

**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> & 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 & my fat calves have been slaughtered, & everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' <sup>5</sup> But they paid no attention & went off, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup> while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, & killed them. <sup>7</sup> The king was angry, & he sent his troops & destroyed those murderers & 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 & invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' <sup>10</sup> And those servants went out into the roads & gathered all whom they found, both bad & 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 & foot & cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping & gnashing of teeth.' <sup>14</sup> For many are called, but few are chosen."

**Intro:** Last Sunday, we saw Jesus tell a parable that showed the measureless (seemingly reckless!) love & mercy of God, & it shined the light of conviction & condemnation on the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day because of their rejection of the prophets God had sent to them & ultimately, they rejected Jesus Himself, the Son of God. God's love & mercy are relentless & without measure, but you must repent & receive His Son to receive mercy.

**Remember why Jesus spoke in parables? Matthew 13:10-16:** Then the disciples came & said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to the one who has, more will be given, & he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, & hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: 'You will indeed hear but never understand, & you will indeed see but never perceive. <sup>15</sup> For this people's heart has grown dull, & with their ears they can barely hear, & their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes & hear with their ears & understand with their heart & turn, and I would heal them.' <sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, & your ears, for they hear.

Today we see another parable, & this one describes what the kingdom of heaven is like: a great wedding feast the King is giving for His Son! It's going to be a glorious celebration! And trust me, you want to be there!

The Kingdom of Heaven is the greatest wedding celebration that has ever crossed the horizon of this world!  
Everyone is invited! Come! And come clothed in the righteousness of Christ & in your good deeds done in Him!

### **1. The Kingdom Of Heaven Has A King Who Has A Son**

**Matthew 22:1-2:** 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 . . . ."

In this parable describing the kingdom of heaven, the king represents God the Father, & the son represents His Son Jesus Christ. These truths remind us that God has all power and authority in heaven & on earth! Kings rule & and reign – God is King! He rules & reigns!

**a. God has all power & authority & Jesus His Son has all power & authority:** They decide who's in & out!

- **Daniel 4:34-35:** At the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, & my reason returned to me, & I blessed the Most High, & praised & honored him who lives forever, for his dominion is an everlasting dominion, & his kingdom endures from generation to generation; <sup>35</sup> all the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, & he does according to his will among the host of heaven & among the inhabitants of the earth; & none can stay his hand or say to him, "What have you done?"

- **Matthew 28:18:** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to me.

- b. God is King & His Son, Jesus, is King:** In this parable, God is the King. But take note – Jesus is also King!
- **Isaiah 44:6:** Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god."
  - **Revelation 1:17-18:** Fear not, I am the first and the last,<sup>18</sup> and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.
  - **John 1:49:** Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

## **2. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Like A Party Celebration**

The king is giving a wedding feast for his son. This is a celebration! This is a happy, joyful occasion! This is an occasion for dancing & singing & laughing & peace & joy! Beloved, be encouraged! This is what awaits us!:

- **Zechariah 8:5:** And the streets of the city shall be full of boys & girls playing in its streets.
- **Isaiah 65:17-19:** For behold, I create new heavens & a new earth, & the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad & rejoice forever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy, & her people to be a gladness. I will rejoice in Jerusalem & be glad in my people; no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping & the cry of distress.
- **Ephesians 2:4-7:** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved – & raised us up with him & seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, **so that in the coming ages** he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

## **3. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Like A Royal Wedding**

The king is giving a **wedding** feast for his son. This parable points us to the destination of all of human history – a wedding & a marriage that will never end & through which all of our deep desires will all be more than fulfilled!

**Revelation 19:7, 9; 21:1-4:** Let us rejoice & exult & give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, & his Bride has made herself ready . . .<sup>9</sup> And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." . . .<sup>21:1-4</sup> Then I saw a new heaven & a new earth, for the first heaven & the first earth had passed away, & the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, & they will be his people, & God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, & death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

**Jonathan Edwards:** The end [goal] of the creation of God was to provide a spouse for His Son Jesus Christ [who] might enjoy Him and on whom He might pour forth His love. And the end of all things in providence are to make way for the exceeding expressions of Christ's love to His spouse & for her exceeding close & intimate union with, & high & glorious enjoyment of Him & to bring this to pass. And therefore the last thing & the issue of all things is the marriage of the Lamb. And the wedding day is the last day, the day of judgment, or rather, that will be the beginning of it. The wedding feast is eternal; & the love & joys, the songs, entertainments & glories of the wedding never will be ended. It will be an everlasting wedding day!

This party/celebration is out of our league! We do not deserve to be invited to this! But we are! All are invited!

## **4. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Like A Feast**

The king gives a wedding **feast** for his son. Food is a human need & strong desire. A feast is coming like no other!

- **Psalms 34:8:** Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!
- **John 6:35, 51:** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, & whoever believes in me shall never thirst . . .<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.

**John Piper:** One of the reasons God created bread, or created the grain & the water & yeast & fire & human intelligence to make it . . . is so that when Jesus Christ came into the world, He would be able to use the enjoyment of bread & the nourishment of bread as an illustration of what it means to believe on Him & be satisfied with Him . . . Bread exists to help us know what it is like to be satisfied in Jesus.

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### **5. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Not For Those Who Won't Come**

**Matthew 22:2-3:** The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, <sup>3</sup> & sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come.

- **John 5:39-40:** You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; & it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

- **John 1:11-13:** He came to his own, & his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

- **Matthew 11:28:** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, & I will give you rest.

- **John 6:37:** All that the Father gives me will come to me, & whoever comes to me I will never cast out **GOSPEL**

- **Romans 10:9:** because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord & believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Sister Tanya's Prison Evangelism!)

### **6. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Not For Those Who Would Rather Do Other Things**

**Matthew 22:4-5:** Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen & my fat calves have been slaughtered, & everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.' <sup>5</sup> But they paid no attention & went off, one to his farm, another to his business . . . .

God & His Son & His priorities & His purposes must take first place in your life, by far!

- **Matthew 6:33:** But seek first the kingdom of God & his righteousness, & all these things will be added to you.

- **Matthew 10:37-39:** Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, & whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross & follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, & whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

**John Piper:** (*Hunger For God: Desiring God Through Fasting & Prayer*) The greatest enemy of hunger for God is not poison but apple pie. It is not the banquet of the wicked that dulls our appetite for heaven, but endless nibbling at the table of the world. It is not the X-rated video, but the prime-time dribble of triviality we drink in every night. For all the ill that Satan can do, when God describes what keeps us from the banquet table of his love, it is a piece of land, a yoke of oxen, & a wife (Luke 14:18–20). The greatest adversary of love to God is not his enemies but his gifts. And the most deadly appetites are not for the poison of evil, but for the simple pleasures of earth. For when these replace an appetite for God himself, the idolatry is scarcely recognizable, & almost incurable

### **7. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Not For Those Who Hate The King And His Messengers**

**Matthew 22:5-6:** But they paid no attention & went off, one to his farm, another to his business, <sup>6</sup> while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, & killed them.

We saw this last week. This is what the people of Israel did, over & over again, when God sent them prophets. They rejected them & persecuted them & even killed some of them. And they eventually kill the Son!

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## **8. The Kingdom Of Heaven Has A King Who Will Bring Justice**

**Matthew 22:7:** The king was angry, & he sent his troops & destroyed those murderers & burned their city.

If you reject the king's invitation, there will be hell to pay, very literally! Some think 70 A.D.; Final judgment

- **Craig Blomberg:** Overt rejection of God's invitation leads to eventual retribution.

- **Revelation 6:15-17:** Then the kings of the earth & the great ones & the generals & the rich & the powerful, & everyone, slave & free, hid themselves in the caves & among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains & rocks, "Fall on us & hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, & from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, & who can stand?"

- **Revelation 14:19-20:** So the angel swung his sickle across the earth & gathered the grape harvest of the earth & threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. & the winepress was trodden outside the city, & blood flowed from the winepress, as high as a horse's bridle, for 1,600 stadia [about 184 miles – that's a lot of blood!].

## **9. The Kingdom Of Heaven Has A King Who Wants It Filled With People And It Will Be Filled With People**

This king has three different waves of invitations! 1) He invites & no one comes; 2) He invites & people do other things or attack violently; 3) He sends his servants into the main roads to invite whosoever will who will come!

**a. God wants sinners to be saved: 1 Timothy 2:1-4:** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, & thanksgivings be made for all people, <sup>2</sup> for kings & all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful & quiet life, godly & dignified in every way. <sup>3</sup> This is good, & it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who desires all people to be saved & to come to the knowledge of the truth.

**b. We should want sinners to be saved too & work to accomplish that purpose: Matthew 28:18-20:** And Jesus came & said to them, "All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore & make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

## **10. The Kingdom Of Heaven Has All Kinds Of Invited Guests**

**Matthew 22:8-10:** 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 & invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' <sup>10</sup> And those servants went out into the roads & gathered all whom they found, both bad & good.

**a. What does it mean to be worthy?:** It's not that some people are just better than others or have earned it more than others! To be worthy is simply to accept the invitation! To trust in Jesus Christ!

**b. God's Mercy-Heart: V. 9:** Go therefore to the main roads & invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.

**c. What does it mean that the servants gathered all whom they found, both bad and good?:** There is a sense in which everyone is bad in God's eyes:

- **Mark 10:18:** Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone.

- **Romans 3:10-12:** None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.

But in another sense, judging by human standards, there are morally good & morally bad people. There are people, like the rich young ruler, who outwardly conform to God's standards: honor their parents generally, stay married & don't cheat on their wives, raise families & love their children, work hard & contribute to society. And there are people who, judging by human standards, are bad: they cheat, steal, murder, they're lazy, they commit adultery, etc. There are the younger prodigal sons in the world & there are the elder brother prodigal sons in the world. God is calling them all! God is also calling all nations! God is calling everyone!

- **Craig Blomberg:** God invites many people of different kinds into his kingdom.

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### **11. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is For All Those Who Will Come And It Will Be Filled**

**Matthew 22:10:** So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

- **John 6:37:** All that the Father gives me will come to me, & whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

- **Romans 8:29-30:** For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, & those whom he called he also justified, & those whom he justified he also glorified.

### **12. The Kingdom Of Heaven Is Only For Those Who Have The Proper Wedding Garment**

**Matthew 22:11-13:** 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 & foot & cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping & gnashing of teeth.'

**a. Those without a wedding garment will be cast out of the wedding feast:** You have several groups of people in this parable who don't make it into the wedding feast/kingdom of heaven: 1) Those who are invited but don't come; 2) Those who are invited but have "better" things to do; 3) Those who are invited but react with violence toward the invitation; 4) Those who are invited & seem to come/make a start at coming, but are not prepared! These are the ones who are in the visible church, but won't make it into heaven on the last day.

- **Craig Blomberg:** Failure to prepare adequately even when apparently accepted by God proves no less culpable or liable to eternal punishment.

**Matthew 7:21-23:** Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, & cast out demons in your name, & do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

**b. Those without a wedding garment will be severely punished: V. 13:** Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand & foot & cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping & gnashing of teeth.'

**c. What does the wedding garment represent?: Charles Spurgeon:** 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.

**Righteousness:** The imputed righteousness of Christ & our own, Holy Spirit produced, good deeds righteousness.

1) **Imputed Righteousness: Isaiah 61:10:** I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness; **Romans 4:5:** And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness

2) **Our Good Deeds Righteousness: Revelation 19:7-8:** Let us rejoice & exult & give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, & his Bride has made herself ready; <sup>8</sup> it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

**d. The King is the only one Who has the authority to let people into His Kingdom & to cast them out:**

**Acts 17:30-31:** The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; & of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.

### **13. The Kingdom Of Heaven Invitation Is The Call Given To Many**

**Matthew 22:14:** For many are called, but few are chosen.

- This call goes out to everyone, everywhere! This is the general call! This is the great invitation! This is the preaching & sharing of the Gospel! We are to be God's servants & call! Call! Call! And call some more!

### **14. The Kingdom Of Heaven Invitation Will Properly Be Accepted Only By Those Who Are Chosen**

**Matthew 22:14:** For many are called, but few are chosen.

- Only those who are chosen actually make it into the kingdom of heaven. This refers to God's predestination & election of those He would save that happened before the foundation of the world.

- **Ephesians 1:4-5:** he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy & blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ . . . .

- **Romans 9:6-24:** But it is not as though the word of God has failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, <sup>7</sup> & not all are children of Abraham because they are his offspring, but "Through Isaac shall your offspring be named." <sup>8</sup> This means that it is not the children of the flesh who are the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as offspring. <sup>9</sup> For this is what the promise said: "About this time next year I will return & Sarah shall have a son." <sup>10</sup> And not only so, but also when Rebecca had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, <sup>11</sup> though they were not yet born & had done nothing either good or bad - in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call - <sup>12</sup> she was told, "The older will serve the younger." <sup>13</sup> As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." <sup>14</sup> What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! <sup>15</sup> For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, & I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." <sup>16</sup> So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. <sup>17</sup> For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, & that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." <sup>18</sup> So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, & he hardens whomever he wills. <sup>19</sup> You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" <sup>20</sup> But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" <sup>21</sup> Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honored use & another for dishonorable use? <sup>22</sup> What if God, desiring to show his wrath & to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, <sup>23</sup> in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory - <sup>24</sup> even us whom he has called, not from the Jews only but also from the Gentiles?

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**Jesus: Our Only Hope:** Our only hope is that on that cross, Jesus was punished like all those in this parable who rejected the invitation! Jesus was seized & treated shamefully & killed! God the King was angry with His Son because of our sin & destroyed & burned Jesus with the fires of His own wrath on that cross! Jesus was bound, hand & foot, & cast into the outer darkness where there was weeping & gnashing of teeth! Jesus' garments were literally stripped off, & He died, cursed & naked on that tree! He took upon Himself the nasty & filthy garments of our sin, so that we get His pure robe of righteousness imputed to us by faith alone! And then Jesus rose up!

Christ Jesus Is The Son And Groom  
Of The Greatest Wedding Whom  
His Father Gives To End All Gloom  
The God-Man Came In Mary's Womb  
Then Lived And Died To Death Consume  
He Bore God's Wrath And Judgment Doom  
Then Conquered Death, Rose From The Tomb  
Ascended And All Powers Assume  
On Sinners Christ Will Lay The Boom  
Would You Be Worthy Of This Groom?

Called And Chosen To His Room?  
Where Joys Ever Grow And Loom?  
Then Turn From Loves That Hearts Consume  
And Every Sin That Causes Doom  
And Trust In Christ Alone The Groom  
You Will Be Justified And Bloom  
And Royal Sonship You'll Assume  
A Wedding Garment Yours For Whom  
There Will No More Be Any Gloom  
All Joy Is Yours In Christ Your Groom!