

**The Party Crasher**  
**Matthew 22: 1-14**  
**Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

A 5 year old boy was delighted to participate in his aunt's wedding. The big day arrived and he looked as sharp as the groom in his little tuxedo.

As he came down the aisle the boy would take two steps, stop, and turn to the crowd, alternating between the bride's side and the groom's side. While facing the crowd, he would put his hands up like claws and roar. So it went – all the way down the aisle. As you can imagine, the crowd was in tears from laughing so hard by the time he reached the front of the church.

The little boy, however, was getting distressed from all the laughing, and was near tears when he took his place at the front of the church. When asked what he was doing, the child sniffed and said, "I was being the Ring Bear!"

Today's sermon text is about a marriage; it's about a marriage that is so very important.

**The Gospel According to Matthew 22:1-14:**

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: <sup>2</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, <sup>3</sup>and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. <sup>4</sup>Again, he sent out other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding.”’ <sup>5</sup>But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. <sup>6</sup>And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* spitefully, and killed *them*.

<sup>7</sup>But when the king heard *about it*, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. <sup>8</sup>Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ <sup>10</sup>So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.

<sup>11</sup>“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. <sup>12</sup>So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

<sup>14</sup>“For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”

The passage parable can be separated into three main sections, I call them the Party ABC's:

**MP1 - The Party Announced (v. 1-7);**

**MP2 – The Party Begun (v. 8-10);**

**MP3 - The Party Crasher (v. 11-14), thus the title for the message.**

The first half of the parable, verses 1-7, is about those who despised the king and would not come to the banquet. Notice the king sent his servants to those people who had ALREADY been invited to the banquet to tell them to come. Those who were invited would already have received and accepted an earlier invitation; it was customary to send again to tell them when the meal was ready, and it is this second invitation, which is given in verse 3 and repeated in verse 4. There

was no excuse for the guests to have failed to arrange their schedules accordingly. When the final summons came they should have been anticipating the banquet eagerly.

The king didn't stop with the initial invitation, nor did he stop with the follow-up reminder of those initially invited guests. In verses 5-7, we can see two attitudes among the invited guests – indifference and active hostility. Let's look first at their indifference.

Some who are invited to the gospel banquet do not openly express their hatred of the one who gives it, but they pretend they didn't receive the invitation or they make excuses for not attending. Indifference is that in between response, it's neither yes nor no, it's maybe or I might do it. It's keeping our options open, it's noncommittal, *and it can be downright frustrating, can't it?* One of those invited went off to his field, presumably to attend to some chores or animals, another went off to his place of business. Their refusal was a great insult. It dishonored the son, the king, and even the servants who carried the king's message.

I see this phenomenon manifesting itself in the indifference in all of society. It prevails in many workplaces of America, when people approach their work as "good enough." I'm committed to excellence in everything I do; I believe you'll see that is the message of Scripture. It's such nominally involved people who are the high maintenance people; those who whine about having to do work, who constantly seem to need someone else finish everything they start, which creates more for others.

This attitude of indifference prevails in youth when they would rather watch YouTube videos than complete their chores or homework, when they'd rather their parents sold their cookies, popcorn, and band fruit for them, and when they'd rather stay at home and freeload off their parents than make a living for themselves.

This attitude of indifference is apparent in the church when pleas for volunteers go out to help with some ministries and no one comes forward. It seems church goers would rather be begged than take the initiative to volunteer. Not only is that indifference, it borders on arrogance. Some of that may be due to the fact that people may not know of the need or opportunity.

Back to the parable. Some of those who had been invited did not merely reject the invitation or show indifference. Some were actively hostile toward the king for even thinking of inviting them to his banquet. It was not that they *could* not come; rather that they *would* not. The reason for their refusal is not spelled out, but it is suggested by the way the servants were treated. They "seized" the servants, "treated them spitefully and killed them." If the invited guests felt that way toward the servants, they obviously felt that way toward the king who had sent them and would have seized, mistreated, and killed him if they could have done it.

Many who reject the gospel invitation today have flimsy excuses, they show indifference, and some are outright hostile in rejecting the Good News of the Gospel. They (*you?*) will rightly incur the King's wrath. They say they are too busy for spiritual things. They say they have fields or patients or appointments or whatever it is that imprisons their souls and keeps them from faith in him who brings salvation.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, who preached 7 different sermons on this parable during his ministry in London, tells of a ship owner who was visited by a godly man. The Christian asked, “Well, sir, what is the state of your soul?” to which the merchant replied, “Soul? I have no time to take care of my soul. I have enough to do just taking care of my ships.” But he was not too busy to die, which he did a week later.

Friend, *what about you? What’s your field? What’s your business? What’s your excuse?* If you haven’t received the saving grace in Christ, don’t delay, you may find yourself in the very same predicament. Christian, what about you -- *Do you fit that pattern? Are you more interested in entertainment, sports, and recreation than Christ? Do you know stock quotations or your horoscope better than the Bible?* You do not have to murder a servant or prophet to miss out. You have only to fritter away your time on things that will eventually pass away and thus let your opportunities for repentance and faith pass by.

The king’s wrath was visited upon those who snubbed his gracious invitation to the banquet for his son. These people had only to attend, there’s no indication they had to do anything else. Yet the king was determined to have the banquet. **The second half of this parable tells of those people who did come to the banquet, and it’s just about to begin.**

Look again with me at verses 8-10, especially verse 10: “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ <sup>10</sup>So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.”

Verse 10 is a clarion call to the church of Jesus Christ, we who are Christ’s Bride! We have our marching orders, spelled out just 6 chapters later in this book, to take the gospel into all the world. We are not to be selective with whom we share our faith. We who are biblical and reformed, who some call Calvinists and overly concerned with predestination and election, may fall into the trap of only sharing the Good News with those like us. We may be tempted to determine for ourselves who the elect of God are (or are not).

*What am I saying?* As sinful humans, we have a tendency to gravitate to other people who look like we do, who dress like we do, and who are like us. We’d never give a second thought to sharing the invitation to the banquet with the “bad” people (those not like us). But the message of Scripture is clear. Gather **all** people, the good and the bad. **Next, we see someone who’s not dressed like the rest. Someone has crashed the party.**

Look again at verses 11-14 – “But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. <sup>12</sup>So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. <sup>13</sup>Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

<sup>14</sup>“For many are called, but few *are* chosen.”

James Montgomery Boice writes that he’s glad the parable didn’t end at verse 10 because Christ gives a much-needed warning in this account. As he puts it, “there is sometimes a kind of

inverse pride found in the disadvantaged which imagines that, because they are not rich or famous or powerful, but poor and unknown and weak, therefore, they deserve the king's bounty and can come before him in their own character and on the basis of their own "good" works. Jesus exposed that error by showing how the man who came to the feast without a wedding garment was immediately confronted by the king and thrown outside."

At a wedding feast in those days the host provided garments for his guests. (*Wouldn't that be great if that were still the case today?*) *What is the wedding garment?* It is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, of course. It is that perfect righteousness that God provides freely to all who repent of sin and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for their salvation.

Notice the party crasher's response to the king in verse 12 for not having the proper wedding clothes on. He was speechless. *Have you ever heard someone say that they don't need to receive Christ, that they will take their chances before God, that they'll argue their case at the Day of Judgment?* This passage makes it clear that man approaching the holiness and righteousness and purity of Almighty God is speechless at his impurity before Him. If we are clothed in Christ's righteousness, we will be able to stand before God and rejoice in our salvation. But only if we are so clothed. If we are not clothed in Christ's righteousness, we will be speechless before God and will be cast out.

Verse 13 is a picture of hell. Hell is a very real place, despite what today's culture might say. A United Press survey found that the "typical American male" is a 27 year old who does not read even one book a year. He is materialistic, satisfied with small pleasures, bored with theological disputations. Although he may attend church as much as 27 times a year, he is not interested in the supernatural. He is concerned with neither heaven nor hell. In fact, he has no interest whatever in immortality. His principal interests are football, hunting, fishing, and car-tinkering. Hell is not a reality for most people today.

Because we don't typically see the immediate punishment for our sins, we are led to believe there is no punishment, and if there is no punishment, then there must be no hell. I've heard people actually say they're looking forward to partying with the devil and their friends in hell, like it's going to be a party! I've even heard people say that this life is hell. Even though we have pain, suffering, sickness, terminal illness, and death in this life, it is so much better than hell has been, is and will be. Thomas Hooker paints this picture of hell for us:

"If all the diseases in the world (seized) one man, and if all the torment that all the tyrants of the world could devise, were cast against him; and if all the creatures in heaven and earth did conspire the destruction of this man; and if all the devils in hell did labor to inflict punishment upon him, you would think this man to be in a miserable condition. And yet, all this is but a (slice) of God's indignation. If the (slices) of God's indignation be so hot, what is the full sum of His wrath when it shall seize upon the soul of a sinful creature in full measure!"

The Bible teaches that we will be united again with our bodies at Christ's return, if we die before that point in time. Just as flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God as Paul writes in **I Corinthians 15**, and our fleshly bodies will become spiritual ones for eternal life in glory, so, too, will those damned to hell have a body fixed for their eternity. Every person who rejects Christ Jesus will have a body that will burn forever without being consumed. Spurgeon's

description is “with your nerves laid raw by searing flame, yet never desensitized for all its raging fury, and the acrid smoke of the sulfurous fumes searing your lungs and choking your breath, you will cry out for the mercy of death, but it shall never, never, no never come.”

When we talk about being saved, this is what we are being saved from. We are saved from the full wrath and curse of God fully poured out on those who’ve ignored His free offer of escape from hell and its eternal torment. Hell is not eternal separation from God in the sense that is escape from Him. He is everywhere. God is ever present in hell; you will not be forgotten.

*Why did the king take such drastic action then?* The party crasher came to the banquet on His own terms. He did not come clothed in the righteousness of the Son, but in his own righteousness. It was as if he rejected the garments offered because he felt he was clothed appropriately enough. The judgment, then, is fitting for the punishment. *Who are we to think that we can continuously justify our sinful thoughts and actions and expect entrance to glory on our terms?* Anytime we choose to do differently than the Bible says, we are intentionally sinning against Almighty God.

Notice what the last verse ***does not*** say. It does NOT say, “For many are invited, but few believe.” It says, “For many are invited, but few ARE CHOSEN.” *Chosen by Whom?* It is the KING who determines who responds to the invitation! Likewise, it is GOD who chooses who will respond to His invitation of eternal life. GOD is sovereign, and His will is done, no matter how much we may try to screw it up. If you’re a Christian, you are so, only because of God’s choosing you to be so. You merely accepted the invitation. If you’re not a Christian, you are here and now being invited. *Will you receive the invitation?* And if you receive the invitation, *will you come on God’s terms?*