an invitation was sent, the invitation was always accompanied by the wedding garment. So that the individual, all he had to do was to bring the wedding garment, come in the wedding garment.

But I suppose this man preferred his filthy rags.

He didn't have his wedding garment. The wedding garment speaks of Christ, the one who clothes every believer. When the Lord sends an invitation to you and wants you to be saved, he also sends the wedding garment.

All you have to do is put it on, [00:34:01] put Christ on, receive Christ, in other words. When you receive Christ in your heart, you have the wedding garment on. And so if the man here did not have a wedding garment on, he was insulting the Lord. He was insulting the King.

He was saying, in effect, my clothes are just as good as yours.

So he wouldn't accept the garment the Lord had to give him. Be sure you accept that garment. That garment is Christ, clothed with the robe of righteousness, which is Christ himself. So every believer is clothed in Christ.

Well, the man doesn't have any answer. The Lord tells the servants, it's the King here, verse 13, bind him hand and foot and take him away and cast him into utter darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth [00:35:02] for many are called but few are chosen.

Terrible thing to think of, isn't it? Weeping and gnashing of teeth. Cast him into utter darkness.

Now, you know, we can't apologize for what scripture says. I personally feel terrible at the thought of anybody ever being eternally lost in hell. The thought is horrible.

I would never wish that on my worst enemy. Would you?

But I don't decide this question, do I? It's the Lord who decides it.

And when the Lord says there is such an end for the unbeliever, I better believe it.

I have to accept it.

It's true.

In order that the fear of God should be put in men's souls [00:36:01] and make them realize how much they need Christ.

So we can't apologize for anything like that. This is the truth of God.

And it's the Lord Jesus who says this. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He knows what he's saying.

The one who is in absolute authority. For many are called but few are chosen. Many are called.

The gospel goes out to many everywhere. But the result is, sad to say, only few are chosen. Why?

Because they do not receive Christ.

They don't have the wedding garment. They have not received the Lord Jesus into their heart.

Be sure you have.

Some years ago, quite a number of years ago, because we're still in the days of the horse and buggies, of course you've got horse and buggies out here in this country, haven't you? But at any rate, [00:37:04] a farmer woke up in the middle of the night and he said to his wife, I've got to go to town. Well, she said, whatever for? I've got to go, he said. So he picked up his horses, drove into town, and he arrived there just about the time that things were starting to open up. He made his way to the blacksmith shop. The blacksmith was a man named Joe, and they called him Old Joe.

But he was a man of very bad character, using vile language, and a man of bad temper, so that people just tried to keep away from him as much as they could unless they had to have business with him. Well, Joe asked him, what are you here for?

Well, he said, I want you to sit down.

He sat down. [00:38:01] Listen, I had a dream last night, and I dreamed that I'd been taken to heaven, and there I saw many people I knew, and I was so glad to see them.

And I looked for different ones, and I saw them there, and I asked the Lord, is so-and-so here? Yes, he's here. And so-and-so? Yes, she's here too. What about Old Joe? Is he here? And the Lord said, nobody ever invited him.

He said, Joe, I'm ashamed that I've never invited you before, but I want to invite you now.

That blacksmith broke down and wept.

He was saved.

See how the grace of God can work in the most wretched souls imaginable.

[00:39:03] There's one man I knew who had been saved, and another, a brother in the meeting, said, no, that man could never be saved. He's a man he knew well. He'd known him for years. The man had lived a very bad life. When he heard he was saved, he said, no, that's impossible. But when he saw him, he was astonished at the wonderful change that had taken place in that man. Do you see how important it is, dear friends, to accept the invitation of the Lord?

Lord, yes, I will accept your invitation. I will trust you as Savior.

If you've never accepted his invitation before, dear friends, do it tonight. You're invited.

You can be saved if you never have been before. You can be saved tonight by just receiving Christ as your personal Savior.

And then you can be sure you are chosen, [00:40:02] chosen by God and blessed for eternity. Shall we sing together? Hymn number 25.

Jesus is tenderly calling me now, calling today, calling today.

Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam farther and farther away? Number 25.

Jesus is tenderly calling me now, calling today, calling today.

Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam farther and farther away?

Calling today, calling today.

Jesus is calling, is tenderly calling today.

[00:41:07] Jesus is waiting, O come to him now, waiting today, waiting today.

Come with thy sins at his feet lowly bow, come and no longer delay.

Calling today, calling today.

Jesus is calling, is tenderly calling today.

Jesus is pleading, O listen to his voice, hear him today, hear him today.

They who believe on his name shall rejoice, quickly arise and obey.

[00:42:02] Calling today, calling today.

Jesus is calling, is tenderly calling today.