

Bride and Bridegroom #2

The Kingdom as a Wedding!

Matthew 22:2-14 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 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.'" 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' 10 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. 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 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.' 14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

I. An Overall Perspective of the Kingdom and the Bridal Picture!

A. God's ultimate and eternal purpose for creation is to provide a family that includes faithful children (sons and daughters) for Himself and an equally yoked (corporate) Bride for Jesus as His eternal companion. God promised to give Jesus an inheritance consisting of a people whom He fully possesses in love.

Psa 2:8 *I (the Father) will give You (Jesus) the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.*

- 1. Mandatory obedience:** God will cause all creation to obey Jesus! (**Psa 110:1,2; Rev 19:15; Phil. 2:9-11**)
- 2. Voluntary love:** God will raise up people who voluntarily choose to love Him! (**Mt 22:37; Lk 1:3; Acts 1:1**)

B. Equally yoked as a bride in love with the Bridegroom, God wants us to love Him with all of our heart and mind because He loves us with all of His heart and mind. Jesus wants us to love Him in the way He loves us. This summing up the whole law in the "Great Commandment" is found in the of context of this wedding parable with an intensified end time application!

Matthew 22:37-38 *Jesus said to him, ""You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." 38 This is the **first and great** commandment.*

C. As our beloved husband, Jesus, loves us as His bride and has given Himself for us and is now preparing us for presentation to Himself as glorious. He is not only preparing us for Himself in this way, He is also preparing for us a worthy place in which to be with Him (John 14:2,3).

Ephesians 5:25-27 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

D. God's purpose is to select and train a Bride who would be prepared by voluntary love to reign with Jesus. The First Commandment will be in first place in the Church when Jesus returns.

Revelation 19:7 *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

II. This Parable is set in the Context of Jesus' last or Passion week on Earth!

A. Jesus' much anticipated ride into Jerusalem on a donkey to fulfill the famous messianic prophecy in Zech. 9:9 set the tone for His teaching throughout all of Mt. 21-25 in which He emphasized the End-Times. His next visit to Jerusalem will be on a white horse as the King of Kings (Rev. 19:16). Obviously, we live between these to triumphal entries by Jesus into Jerusalem!

Zechariah 9:9 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Revelation 19:11,16 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war...16 And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

B. In the triumphal entry the people of Israel (multitudes of them) were crying out a much anticipated messianic welcome of expectation from Psalm 118:25-26 which is quoted in the shouts of the people as they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem.

Matthew 21:9 Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: "Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' Hosanna in the highest!"

C. In the last verse of chapter 23 of Matthew, as Jesus weeps over Jerusalem because as a whole the Jews of His day were at that time missing the "day of their visitation," He states that they will not see Him again unto the day when they say as a whole "Blessed is He that comes in the name of the Lord!" Obviously, we live between these two days of visitation and these two welcomes into Jerusalem by the Jewish people of their Messiah and ours.

Matthew 23:39 ...for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

D. Looking at this very important passage (Mt 21-25) we see the layout which forms the context and run up to this particular parable as we follow Jesus in the scripture through these important events:

(John 11:45-12:12:11 provides a detail of the raising of Lazarus; the coming of many Jews to faith in Jesus; the plotting of the religious leaders; and the anointing by Mary of Bethany the night before the triumphal entry)

1. The Triumphal Entry – Mt 21:1-11
2. The 2nd Cleansing of the Temple – Mt 21:12-17
3. The Cursing of the Fig Tree – Mt 21:18-22
4. The examination by the chief priests and elders & Jesus perfect rebuttal – Mt 21:23-32
5. The parable of the vineyard & Jesus' application– Mt 21:33-46

III. The Kingdom Message: Evangelism as an Invitation to the Wedding!

A. The Father sent servants or messengers to invite people to a wedding. In this parable, Jesus reveals His burning desire for us and longing for a deep relationship with us that will last forever. This reveals the purpose of humanity, the design of history and the highest focus for ministry.

Mt. 22:3-4 (King)...sent out His servants to call those...invited to the wedding; they were not willing to come. 4 Again, He sent out 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."

B. The bridal perspective changes the way evangelists preach salvation, pastors counsel people in difficulty, teachers teach the Bible, forerunners prophesy or apostles build churches. It affects how we view people and preach on salvation, holiness or judgment. We are saved "from something" terrible and "to something" glorious. We need salvation to escape hell as well as to qualify and empower us to engage in a deep eternal relationship with God (1 Cor. 1:9).

IV. Negative Responses to God's Love: Passivity and Hostility!

A. Passive resistance to Jesus! Passivity about God's deep desire and great provision for us is a serious crime of ingratitude. People say that they must be practical, but there was nothing practical about creation and the incarnation. God went out of His way for love. Farms and businesses are given to us as God's gift to experience His love and express it back to Him. No blessing or ministry assignment in God is ever to take the place of our relationship to Him.

Mt. 22:5 They made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.

B. Active resistance to Jesus! Hostility to God's messengers (treated spitefully and killed).

Mt. 22:6-7 The rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 When the King heard about it, He was furious. He sent out His armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

C. God's active response! The King sent His armies to destroy those who murdered His messengers. God sends His armies in His fury to destroy the murderers and burn their cities. God will burn cities of the Antichrist because He arranged a wedding and they killed His beloved (Rev. 16:17-21; 19:2, 11-21). The Roman's attack on Jerusalem in 70 AD was a partial fulfillment of this.

D. The intensity of the Father's love is the same intensity of His wrath against all that hinders love.

Rev. 19:2 True and righteous are His judgments, because He judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth...and He has avenged on her the blood of His servants shed by her.

E. There is no contradiction between the passion of the Father and His anger. The context of God's fury is His intensity in arranging a marriage and protecting His people (v. 2). We can only make sense of Jesus as the Judge as we understand Him as the Bridegroom. He works with the Father in judgment to remove everything that hinders love and all that harms His Bride.

F. The fury of the Father is an expression of His passion for Jesus and His Bride (Ps. 2:5-9).

Ps. 2:5-9 He (the Father) shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure...8 "Ask of Me, and I will give You (Jesus) the nations for Your inheritance...9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces..."

G. On the island of Patmos, 60 years later, Jesus developed Mt. 22:7 in more detail for John in the judgments described in the Book of Revelation. Revelation is about a Bride being prepared for her wedding and the First Commandment filling the earth and evil being driven off the planet.

H. We must not be ashamed of God's fury and thus, seek to hide it or downplay it as if it is a fault in God's character. We must not be afraid to be accused of being "gloom and doom" or "fire and brimstone" preachers". Jesus preached a message of doom to those who oppose His fiery love. We can only preach judgment in a right way with a right spirit by understanding the Bridegroom. God's judgment is best understood in light of the refusal to receive His intense love.

I. We downplay the fury of God's judgment because we do not understand the reality of His passionate love. The Father burning cities in Revelation is part of the bridal message. We have no authority to change God's Word or adapt it to our cultural sensibilities because of fear of man.

J. Paul prayed that they would be rooted and grounded in understanding and experiencing God's love. All speaking on judgment is to be rooted in revelation of the intensity of Jesus' love!

Eph. 3:17-19 That you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend...what is the width and length and depth and height-- 19 to know the love of Christ....

V. God's Glory: His Desire for all to Participate in the Wedding!

A. Those invited were not worthy because they did not respond with love. Being worthy of salvation does not mean that we earn it, but that we respond in grateful love to Jesus' love.

Mt. 22:8-10 Then He said to His servants, "The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding." 10 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.

B. The primary "currency" in eternity is voluntary love formed in our hearts in this life. Christianity through the lens of the Bridal paradigm makes radical abandonment to God's love reasonable and has no interest in "fire insurance Christianity".

C. God's heart is seen in His desire for both the bad and good (Mt. 21:31). Jesus wants the "bad" ones. There is no one who has gone too far and if they will simply respond then God wants them.

Mt. 21:31 Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

D. God's zeal to send His messengers to the highways and byways is an expression of His fiery passion. He wants His servants to participate in this great drama. It was unthinkable to the Jews of that day to go out of their way to bring salvation to the Gentiles in the highways and byways. This is exactly what the remnant of completed Jewish believers were sent to do a short time latter in the book of Acts.

Acts 10:44-45 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

E. The Lord has no pleasure in the death of wicked and desires all to be saved. It is our response to His loving invitation that is crucial!

Ezek. 18:23 Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "and not that he should turn from his ways and live?"

2 Pet. 3:9 The Lord is...not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

F. The wedding hall will be filled! John saw this at the Great Harvest at the end-of-the-age!

Rev. 7:9 Behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb...

VI. The Necessity of Responding in Humility and Love!

A. Because these invited guests came right off the street, proper attire (wedding garment) was provided by the King for all that were invited. The first thing we must see is that the man that was abruptly dismissed (to say it lightly) from the wedding did not put on (appropriate) what was provided and expected by the King!

Mt. 22:11-14 But when the King came in to see the guests, He saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So He said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 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.' 14 "For many are called (**invited**), but few are chosen (**respond so as to be chosen**)."

B. A wedding garment will be required to participate in the great Wedding Feast. It speaks of the righteousness of God imputed and imparted to us. Wedding garments will be given to each believer according to their behavior (acts of obedience). This is different from the robe of righteousness we receive as a gift (2 Cor. 5:21; Isa. 61:10).

Rev. 19:7-9 For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen...for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!

1. Legal position: The gift of Jesus' righteousness is imputed to us instantly at the new birth! (Justification)

2. Living condition: Righteous character is imparted to us progressively by the Holy Spirit! (Sanctification)

Romans 13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out (co-operate w/ God) your own salvation with fear and trembling;

Ephesians 4:20-24 But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

C. This man speaks of those who try to enter the celebration of salvation on their own terms on do not "put on" what the King has provided.

1. The garment of religion: includes "nominal Christianity", Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc. or those who think they will receive salvation outside of being born again. The man with religious pride trusts in his own merits in thinking he is qualified for salvation.

2. The garment of compromise: those with continual compromise presume on God's mercy by thinking they are saved without being serious about loving Jesus with obedience.

D. God has great mercy toward us in our many failures. What He does not accept is our long term unwillingness to war against our failures with sincere repentance. It is not enough to be familiar with biblical language and attend worship gatherings. Our immaturity does not disqualify us but our insincerity does. We must distinguish between rebellion and immaturity. If we mistake immaturity as rebellion then we run from Him instead of to Him when we see our weakness.

E. Many (multitudes) are *called* (invited), only few are *chosen* (by responding with loving faith). This principle connects this parable with the parable in Mt. 21:1-10. The Lord calls “many” reflecting His invitation to all, “as many as you find” (Mt. 22:9). The “chosen” refers to the responsive who seek to love Jesus with all their heart (v. 37). The “called” lose their privilege by their own unresponsiveness to God’s gracious call and invitation.

F. Divine election works with human responsibility so that voluntary love is manifest (v. 37).