

The Gospel of Matthew, Teacher's Guide

Lesson 27: The Wedding Feast; Questions and Traps

Matthew 22:1-46

Teaching Aim (Teacher Orientation)

This chapter is rich with doctrine because Jesus, in His final public debates, lays out truth on nearly every front. The parable of the wedding feast teaches the breadth of the gospel invitation, now thrown open to all nations, and at the same time its seriousness: the call goes out widely, but one must come clothed in the righteousness God provides, for many are called but few are chosen. Then in three encounters Jesus settles foundational truths: our distinct duties to civil government and to God; the reality of the resurrection grounded in the living God who is God of the patriarchs still; and the heart of the whole law in loving God and neighbor. Finally He raises the deepest question of all, how the Christ can be both David's son and David's Lord, pointing to His own identity as more than merely human. Help your class see these are not disconnected debates but a single revelation of who God is and who Jesus is.

Yet the chapter is not merely a doctrinal seminar; it presses hard on the heart. The first-invited guests are a warning to everyone whose religion has cooled into respectable busyness. The man without the garment is a warning against presuming on grace without being clothed in Christ. The question about Caesar searches our divided loyalties. The Sadducees' small view of God exposes our own. Every debate in this chapter is also a mirror. Teach so that your students do not merely admire how Jesus won each exchange but feel the truth coming to rest on their own lives.

So aim at both. Send your class home with a clearer grasp of the wideness and the seriousness of the gospel, the proper place of government, the certainty of the resurrection, the great commandment, and the deity of the Christ. And send them home examined: are they truly coming to the feast, clothed in His righteousness, giving to God what belongs to God, loving Him with everything, and bowing to Jesus as David's Lord?

Question 1

Student Question:

In the parable, the king prepares a great feast for his son and sends servants to call the invited guests, who simply will not come (vv. 1-6). What is Jesus teaching about God's gracious invitation and the seriousness of refusing it?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Open by setting the scene of the parable in verses 1 through 6. A king prepares a wedding feast for his son, the grandest celebration a kingdom could offer. In that culture, to be invited to the

royal wedding was the highest honor imaginable, and to refuse was a deliberate insult to the king and his son. Yet the invited guests “would not come” (v. 3), and when called again, “they paid no attention and went off” (v. 5).

Help your class feel the offense. This is not a small slight. The king has spared no expense; everything is ready (v. 4). The refusal is not because the feast is unappealing but because the guests value other things more. Some are merely indifferent; others turn violent, seizing and killing the servants (v. 6). Jesus is portraying how God’s own people had treated the prophets and were now treating His servants and His Son.

Draw out the seriousness of refusing the invitation. We tend to imagine that ignoring God is a neutral, harmless thing, that the danger is only in active rebellion. But the parable shows that polite indifference is itself an insult to the King and brings real consequence; the king was angry and acted (v. 7). To shrug off the gospel invitation is not safe.

Then lift their eyes to the grace of it. The astonishing thing is not that the king is offended but that he invited them at all, and that even after refusal he keeps the feast open. The God of heaven invites rebels to celebrate the wedding of His Son. The invitation itself is sheer grace, and to treat it casually is to despise that grace.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The gospel as a gracious invitation from God to share in the joy of His Son
- The seriousness and real consequence of refusing or ignoring God’s call
- Indifference, not only open rebellion, as a rejection of the King
- The mistreatment of God’s servants as a pattern throughout redemptive history

Discussion Prompts

- Why is indifference to the gospel as serious as open rebellion?
- What does it reveal about God that He invites rebels to His Son’s feast?
- How do you guard against treating God’s grace as something casual?

Question 2

Student Question:

The first guests rejected the call not by hating the king but by being too busy with a farm and a business (v. 5). Where is ordinary, respectable busyness keeping you from fully answering God’s call on your life?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self question fastens on a single, searching detail of verse 5: the guests went off, “one to his farm, another to his business.” Note that these are not wicked pursuits. A farm and a business

are good and ordinary things. The tragedy is that good things became reasons to refuse the best thing.

Help your students see how respectable this kind of refusal is. No one in the parable curses the king to his face. They simply have other priorities, real responsibilities, legitimate concerns. This is how most of us drift from God, not by a dramatic renunciation but by a thousand small choices that put the farm and the business ahead of the feast.

Press the question into specific places. For one person the farm is a career; for another it is family logistics, hobbies, screens, side projects, the endless to-do list. The question is not whether these things are good but whether they have quietly taken the place that belongs to God's call. Busyness is the socially acceptable way to say no.

Offer hope and a way forward. The remedy is not to abandon the farm and the business but to dethrone them, to put the King's invitation first and let everything else find its proper place beneath it. Help your students name one area where they need to reorder their priorities this week.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The danger of good things crowding out the best thing (Luke 10:38–42)
- Busyness as a respectable form of refusing God
- The need to order all lawful pursuits beneath the call of God
- Priorities as a true revelation of what we love most

Discussion Prompts

- What good things in your life most easily crowd out your response to God?
- How can you tell when a legitimate pursuit has taken God's rightful place?
- What is one priority you need to reorder this week?

Question 3

Student Question:

When the invited refuse, the king sends servants into the streets to gather everyone they can find, "both bad and good" (vv. 9–10). What does this turn in the parable teach about how far and wide the gospel call now goes, and to whom?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question turns to the great pivot of the parable in verses 8 through 10. When the invited guests prove unworthy, the king tells his servants, "Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find." And they gather "all whom they found, both bad and good," until the wedding hall is filled.

Help your class hear the gospel in this turn. The invitation that first went to one people now goes out to everyone. This is the missionary heart of God, the same move Jesus will command in the Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). The doors are flung open to the highways, to the unlikely, the overlooked, the outsider.

Dwell on the phrase “both bad and good.” The servants do not screen the crowd for worthiness; they invite everyone they meet. The gospel call is genuinely universal; it goes to the respectable and the disreputable alike. No one is too far gone to be invited, and no one is so good that they do not need the invitation.

Connect this to the church Christ is building, a people gathered from every nation and background, filling the hall the first-invited refused. Let your students marvel that the invitation reached them, and challenge them to carry it outward. The same servants who gathered the guests are a picture of every Christian sent to invite others to the feast.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The universal scope of the gospel call to all nations (Matthew 28:19; Acts 10:34–35)
- The genuine, sincere offer of the gospel to everyone, bad and good alike
- The church as a people gathered from every background to honor the Son
- Every Christian as a servant sent to extend the invitation

Discussion Prompts

- How does it move you that the invitation reached someone like you?
- Who are the people on the highways and hedges that God may be sending you to invite?
- Why is it important that the call goes to both bad and good?

Question 4

Student Question:

The hall is filled with all kinds of people, the kind religious folk might never expect to see at the King’s feast (v. 10). Is there anyone you have quietly written off as beyond God’s invitation, and how does this parable challenge that?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self question builds directly on the “both bad and good” of verse 10. Having seen how wide the invitation is, students now must ask whether their own hearts are as wide as the King’s. We readily celebrate that grace reached us, while quietly assuming it could never reach certain others.

Help your class surface the people they have written off. We all keep a private list, often unspoken: the relative who mocks our faith, the coworker whose lifestyle offends us, the person

whose past we cannot imagine God forgiving, the group we have decided is hopeless. The parable confronts that list directly; the King's servants gathered everyone.

Be tender but honest. Writing someone off is partly self-protection and partly pride, a quiet sense that we belong at the feast and they do not. But every guest in that hall was an undeserving invitee, gathered off the street. There are no first-class guests at this wedding; all are there by the same grace.

Move toward concrete love. Ask each student to name one person they have inwardly excluded and one small way they could extend the invitation, a prayer, a conversation, an act of kindness, a refusal to give up on them. The proof that we believe the gospel is wide is that we treat people as God does.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The breadth of God's grace as a rebuke to our narrow hearts
- The pride that assumes we belong and others do not
- Loving and inviting the very people we are tempted to exclude
- Every believer present at the feast by the same undeserved grace

Discussion Prompts

- Who have you quietly assumed is beyond God's reach?
- What does it reveal in us when we write certain people off?
- What is one way you could extend the invitation to that person this week?

Question 5

Student Question:

The king finds a man without a wedding garment and casts him out, and Jesus says, "many are called, but few are chosen" (vv. 11-14). What is the wedding garment, why can no one come without it, and what does this teach about the difference between merely being invited and truly being ready?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This question takes up the sobering close of the parable in verses 11 through 14. When the hall is full, the king comes in and notices a man "who had no wedding garment." He asks how the man got in, and the man is speechless. The king has him bound and cast into the outer darkness, and Jesus seals it: "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Address the obvious puzzle. If the man was gathered off the street, how could he be expected to have a wedding garment? In that culture, a host of such a feast provided the proper garments for his guests; refusing to wear it was a deliberate insult, a determination to come on one's own terms. The man wanted the feast without submitting to the King's provision.

Now teach what the garment means. Scripture pictures salvation as being clothed: God clothes His people “with the garments of salvation” and “the robe of righteousness” (Isaiah 61:10); the redeemed are arrayed in fine linen, “the righteous deeds of the saints” (Revelation 19:8). The garment is the righteousness God Himself provides in Christ, put on by all who truly come to Him in faith and obedience. Paul says those baptized into Christ “have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:27). One cannot come to the feast dressed in his own merits; he must be clothed in what the King supplies.

Then explain the difference between being called and being chosen. The invitation went to many; the hall was full. But being present is not the same as being clothed. It is possible to be in the crowd of the called, even in the church, and yet refuse to be clothed in Christ, to want the benefits of the feast without submission to the King. ‘Few are chosen’ is not a denial of the wide call; it is a warning that the call must be answered rightly, by truly putting on Christ. Lead your class to examine whether they have merely accepted the invitation or have actually put on the garment He provides.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The wedding garment as the righteousness God provides in Christ (Isaiah 61:10; Revelation 19:8)
- Putting on Christ in baptism and faith as the way we are clothed (Galatians 3:27)
- The difference between being among the called and being truly ready and chosen
- The genuine universal call answered rightly, not Calvinist unconditional election
- The danger of wanting the feast without submitting to the King’s terms

Discussion Prompts

- What does it mean to come to God clothed in the righteousness He provides?
- How is it possible to be among the called yet not truly ready?
- Have you put on Christ, or are you trying to come on your own terms?

Question 6

Student Question:

Coming to the feast clothed in what the King provides means more than a casual response to grace; it means being genuinely dressed in His righteousness. How are you tending to your own readiness for the King, rather than presuming on the invitation?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self question follows the garment imagery into daily life. The man who lacked the garment had grown careless; he presumed the feast would receive him as he was. The question for your students is whether they are actively tending their readiness for the King or quietly presuming on grace.

Clarify what tending readiness means, so it does not slide into earning salvation. We are clothed in Christ's righteousness as a gift; we do not weave the garment ourselves. But the New Testament everywhere calls the clothed to keep the garment unspotted, to "put on the new self" daily (Colossians 3:10–14), to walk worthy of the calling. Readiness is the ongoing, grateful response of those already clothed.

Help your class see the danger of presumption. Because grace is free, it is easy to drift into spiritual carelessness, assuming our standing with God needs no attention. But Scripture warns that Christians can fall away and must remain faithful (Hebrews 3:12–14). The garment, once put on, is to be kept on through a life of ongoing faith and obedience.

Make it practical. What does tending readiness look like this week, in prayer, in repentance from a known sin, in the Lord's Supper, in obedience? Ask each student to name one concrete way they will tend their walk with the King rather than presume upon it.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Readiness as the grateful, ongoing response of those clothed in Christ (Colossians 3:10–14)
- The danger of presuming on grace and growing spiritually careless
- The need to remain faithful, since Christians can fall away (Hebrews 3:12–14)
- Keeping the garment unspotted through a life of obedience

Discussion Prompts

- Where have you been presuming on grace rather than tending your walk?
- What is one concrete way you can keep your garment unspotted this week?
- How is tending readiness different from trying to earn salvation?

Question 7

Student Question:

The Pharisees and Herodians try to trap Jesus on taxes, and He answers, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (vv. 15–21). How does this answer order our duties to government and to God, and what belongs to God that can never be given to Caesar?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Now the traps begin. In verses 15 through 22 the Pharisees join with the Herodians, ordinarily bitter rivals, to spring a question on taxes. It is a perfect snare. If Jesus says pay the tax to Caesar, He alienates the patriotic crowds who hate Roman rule; if He says do not pay, He can be reported to Rome as a rebel. They flatter Him first (v. 16), which only exposes their insincerity.

Watch the brilliance of His answer. He asks for a coin, the denarius, and asks whose image and inscription it bears. "Caesar's," they say. Then comes the famous reply: "Render to Caesar the

things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (v. 21). The coin bears Caesar's image, so let Caesar have his coin; but the deeper claim hangs in the air.

Draw out the ordering of our duties. Jesus affirms a real, God-given place for civil government; Christians pay taxes and honor governing authorities (Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–17). Faith does not make us lawless. There is a sphere that legitimately belongs to Caesar, and we render it without grumbling.

But press the second half, which is the heart of it. If the coin bears Caesar's image and so belongs to Caesar, what bears God's image? We do. Human beings are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and so we belong wholly to Him. Caesar may have his coin; God must have our very selves. There are limits to Caesar's claim that never apply to God's. Help your class see that whole-life surrender to God is the unspoken climax of Jesus' answer.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The God-given, limited role of civil government (Romans 13:1–7; 1 Peter 2:13–17)
- The Christian's duty to pay taxes and honor authorities
- The image of God on every person as the ground of belonging wholly to Him (Genesis 1:27)
- The limits of Caesar's claim and the totality of God's claim on our lives

Discussion Prompts

- What rightly belongs to Caesar, and how do you render it faithfully?
- What belongs to God that can never be given to any earthly power?
- Where do your loyalties to country and to God need to be reordered?

Question 8

Student Question:

Jesus told the trappers, "You know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God" (v. 29). Where might a shallow grasp of Scripture or a small view of God's power be limiting your own faith, and how can you grow in both?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This self question draws on Jesus' rebuke to the Sadducees in verse 29: "You are wrong, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God." Their error came from a double poverty, an ignorance of what God had actually said and a too-small view of what God could do.

Help your students see how common this double poverty is. Much weak faith grows in exactly this soil. We do not know the Scriptures well, so our beliefs are vague and easily shaken; and we have shrunk God down to the size of our own experience, so we do not expect Him to do what He has promised. The Sadducees could not imagine resurrection because they neither searched the Scriptures carefully nor reckoned with God's power.

Press the question gently into their own lives. Where is a thin grasp of Scripture leaving them confused or unstable? Where has a small view of God's power capped their faith, in prayer, in hope for a wayward loved one, in the face of suffering or death? Often we are discouraged simply because we have forgotten both what God has said and what God can do.

Then point to the remedy. Both poverties have the same cure: drawing near to God through His Word. The more we know the Scriptures, the larger our God becomes, and the larger our God, the more our faith can rest. Encourage one concrete step, a plan to read, a passage to memorize, a habit of carrying God's promises into prayer.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The authority and sufficiency of Scripture for faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16–17)
- The danger of weak faith rooted in ignorance of the Word
- A small view of God's power as a limit on faith and hope
- Growing in knowledge of Scripture as the path to a larger view of God

Discussion Prompts

- Where is a thin grasp of Scripture leaving your faith unsteady?
- Where has a small view of God's power capped your hope?
- What is one concrete step to grow in both this week?

Question 9

Student Question:

When the Sadducees deny the resurrection, Jesus answers, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not God of the dead, but of the living" (vv. 31–32). What does Jesus reveal here about the resurrection, the living God, and then about His own identity when He asks how the Christ can be both David's son and David's Lord (vv. 41–46)?

Commentary and Teaching Notes

This is the heaviest doctrinal question of the lesson, gathering two of Jesus' greatest answers, so take your time. First the Sadducees, who denied any resurrection, pose an absurd riddle about a woman married to seven brothers in turn (vv. 23–28), hoping to make resurrection look ridiculous. Jesus corrects their whole frame: in the resurrection people "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven" (v. 30). Resurrection life is real but transformed, not merely a return to earthly arrangements.

Then Jesus proves the resurrection itself from Scripture, in a way the Sadducees, who prized the books of Moses, could not dodge. God said to Moses at the burning bush, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6), and Jesus reasons, "He is not God of the dead, but of the living" (v. 32). The patriarchs had died centuries before, yet God

still calls Himself their God in the present tense. They live to Him; therefore the dead will be raised. The living God binds Himself in covenant to His people, and that bond is not severed by the grave.

Then comes the climax of the whole chapter, when Jesus stops answering and asks. In verses 41 through 46 He poses His own question to the Pharisees: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They answer rightly, "The son of David." Then Jesus quotes Psalm 110:1, where David, speaking by the Spirit, calls the Messiah "Lord": "The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at my right hand.'" And He presses the riddle home: "If then David calls him Lord, how is he his son?" (v. 45).

Unfold what Jesus is teaching about Himself. The Christ is indeed David's descendant, truly human, the son of David. But David, the great king, calls this descendant his Lord, which no father would say of a mere son. The only resolution is that the Christ is more than merely human; He is David's son according to the flesh and David's Lord according to His deity, the eternal Son enthroned at God's right hand. This is the same exaltation Peter proclaims at Pentecost, that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ, seated at His right hand (Acts 2:34-36).

Let your class feel the weight of it. The Sadducees' debate ends with the living God who holds His people beyond death; the Pharisees' debate ends with the Christ who is David's Lord, reigning at God's right hand now. Both point to the same towering truth: Jesus is no mere teacher to be tested but the divine Lord to be worshiped. 'No one was able to answer him a word' (v. 46), and the only fitting response left to us is to bow.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- The reality of the resurrection, transformed and not merely a return to earthly life (v. 30)
- The living God who remains God of the patriarchs, proving the dead are raised (Exodus 3:6; v. 32)
- God's covenant bond with His people unbroken by death
- The Christ as both David's son in the flesh and David's Lord in His deity (Psalm 110:1)
- Jesus more than merely human: the eternal Son enthroned at God's right hand (Acts 2:34-36)
- Jesus as the divine Lord to be worshiped, not a teacher to be tested

Discussion Prompts

- How does 'the God of the living' shape your hope in the face of death?
- Why can the Christ not be merely human if David calls him Lord?
- What changes when you approach Jesus as Lord to be worshiped rather than tested?

Question 10

Student Question:

Look back across the whole chapter, the feast, the garment, and the answers that silenced every challenger. Name one specific way the King who answers every question is forming your response to His invitation, your readiness, or your worship this week.

Commentary and Teaching Notes

Use this capstone to gather the whole chapter and press it home. Matthew 22 has given us the wide and serious invitation of the feast, the necessity of the wedding garment, the proper place of Caesar and the total claim of God, the certainty of the resurrection in the living God, the heart of the law in love, and the towering identity of the Christ as David's Lord. The aim now is transformation, not more information.

Notice how the chapter ends: "nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions" (v. 46). The challengers fell silent. The right response to the One who answers every question and silences every challenge is not another test but surrender. Help your students move from spectators of these debates to worshipers of the King.

Invite each person to be specific. Where in this chapter did the Lord meet them? Is it the busyness crowding out the feast, the readiness they have been presuming on, the loyalty that belongs wholly to God, the small view of His power, or the call to bow before Jesus as Lord? Give them a quiet moment to name one truth and one response.

Close in worship. The God who is God of the living, the Christ who is David's Lord, has invited people like us to His Son's wedding feast and clothed us in His own righteousness. Let obedience this week flow from amazement that we were ever invited at all, and from the joy of belonging to the King no one could answer.

Doctrinal / Christian Living Issues

- Surrender, not further testing, as the right response to the Lord
- The integration of doctrine with daily transformation
- Specific, concrete obedience as the fruit of encountering Christ
- Worship and gratitude as the proper motive for the Christian life

Discussion Prompts

- Which truth from Matthew 22 most needs to take root in your heart?
- What single, concrete response will you make this week?
- How can this class pray for you as you respond?