

Family Bible Study

10/14/2026



Matthew 22:1-14

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

¹ Again Jesus spoke to the people in parables, saying, ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ ⁵But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ ¹⁰And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ “But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. ¹²And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”

8. A central understanding of Christian worship is that it is a foretaste of the great "wedding feast" (Rev 19) that is coming. Are some people absent because they have other "pressing" business that they think is more important? Doesn't this sound like a story of the church? We probably shouldn't send troops to destroy the non-attenders and burn their houses, though!
9. Who does the king then get to attend the wedding feast?
10. If those who accept the king's invitation are in fact the Church, what does it say about this group being "both bad and good" (v10)?
11. But then the king sees a guest not wearing their wedding garment. What does the king say and do to this guest (v12-13)? If the aim was just for the banquet hall to be filled, why would he care in a guest didn't dress for the occasion? What does the attire say about what they think of the feast and the king's celebration?
12. If this parable is an allegory about God "the king", what does the incident with the poorly-dressed banqueter say about being a Christian, how it's not enough to acknowledge the *goodness* of God (the food), but one also needs to acknowledge the *authority* of God?
13. Besides clothing, what other ways display a proper attitude when accepting the invitation to worship (wedding banquet)?
14. What does St. Paul's characterization of one's life after conversion as a "putting on" the new life in clothing terms (Rom 13:12-14; Gal 3:27; Ephes 4:24, 6:11; Col 3:9-10; 1 Thes 5:8) inform how we understand the king's confrontation with the under-dressed man?
15. "Many are called, but few are chosen" (v14). Who is doing the choosing, and what difference does that make to Jesus' point?
16. In what ways do we show up at the feast without our wedding garment? How do we similarly want to enjoy the feast without also honoring the king? What can we do to change that?

Questions to Wonder with Kids

- In this passage, Jesus tells a parable (story with a point) about a great wedding banquet that a king throws for his son. What happens when the king's servants go out to invite guests to the wedding party?
- I wonder why the guests didn't want to go...
- What kind of "message" are the invited guests sending when *their king* invites them to attend but they refuse to come?
- I wonder what the king thought when the guests refused to come to celebrate his son's wedding...with some even killing the king's messengers!
- What does the king do then, so that he has guests to fill the banquet hall?
- I wonder who the "King" in this story really is... Who is the "Son"? The "king's messengers"? and the last-minute "guests"?
- But not everyone the servants found came ready to party at the feast. Weddings, you know, are fancy events, with people dressing up very nice. This was true even in Jesus' day. But one guy didn't dress for the occasion. I wonder why...
- Why did the king kick him out? Wasn't he invited?
- What does Jesus say at the end to explain this parable?
- Looking back at the beginning, what did Jesus say is this parable about?
- Worship is often thought of as "wedding banquet", or at least a preview of the heavenly banquet. What then does this story say about the "King" wanting people to attend the feast? What does it say about those who accept the invitation, and those that don't?
- Aside from clothes, what do we need to do to join in the celebration in worship each Sunday?

Questions for Adults

1. In this passage, Jesus presents yet another a parable, the third of three Jesus tells back-to-back. The other two are the parable of the two sons (Matt 21:28-32) and the parables of the wicked tenants (Matt 21:33-46). What is this story about (v2)? Who are the characters? What do they do? What is the crisis?
2. What does this parable have in common with the other two?
3. What is the response of those invited (v2, 5-6)? Why did they not accept the invitation—because they *cannot* come or because they do not *want* to come? What could be more important?
4. What happened to the king's messengers (v6)? What does the host do in response to the guests' refusal? Sounds harsh. Why would he have such a dramatic response?
5. Who, again, is hosting the feast? What is the feast celebrating? How does that change how we read the guests' actions and the host's response?

Richard Bauchum observes: "The attendance of the great men of the kingdom at the wedding feast of the king's son would be expected not only as a necessary expression of the honor they owe the king but also as an expression of their loyalty to the legitimate succession to his throne. Political allegiance is at stake. Excuses would hardly be acceptable, and the invitees offer none. To refuse the invitation is tantamount to rebellion. In refusing it, the invitees are deliberately treating the king's authority with contempt. They know full well that their behavior will be understood as insurrection. This is what they intend, and those who kill the king's messengers only make this intention known more emphatically. The king responds as kings do to insurrection (v7)."
6. Given this *royal* element, how does that impact our interpretation? That is, who is the 'king'? who are the king's 'servants'? Who are the rebellious 'guests' in Jesus' day and age?
7. Why must other guests be invited when those originally invited have refused?