

**Sermon title:** Invitation to a royal wedding banquet

**Sermon text:** Matt 22:1 – 3

## **Introduction**

1. This is a very familiar parable.
2. This is a series on the Kingdom of God in the Gospel of Matthew.
3. The points of the parable are clear/obvious:
  - a. Do not reject the invitation to a royal wedding banquet.
  - b. Do not reject the royal clothes for the wedding banquet.
4. Today, I would like to explain the key details so that the parable is more impactful.

## **Interpretative keys to this Parable**

### 1. Literary device: The Rule of Three

The first two examples set up the pattern.

The third example is the punch line, unexpected twist, surprise ending, key point etc

### 2. Symbolisms:

a. king :: God

b. slaves :: OT prophets

c. invitees :: Jewish leaders

d. man without wedding clothes :: those who deliberately shame God by refusing His provision

e. good and evil people :: Jews and Gentiles

Jesus spoke to **them** again in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup> “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.

1. This parable is directed at “**them**” – the religious leaders (Matt 21:45).
2. “kingdom of heaven is like” – means “I have to use something you know to describe/explain something you do not know”.
3. This is slightly different from the parable of the ten bridesmaids.  
In this passage, the emphasis is on:
  - a. the king’s invitation
  - b. his servants spreading the invitation
  - c. the invited guests who reject the invitation
  - d. the good and evil persons who accept the invitation

<sup>3</sup> He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

1. This is the first invitation.

2. For many, a royal invitation to the prince's wedding would be a once-in-a-lifetime event.

3. This is the highest possible honour bestowed to those nearest and dearest to the king.

4. This is extremely shameful reaction from the invitees.

5. Normally, those nearest and dearest to you are invited first. (Just like today).

<sup>4</sup> “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.’

Notice the elaborate dinner menu – “oxen and fattened cattle” – animals which were specifically fed and in prime condition.

(Just like today; Kobe beef is a sub-set of Wagyu beef).

This is the second invitation.

<sup>5</sup> “But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. <sup>6</sup> The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them.

a. This is an even more shameful reaction from the invitees.

b. The first group of invitees did not even bother to respond – choosing to engage in their own selfish activities (i.e. field and business).

c. The second group of invitees attacked and killed the king’s servants/messengers.

d. Jesus uses this parable to directly accuse the religious leaders for their shameful actions. Jesus’ intention is to completely shame the Jewish leaders and their predecessors.

<sup>7</sup> The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

1. Seeing how his servants were treated,

a. the king was enraged

b. the king sent his army to destroy the murderers

c. the king sent his army to burn their city

2. You might think that this was an over-reaction; yet, the king's reaction was completely justified.

3. The king's reaction was proportional to the dishonour the invitees heaped on the king.

4. Jesus' point: God is not impotent. God is an honoured Person and will fight to restore His honour.

<sup>8</sup> “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. <sup>9</sup> So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ <sup>10</sup> So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

The king’s rationale:

a. Since those who are nearest and dearest to me have been invited twice and twice they have humiliated me, go out and invite anyone.

b. Go to the street corners and invite everyone. Poor, undeserving people are unlikely to refuse a royal invitation to attend the prince’s wedding.

c. Examples of the “bad” : Zaccheaus (Jew) tax collector (Lk 19), Samaritan woman (half Jew) at the well (Jn 4), Syrophoenesian woman (Gentile) (Matt 15:22),).



<sup>11</sup> “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. <sup>12</sup> He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

a. In ancient times, it was common for the king to provide all the invitees with the wedding clothes – e.g. Armani suit.

(Just like today – Groom and Bride providing clothes for their groomsmen and bridesmaid).

b. During the wedding feast, the guests were expected to wear the wedding clothes. (Just like today).

c. This means that the “good and evil persons” also had the royal issued wedding (Armani) clothes. In addition, these “good and evil persons” were wearing the royal issued wedding (Armani) clothes.

d. Jesus selects a familiar OT picture – Joshua in Zech 3.

The clothes are an outward picture of the person's inward condition.

I.e. dirty clothes (external) is a picture of the person's sinful (internal) condition.

The clean clothes (external) is a picture of the person's righteous (internal) condition.

“dirty clothes” – Zech 3:3 and “clean clothes” – Zech 3:4b

e. The king had offered to clothe the man with an Armani suit. But the man refused to wear the royal Armani suit provided by the king; therefore, he deliberately shamed the king.

f. Jesus is painting a picture of a person (or the Jewish religious leaders) who deliberately rejects God's forgiveness of sin.

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. The consequences of:

+ rejecting the royal invitation

+ refusing to wear the royal clothes and shaming the king

2. “tie him hand and foot” – so that it is impossible for him to escape.

3. “outside” – in context, everyone wanted to be on the “inside” because inside means safety and acceptance by the community.

Therefore, to be “outside” is to be without safety and rejection of the community.

4. “weeping and gnashing of teeth” – a place of suffering and torment.

# Summary

## Invitation to the Royal Wedding Banquet

Exhortation 1 – Don't be like those who are overly concerned with selfish ambition to accept God's invitation today.

Exhortation 2 – Don't be like the one who deliberately rejected the royal issued wedding clothes and deliberately shamed the king.

Exhortation 3 – Warning to those who reject the royal invitation.

The consequences of rejecting the royal invitation is eternal – a place of eternal suffering & torment.

Exhortation 4 – Those who accept the royal invitation enjoy the wedding banquet. There is no suffering; only joy and blessing.