

## Parable of the Marriage Supper (Matthew 22:1-14) –

### “Many Called, Few Chosen”

The inability to see a good thing placed in front of us is a great loss. Those who buy 4D lottery tickets regularly would chide themselves no end because the licence plate number of their new car “came out” and they did not “buy” that number. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity and thousands of dollars have been “lost” forever. Then there are others who could have won a multi-million dollar contract with just one phone call but had allowed it to slip out of their hands. They would moan and groan for months and even years. Such great opportunities had “stared” in the faces of these men and they had let them slip by. What a great waste.

How much more when it comes to eternal matters. Material losses can be gained back one day. They are nothing compared to the loss of a soul to damnation in Hell. This parable describes such a loss. The best gift of eternal life was offered to them but they rejected it. They could have had their sins forgiven by God Himself through Jesus Christ and later could participate in the great wedding feast of the Lamb. These were thrown away because they were blind and did not want to see.

**Elements of the Parable** – The king is God the Father; The son is Jesus Christ; the servants are believers who bring the gospel; the wedding dinner is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb; “them that were bidden to the wedding” are the Jews; those in the highways are the Gentiles; the wedding garment is the garment of salvation of Christ; and the place of weeping and gnashing of teeth represents Hell.

**Explanation of the Parable** – This aspect of the kingdom of heaven is about salvation and entrance into heaven to have fellowship with God. The phrase “to call them that were bidden” literally means “to call the ones who have already been called.” They are the ones with the invitation cards. In this instance, it is a reference to the OT. They already had the Word of God to tell them about the suffering Messiah (see Isaiah 53). They would not come. The Bible did not say that “they could not come”. This means that if they had wanted to, they would have come. The act of the will in refusing to come places the blame squarely on the Jews who rejected the call and the invitation! The king is not at fault here! The king then sent more servants to invite them a second time. This time it was with more emphasis to come. They did not have to bring anything or pay anything to come to this dinner which had been prepared and paid for entirely by the king Himself. Notice the personal pronoun “my” oxen (the best and most expensive clean animals – in the plural) and fatlings (referring to corn-fed fatted animals bred for slaughter and not for work in the fields which makes their meat very tender and delicious). They have been killed to invite the Jews to eat. This means that they were slaughtered in their honour and this was the message the servants were to convey! Everything had been prepared. All the Jews needed to do was to come.

Instead, they made light of what the king did for them. Literally, it means that they could not care less about the kingly invitation. This was a gross insult to the king. They turned away from the kingly invitation to their carnal endeavours (farming and merchandising). Making money and doing worldly business was more important than attending the marriage dinner. The insult did not stop there. Others of their colleagues treated the servants of the king who brought the good news, spitefully which includes the use of violence as the original implies. Then they killed them. The king sent his armies who destroyed the murderers and burned their city. They were justly punished for their wicked deeds.

Then the king called his servants to invite others, since the ones who were first called were not worthy! The servants found them in the highways. They did not have the first invitation (i.e. the OT). They would be given the good news to attend the wedding dinner. The king said to invite as many as possible. Whoever was willing to come could come! The bad and good all came to the wedding dinner. The wedding was full of guests.

When the king went round to see the guests, he found that one of the guests was not wearing a wedding garment. Barnes comments aptly on the wedding culture of ancient times, "Anciently, kings and princes were accustomed to make presents of changes of raiment to their friends and favourites, to refuse to receive was an expression of highest contempt, Genesis 14:22; 2Kings 10:22; Esther 6:8; 8:16. It was, of course, expected that such garments would be worn when they came into the presence of the benefactor. The garments worn on festival occasions were chiefly long white robes; and it was the custom of the person who made the feast to prepare such robes to be worn by the guests. This renders the conduct of this man more inexcusable. He came in his common ordinary dress, as he was taken from the highway; and though he had not a garment of his own suitable for the occasion, yet one had been provided for him, if he had applied for it. His not doing it was expressive of the highest disrespect for the king." There was absolutely no excuse for the guest to not put on the wedding garment. He was speechless.

The result was one of severe punishment and casting out of the marriage dinner. The place of torment was one of weeping and gnashing of teeth which is a picture of Hell.

**Application of the Parable** – Some people wrong argue that if he is not chosen or elected by God, then he is not to be blamed for being sent to Hell. In this parable, the meaning of chosen is very clearly taught. The ones who were given the good news of salvation have no one to blame but themselves when they reject the only Saviour who is able to deliver them from the bondage of sin and the penalty of sin which is death and Hell! The good news was placed in front of them but they spurned it. The ones who brought the good news were persecuted and some have even been killed. Jews and Gentiles alike who wish to participate in the Marriage Supper of the King's Son must put on the wedding garment. The wedding garment is none other than the garment of salvation that has been washed as white as snow by the blood of Christ.

If you have been given the good news of Jesus Christ that He came into the world to die for your sins and rose from the dead for your justification, do not reject Him. Learn from this parable of the kingdom of God and put on the wedding garment and be found in the Marriage Supper of the King. For many are called, but few *are* chosen.