

The Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14)

Jesus spoke the following parable in the temple courts on the Tuesday of Holy Week. Although the parable was addressed to Israel's unbelieving spiritual leaders, its message about sinful history from the fall to judgment day is timeless.

1 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. 4 Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ 5 But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. 6 The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. 7 The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. 8 “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. 9 Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ 10 So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, both good and bad, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. 12 ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless. 13 Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 14 “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

1. In Jesus' parable, whom do the king and his son represent?
2. After reading the following passage, describe the banquet table that God has prepared for all people. What does it cost to have a seat?

“On this mountain the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine—the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. In that day they will say, ‘Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation’” (Isaiah 25:6-9).

3. Comment on the responses of those who were invited first to the king's wedding banquet. How were the responses like those of the Jews in Jesus' day? Like those of many people today?

4. After having had his invitation treated with such contempt, the king, nonetheless, continued to extend invitations to his son's wedding. Why? Whom do those on the "street corners" represent?

5. Kings and nobles of Jesus' day would honor invited guests by generously supplying them with beautiful garments to be worn at the wedding. After reading the following passages, explain Jesus' words about the man without "wedding clothes" by completing the paragraph below.*

"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6).

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27).

The man without "wedding clothes" represents anyone who seeks to enter the great wedding feast of heaven robed in his own " _____ " or _____. Defiled by _____, these acts are detestable " _____ " in the eyes of a God who is absolutely _____. God himself offers and supplies, free of charge, the acceptable attire for his banquet. By _____ in Jesus as _____, God robes us in Jesus' perfect _____. Those who by _____ reject this dress insult God and, covered only in their sin, will be _____.

6. How do each of the following serve as a foretaste of God's heavenly wedding banquet?

- The Lord's Supper
- The union between a husband and wife

7. What added thoughts about God's heavenly wedding feast are found in the following passage?

"I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem [the holy Christian church], coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away' " (Revelation 21:2-4).

* (5) righteous acts . . . good works . . . sin . . . filthy rags . . . holy . . . faith . . . Savior . . . righteousness . . . unbelief . . . condemned