

Introduction: Let's review some key points of Jesus' interaction with the religious leaders up to this point in our text.

- The triumphal entry into Jerusalem fulfilled the prophecy of God in the OT, which the religious leaders taught and knew.
- The cleansing of the Temple was offensive to the leaders because it disrupted the racket they had established.
- When Jesus scolded the religious leaders He said, "Have you never read?" (Matthew 21:16). Of course this was condemning to them because they were the supposed spiritual leaders of Israel and clearly failed to recognize the Messiah.
- Jesus then speaks of parables directly related to the religious leaders.
 - ▶ The barren fig tree, one with lots of leaves but no fruit.
 - ▶ The two sons, one who said he would go and didn't, but one who said he wouldn't but did.
 - ▶ The landowner, where they were exposed as the one who killed the landowner's son.

Note: At the root of the religious leaders problem with Jesus was authority. In fact, that is the most likely reason some today aren't true followers of Christ. They simply do not want to submit to the authority and Lordship of Christ. Or maybe a better application to these parables would be considered a judgment parable. For three years Jesus has been teaching and preaching the kingdom of God. He has been proclaiming Himself as the Messiah, the Son of God, to His own people, the chosen people of Israel. But at the end of these three years only a handful of Jews had not rejected Him.

The multitudes were amazed and refreshed at His ministry of healing, miracles and teaching. But when all the people (or most of them) began to realize that Jesus wasn't the type of Messiah they wanted, one that would restore the power to themselves and rid the Romans, they turned against Him. Yes, Jesus continued to respond to the Jewish leaders by these parables, explains the truth, which they saw, but yet denied.

POINT 1 - THE INVITATION IS REJECTED (VS. 1-6)

We find that in vs. 3, and 4 a repeated invitation to come. And an important note here in this parable, is that Jesus gave no introduction in the previous two parables, but now He does (vs. 2). This introduction is "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to" was important because the Jews believed it (the kingdom of heaven) was for them exclusively and maybe a few special others, and the audience in the Temple knew He was talking to them.

1A - In the Near East, a wedding feast was inseparable from the wedding itself, which involved a week-long series of meals and festivities and was the highlight of social life.¹ It was elaborate, it was the greatest festivity given by the greatest monarch and the most honored guests were to come.

¹ The John MacArthur New Testament Commentary; Matthew; pp. 305

1B - The text indicates they were already “pre-invited” to the wedding. However, they were unwilling or as it’s translated as well “**would not**” come. The phrase “would not” comes from the idea of “**expressing a negative absolutely, is rendered no.**” For those into etymology a little more it’s root word is “**a primary word, an absolute negative.**” Imagine for a moment what kind of food and festivities and fellowship and prestige you would have been a part of. It was a royal wedding. All of the pomp at the wedding was not what most people ever experienced. Not to come to the wedding was almost indescribable. Matthew Henry makes this observation, “**The reason why sinners come not to Christ and salvation by him is, not because they cannot, but because they will not.**”² John 5:40, “**And you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.**”

1C - The king sent out more servants. And in this invitation he tells of all that has been prepared. The finest oxen and livestock and goods are all ready. Nothing to bring but yourself. It’s all here. Come and dine. Plead with the people to come, it has been prepared.

1D - They responded indifferently, “**they paid no attention**”, as if the wedding was no big deal, and they “**went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business.**” They were so preoccupied with their wealth, satisfaction and self serving ways, they weren’t concerned with the invitation.

1E - Yet another group of men were offended at his invitation, vs. 6, “**and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.**” The wedding feast represented God’s promised blessing to Israel and all in the Temple understood this. The slaves (servants) who again and again invited them to the feast are to be known as John the Baptist, Jesus Himself, the Apostles and all the teachers and preachers and proclaimers to this day. We know this from the point of vs. 1 where the king gave a feast in honor of his son. But John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus was crucified, the Apostles were rejected and killed and persecuted. And today the same rejection applies to those telling others of the great gathering of those who believe.

POINT 2 - JUDGEMENT UPON THOSE WHO REJECTED THE INVITATION (VS. 7-8)

We have a second scene in this parable. This depicts the punishment and judgement of those who rejected the ones inviting them to the wedding feast. The king would have been justified in destroying them after the first invite, but his grace, just like our God, is great. But after repeated invitations his grace transitioned into judgment. In Genesis 6:3, “**My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.**” If for some reason you are waiting and waiting and waiting for the right moment and right time, you may wait too long. Note: keep in mind the anger towards those simply telling them to come to this great wedding feast.

POINT 3 - THE NEW GUESTS ARE INVITED (VS. 9-10)

Go therefore is the command of vs. 9 and the same command Jesus gave in Matthew 28:19, “**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.**” This is a rock solid command that applies today. The church is the sending agent of missionaries and church planters. Just as the king had commanded they went out and invited people to come.

² https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Mat/Mat_022.cfm

3A - The invitation went out to both evil and good or it may be better said “morally evil” and “morally good.” The point is neither, good or evil, could have come to the wedding on their own merits. Even the original guests could not have done this. No one is invited based upon their own personal holiness or standards.

3B - God will only accept those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. We must be reminded of this high and holy standard as outlined in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, “**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.**” No one has enough righteous on their own, and the post thought of hope from 1 Corinthians comes in vs. 11, “**Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.**” It’s Him and His work and righteousness and atonement.

3C - It is faith in the provision of Christ that will make one worthy of being a guest at the great wedding dinner hall. It will be the provision of Christ that makes one worthy of eternal life, never ending joy, never ending hope in the rock of our salvation. It will be the atoning work of the cross, the blood, the resurrection that makes us worthy, not ourselves.

POINT 4- THE HYPOCRITE INTRUDER EXPELLED (VS. 11-14)

4A - The first fact we must note in the man came not properly dressed. He was not a party crasher he simply came improperly dressed. How could anyone be expelled since the king called both good and evil and obviously they didn’t have the proper clothes in their own collection. This seems so unfair. The fact is very clear, although they had nothing to put on, the king provided the attire for them to wear because everyone else had the proper attire. In other words, the king made provision for them.

4C - The king asked a question concerning his failure to put on the attire, “**Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?**”³ Maybe if the man offered a good excuse it would have been understandable. Maybe if someone robbed him of his clothes. Anything to answer the king right? But what does the Scripture tell us? “**And the man was speechless.**”⁴ Note: he could not even offer the kind a lame excuse. Until this point the man assumed he could come to the king’s table on his terms and his clothes and his ideas. It’s no different than our first parents who attempted to cover their sin in Genesis 3:7, “**Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.**” That’s the problem, too many today are making for themselves covering of their sin and not what God has provided.

4D - The judgement of the king was swift and final. The binding of his hand and foot has been noted by some commentators as a symbol of him not being able to refuse removal but also

³ Matthew 22:12a

⁴ Matthew 22:12b

preventing a return. The man was permanently expelled from the presence of the king and the king's people into outer darkness. Ever since Cain's first attempt to do things on man's own terms, men have tried to subvert the requirements of God for salvation. Like tares in the church, many have attended Bible studies, quote Scripture, give to the support of the church, and may even be leaders in the church. But in the day of judgement their hearts will be revealed, as they have fooled man, they won't fool God. And in that day a question may be asked, "How did you come in here without proper wedding clothes?" Man will be speechless as he searches for an adequate excuse.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

The proper wedding garment isn't your works or righteousness or efforts or good thoughts. It is the God-imputed righteousness of the shed blood of Jesus Christ. The hypocrites who thought they could sit at the king's table without the proper attire are to be taken away from the communion of the faithful, to be cut off as withered branches. They shall be taken away from the king, from the kingdom, from the wedding feast, and just as our Lord Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness."⁵ In Isaiah 51:20, "Your sons have fainted, they lie helpless at the head of every street, like an antelope in a net, full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God."

Let me say lastly, the final verse of this parable speaks volumes to the ear deafness, blindness and would not's of those who won't come dressed and clothed in Jesus' righteousness, but their own. If you set aside all the hypocrites, self-righteous, external righteous men, you will find few, very few are chuses, few who believe the truth, few who confess and repent. The gate is narrow and few be there that find it. Why? Because the broad way allows for many faiths, many ideas, many religions, but the narrow gate can only be accessed by what the King (our God) provides. And that is the only perfect and holy and glorious, and merciful blood of His only Son for a means of atonement.

Are you sitting at the King's table clothed in your good works? You will be cast out. You will be exposed. Or do you have on the King's attire? The shed blood of Jesus Christ. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh precious is the flow, that makes me white as snow, no other fount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.

⁵ Matthew 7:23