

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

Matt. 22:1-14

Introduction:

1. Matt. 22:1 says, "Jesus spoke to them again in parables."
2. A parable is a simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson.
3. The word itself means "to cast alongside." Jesus' parables were stories "cast alongside" a spiritual truth.
4. Such analogies or comparisons were used to rivet the attention and call on the hearers for reflection.
5. One of the characteristic traits of parables is that their message is not spelled out explicitly, but implied. And so, the hearer is called on to determine the message and apply it to him/her self.
6. First, let's consider the context, then we will read the parable and after that I want to make six observations about it.

Discussion:

I. This parable is not told in isolation.

- A. Matthew sets it in the historical setting following Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
 1. Some are proclaiming Jesus the Son of David. They see Him as the promised King (21:5-11).
 2. Others have challenged His authority and are rejecting Him.
- B. The parable of the wedding feast is the third in a series.
 1. Two sons were told to work in the vineyard. One said, "I will not," but regretted it and went." The other said, "I will," but did not go. Tax collectors and prostitutes were the first son. The chief priests and the Pharisees were the second.
 2. A landowner planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers. When it came time for the landowner to receive his produce the vine-growers beat one of his slaves, killed another and stoned a third. When he sent his son they killed him in order to seize his inheritance.
- C. Jesus quoted Psa. 118:22f: "The stone which the builders rejected, this became the chief corner stone." He was the stone that the chief priests and Pharisees rejected. And now He said, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing the fruit of it" (Matt. 21:42-43).

II. Reading of Matt. 22:1-10.

III. Six observations about the parable of the wedding feast.

A. **God is often portrayed as a king in Scripture.**

1. One of the early instances of this is in 1 Sam. 8.
 - a. Israel did not have an earthly ruler like the nations around them did.
 - b. They came to Samuel, the prophet, complaining that he was too old and asked him to appoint a king to judge us like all the nations.

- c. Samuel believed that they had rejected him, but God said, “They have rejected Me from being king over them.”
 - d. This was a radical turn for the people. They had turned from God as sovereign and looked to the nations for their model of rulership.
 - 2. God gave them an earthly king, but did not abdicate His position as Sovereign Ruler. He expected the kings and the people to recognize Him as their ultimate ruler. Indeed, through His prophets He appointed the earthly kings.
 - 3. In addition to that, God promised to raise up His special King, to rule over His people forever (2 Sam. 7:12ff). This was the one that some acknowledged Jesus to be in Matt. 21:9 (cf. Ps. 118:26).
 - 4. To reject Him was ultimately to reject God from being King over them.
- B. The wedding feast comparison is a recurring image.**
- 1. Jesus repeatedly used it (The Parable of the ten virgins [Matt. 25:1-13]; Jn. 14:1-6 is based on Jewish wedding imagery.).
 - 2. Paul spoke of Christ and the church as groom and bride (Eph. 5:25ff).
 - 3. John speaks of the marriage of the Lamb and the marriage supper in a context referring to the reign of God (Rev. 19:6ff).
 - 4. Isa. 25:6 speaks of the Lord of hosts preparing a lavish banquet for all peoples. Death will be swallowed up and God will wipe away tears from all faces. There will be rejoicing in His salvation (vs. 8-9).
- C. People distracted by the things of this world to the neglect of their relationship to God is a powerful theme in the history of Israel.**
- 1. God had always demanded exclusive loyalty. Anything less was idolatry/adultery.
 - 2. Coming into Canaan the warning was, “Do not forget the Lord when you dwell in splendid cities, houses full of good things, cisterns, vineyards, olive trees, and good eats . . .” (Deut. 6:10ff).
 - 3. “Make no covenant with the nations. Do not intermarry with them. They will turn your children from following Me to serve other gods” (Deut. 7:2-4).
 - 4. Their kings were to write a copy of the law. Read it. Learn it. They were not to multiply horses, multiply wives, nor increase silver and gold for himself (Deut. 17:16-20).
 - 5. Yet these were the very things they did. They forsook the Lord for idolatry. Solomon the prime example. 1 Kings 10 and 11 highlight his wealth, his horses, and his wives. “His wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David had been” (11:4).
 - 6. Now those of Jesus’ day were doing the same (Matt. 22:5).
- D. God’s judgment came upon them.**
- 1. The northern kingdom lost to the Assyrians.
 - 2. The southern kingdom overpowered by the Babylonians.
 - 3. Prophets had been sent, but they mistreated and killed them. From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah they had rejected and destroyed prophet after prophet (Matt. 23:34ff).
 - 4. Now they were ready to destroy the Son.
 - 5. The judgment of God would fall upon them. The chief priests and the Pharisees recognized that Jesus was talking about them (21:45). Jesus said, “The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it” (Matt. 21:43).

E. Others would be invited to the feast.

1. It is obvious in this text that these represent the tax collectors and prostitutes.
2. Later, even the Gentiles will be invited (Acts 10-11).

F. Reading of 22:11-14. Unless one is clothed properly he is thrown out.

1. On the surface this seems a harsh judgment, but the realization is that the King has provided the garments.
2. Isa. 61:10 says, "My soul will exult in my God; for He has clothed me with garments of salvation, he has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."
3. Gal. 3:27 speaks of those baptized into Christ as having been "clothed with Christ."
4. Rev. 19:8 speaks of the bride of Christ. "It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."
5. Yet here is one who has not clothed himself in such garments.
6. Invited to the feast—called out from the world, but not chosen. Not dressed in the righteous acts of the saints. Garments provided . . . but not worn. Note the individual conditionality of being among the chosen.

Conclusion:

1. For the chief priests and the Pharisees the message was clear. He was speaking about them.
2. They sought to seize Him (21:46). They plotted together how they might trap Him (22:15).
3. Is the message clear to you? You have been invited to a wedding feast. Are you too involved in other things???
4. In the parable of the prodigal (Lk. 15) the older son represents the Pharisees, the younger son the tax collectors and sinners. His Father says to His servants, "Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him" (15:22).
5. Are you clothed with the best robe???