

The Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 27: The Wedding Feast; Questions and Traps -- Matthew 22:1-46

It is the last week before the cross, and the tension in Jerusalem is electric. Jesus has cleansed the temple and told parables that left the religious leaders fuming. Now He tells one more, and it is a wedding. A king throws a feast for his son, and the invitations go out. But the guests who were invited will not come. They are too busy, too distracted, too indifferent. One goes to his farm, another to his business, and some even seize the king's servants and kill them (vv. 5-6). A wedding feast, the happiest occasion imaginable, and the invited guests cannot be bothered to come.

So the king does something startling. He sends his servants into the streets and tells them to gather everyone they can find, "both bad and good" (v. 10), until the wedding hall is filled with guests. The party will happen. The Son will be honored. If the first-invited will not come, the doors are thrown open to whoever will. This is the gospel in a single image: the invitation that was first given to one people now goes out to all the world, to the highways and hedges, to anyone who will come.

But the parable has a sting in its tail. The king comes in and finds a man with no wedding garment, and the man is speechless, then cast out (vv. 11-13). The invitation is free, but it is not casual. One must come clothed in what the King provides, dressed in the righteousness He gives, ready for the feast. And Jesus ends with words that should make every heart sit up: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (v. 14). The call goes out widely; the question is whether we will truly come, and come rightly.

The rest of the chapter is a series of traps. The Pharisees, the Herodians, and the Sadducees take turns trying to catch Jesus in His words, on taxes, on the resurrection, on the law. And one by one He turns their traps into windows that let in the light: render to Caesar and to God, the God of the living and not the dead, love God and love your neighbor. Then He turns the tables entirely with a question of His own: whose son is the Christ? By the end, no one dares to ask Him anything more (v. 46). Come and watch the King handle every challenge, and let His answers go to work in you.

Group Discussion: In the parable of the wedding feast, the king's invitation first goes to those who refuse it, and then is thrown open to everyone the servants can find, "both bad and good" (v. 10). What does this picture teach you about how wide the gospel invitation really is, and who today might assume they are not the kind of person God would invite?

Personal Reflection: The first-invited guests did not openly hate the king; they simply had other things to do, a farm, a business, the ordinary busyness of life (vv. 5-6). Where is the steady, respectable busyness of your own life quietly crowding out your response to God's invitation?

Read Matthew 22:1-46

Study Questions

1. 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?
2. 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?
3. 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?
4. 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?
5. 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?
6. 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?

7. 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?
8. 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?
9. 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)?
10. 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.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Isaiah 61:10, being clothed with the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness; Revelation 19:7–9, the marriage supper of the Lamb and the bride clothed in fine linen; Romans 13:7, render to all what is owed, taxes to whom taxes are due; Exodus 3:6, 15, God revealing Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; Deuteronomy 6:4–5, the call to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and might.