

The King Wants You at This Banquet!

- Imagine: you're a peasant, living in hut w/extndd fam. You work a few acres/land, raising crops & small lvstck. You cook outside, eat outside, sleep on grnd. Life is hard! You plow land & sow seed w/own hnds. You spin own wool, stich own clths, bake own brd. Your back aches fr your work; you give birth lying/straw; and during drought/famine you know pain/hunger. One day as working, see team horsemen galloping twrd you w/king's banners flailing in wind; think: this can't be good. But instd of commndng tax \$, the herald unrolls scroll, addrsses you by name, proclaims: "King hereby reqsts honor/presnc at wed bnqt for son, crwn prince. No expense been spared for celbrtn, and your entire fam is invited attend as special guests of royal fam." IOW, king wants you at this bnqt!
- There's 2 ways you can react to this invttn. 1) Be amazed, thrilled, excited, honored be invited, thankful for opprtnty, grateful for genrsty. You can't wait go; circle on calendar; count days; make all preprtns; prioritize this above evthng else. OR) Blow it off; not interested; "not worth my time; I've got better things do." So you turn down royal invttn, either bec hate king, or just have other priorities. You make decision to dishonor, disrespect, disregard king by not attending his banquet.
- Those: 2 reactions to Gos that J contrsts in prbl wed bnqt. 3rd/3 prbls J tells on Tues/HW, tog w/prbl 2 sons (2 wks ago), and prbl/tenants (last wk). J is spkng ~48 before Last Supper, in final momnts before Passion. And it was these 3 prbls that pushed Phrs over edge, finly convncd them put J to dth – bec in all 3 prbls, J is calling them out for their hypcrsy and for rejecting him as Son/God.
- In this prbl, of wed bnqt, king: Lord; son: J; srvnts who spread invttn & get killed for it: prphts. And wed bnqt: kngdm/God, messianic bnqt. It's the peace/grace/frgvns/blssdnss of being in HCC as baptzd bel in Xp J. This bnqt is experncd perfly in hvn, but also enjoyed even now on earth by Xians, who have peace of God that transcnds undrstndng. Scrptr describes kngdm/God as a bnqt/feast, in many diff places – like 1st rdng, Isa 25: **"On this mnt the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all ppls, a bnqt of aged wine, the best/meats and the finest/wines"** (6). Or Isa 55: **"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk w/o money and w/o cost... Listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest/fare"** (1-2). Or fr bk/Rev: **"Blessed are those who are invited to the wed supper/Lamb!"** (19:9). When God describes peace/joy/blssdnss of being connctd to J as member of his HCC, in his kngdm, here on earth or in hvn, he often compares it to a lavish meal, like a wed bnqt.
- And notice 2 things re this meal: 1) It's free; there's no cost to you; paid in full by host, as a gracious gift. The king: **vs. 4b "I have prepared..."** His free invttn! And 2) This meal is for evone! It's: a **"feast of rich foods for all ppl."** The invttn is extended to whole wrld; no one excluded. The srvnts are sent **"out into the streets and gathrd all the ppl they could find."** The Lord wants his Ch/hvn full of ppl, incl you! The king wants you at this bnqt!
- But the sad reality: so many ppl reject this invttn! **Vs. 5-7.** And while true that these vss fulfilld primly by Phars/Jews who rejctd/killd J, and by Rom armies that destrdyd city Jrslm in AD 70, nvrthlss when we ponder this prbl, we have to ask selves: how do I react to God's gracious invttn? Do I honor, respect, prioritize this invttn? Or not? Here's a test: what is most imp to you in life? Spouse, kids, fam, job, home, health? Field or business? All of these are good, but all of these are idols, if they become more imp to you than Xp. The invttn in this prbl is to a reltnshp w/Xp, by faith, that trusts in him as Sav fr sin, Son/God, and most imp aspect of life. For Xians, there is nothing more imp in this world than being connctd to J. And here we have before us an invttn fr God to bel that CJ has taken all our sins upon self & has rescued us fr their etrnal punshmnt in hell by endurng that punshmnt for us, in our place, on cross.



It's an invitation to believe that through Jesus for dead we have a resurrection that awaits us. And again, this invitation is free (no cost to you; Jesus paid for everything); and it's for everyone, including you personally. The king wants you at this banquet! He wants to honor you by bringing you into his palace! But also wants you to honor/prioritize this invitation/Gospel above everything else in life, even family/kids. So again, what is most important to you in your life, and how are you prioritizing that when it comes to worship participation, Bible study attendance, church membership, Christian living? If this parable convicts you & helps you to see what you've prioritized above Jesus and your faith in him, then I think this parable's doing exactly what Jesus intended it to do.

- Now, there is a 2nd scene, a part 2, to this parable, but it really teaches the same thing as part 1. Once the wedding hall is filled, the king finds a guest not wearing wedding clothes. **Vs. 12-13.** What's the deal here? Some kind of super strict dress code? No, this is a parable, so not talking about literal clothes. The wedding clothes represent faith/Jesus. What gets you into heaven: faith/Jesus; what keeps you out/heaven: having no faith/Jesus. This man: unbeliever; he dishonors, disrespects the king just as much as the 1st group, but instead of outright rejecting the invitation, this man comes to the banquet without wedding clothes; comes to Jesus without faith. He's a hypocrite; fakes it (a lot like 2 weeks ago, when the son agreed to work in the field but then never went; faked it). And fake faith is no faith. Like I said in sermon 2 weeks ago: God wants fake followers as much as you want fake friends.
- So the warning in both parts of this parable: God wants committed, genuine followers who treasure his Gospel invitation above everything else. And that makes me shudder, because I recognize all my own misplaced priorities, all the times I've let an idol rise above Jesus in my heart, and all my own personal hypocrisy. Do you recognize those things in yourself? Spend a little time considering your own misplaced priorities, your idolatry, your hypocrisy. And I think together we'll find that we deserve to be thrown out of the banquet into darkness, as well.
- But there is one great truth that remains unchanged: the king wants you at this banquet! He's inviting, encouraging, begging you to come! He wants you seated by and celebrating with the crown prince, Jesus himself. And Jesus gave his life on the cross to get you on the guest list. So how will you respond? Faith in Jesus says, "Yes: I believe this banquet is for me; my Lord wants me there, despite my sin; I believe in Jesus as my Savior; I repent of finding an excuse after an excuse for not making Jesus my highest priority; I repent of all my misplaced priorities; Lord, there is nowhere I'd rather be than at your banquet. Thank you for inviting me."

Matthew 22:1-14

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. ³He 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. ⁶The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. ⁷The 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. ⁹So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ ¹⁰So 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.

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