

Sunday, October 11, 2020

### Your Royal Invitation

We continue with our Sermon Series focusing on Christ's teaching found in Holy Week. Again, a quick recap; during holy week on the first day Jesus came into Jerusalem, looked around, assessed the situation and then left. On the second day, Monday, He came back into Jerusalem, went back and addressed what He had seen, the corruption. He drove out the moneychangers, he threw out those who selling goods and profiting off of it. On the third day, Tuesday, He began to teach. His message basically came in three different levels. The first level was that He, Jesus is God's true son. He's the promised Messiah, He's the truth, He's the word in the flesh. The second great thing is that the religious leaders were corrupt both in their teachings and their practices which they had manipulated for personal financial gain. And the third, as a result, the gospel was going to be going to those who would repent, the Gentiles. To those who as Jesus said last week, would fall on the cornerstone, fall on the Rock and be broken to pieces, and be made whole, a new creation in Christ.

But that takes us to chapter 22 which is right on the heels of that second parable, the parable of the Talents. Chapter 22 begins by saying, 'Again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying...' but I have to correct that. You see, if you look at the Greek manuscript, that translation of 'and again Jesus spoke to them in parables saying,' is skipping one whole word in the Greek language. It actually reads; 'and again Jesus *apokritheis eipen.*' The word *apokritheis* here is to give an answer to a question or to begin to speak where something has preceded it, such as a statement or a question. And *eipen* means he, she or it spoke or said. So literally, if we take those two Greek words and we put them both in, it reads like this: 'and again, Jesus responded and spoke to them.' That is critical. What was he responding to? Well after giving the parable of the two sons, and the parable of the tenants, apparently the religious leaders either asked Him a question or made a statement. They may have asked a question something like; 'Are you saying that we have fallen away from the truth of God's word?' Or they may have just made out statement saying something like, 'don't listen to him, he doesn't know

what he's talking about.' And Jesus, again responded to them, spoke to them. So, this is coming as a result of something you don't know exactly what, but something that was said to Him after the parable of the two sons and the tenants. And based on what we see in this next parable, we know they were not happy. It was critical, a critical statement, a critical question.

And so, Jesus gives a third parable, the parable of the Wedding Feast. So, He is still speaking to the crowd that's there, but he's also directly addressing those who have questioned Him or made this statement. And again, just like the parable of the tenants, He uses figurative language, parables, that would be familiar because Jesus parallels this concept of the wedding feast that is also found in Isaiah chapter 5. And so, He begins, The Kingdom of God may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. Now like we did last week, let's break that down. First of all, the feast, it's written in the plural and that's correct because a wedding feast, especially a royal wedding feast had many components to it. It was days long and there was much to be seen and much celebrating. So, he was the king putting on a wedding, a days-long celebration, for his son. The Kingdom of heaven, well the Kingdom of heaven is referring both to the activity of God on this earth; that would be the temporal kingdom of heaven; but it is also referring to the eternal Kingdom of heaven which takes this a step past the previous two parables. The wedding feast, well it was a country-wide celebration since it was the King's son, he invited the country, all the noble people. And this would then be a time of fellowship, celebrated with feasting, and rejoicing with the king in his palace, in his court.

Who is the son, the bridegroom? Well that is Jesus and that mirrors what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 15, in His discussions with the Pharisees; where Jesus refers to himself as the bridegroom. It's a theme consistently all the way through the Book of Revelation Jesus is the bridegroom, the church is His Bride.

There's our beginning the Kingdom of heaven of temporal and eternal may be compared to a king, God, the Father who gave a wedding feast, a huge celebration for his son. And the King quote "sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast." Servants,

it was customary for people, for the person who was having a wedding to send out the general invitation of all those would be invited, but then to send the servants, his servants to give them a second invitation. In fact, there's an old rabbinical saying that goes all the way back to the first century Jewish times. It goes like this: Not one of them goes to the banquet unless he were twice invited. So, in other words, unless someone was willing to invite you twice, you didn't go to the wedding. That was the custom of the time.

Now who were these servants? What is this a reference to in the parable? It's a reference to the prophets. The prophets were inviting everybody to the feast as they prophesied about the coming messiah. Now he sent his servants to call them. Look, this is what you are to look for. To call, 'He's here!' He's prophecy fulfiller! He's the Redeemer! He said to his servants, call those who were invited. We're back to the first invitation. We go back to the book of Genesis; we find it right there. God extended the invitation to Abraham, and it was through him that all families of the earth would be blessed. By the way, it was also Israel that was given the oracles of God as we read in Romans 13. And so that invitation began with Abraham. It went to Isaac, it went to Jacob, it went to the twelve tribes of Israel. The invitation to be a part of Gods family; to be the family through whom God would bring the Messiah into the world; and through whom God would also bring His word into the world. We have both the written word and the Living word; the Bible and Jesus. And both came through the invitation that started with Abraham.

These servants, with the second invitation, the royal invitation. The first invitation started with Abraham, the second invitation, that's the second invitation from the servants, and now they are obligated to come by Jewish customers and thought. But we read; They would not come. This is an insult! God has been gracious and inviting them to come. They say no. So, he sends more servants. That would be John Baptist, that would be the disciples of Jesus who he sent out throughout all of Israel and there would be Jesus himself. To do what? To invite again. This would be a personal, royal invitation made in person by a direct representative. The response? First, what would they say? Everything is ready, it's more than just the dinner all these things are ready, you are not going to waste your time in coming. Come! But they

paid no attention and went off. This was a proclamation personally made in town square. How would they know; because they went off. This was a proclamation there was a great fanfare. The King is sending his royal representative to speak to the town in the town square on this day at this time, and he shows up and says behold the king, himself invites you to come to the feast, and they went off. One to his farm, another to his business. In other words, they are just not interested. The rest, those who didn't go off seize his servants, treated them shamefully, killed them. Is that not exactly what we see with John the Baptist, and Jesus? The result is that the King was angry and sent his servants to destroy those murderers. Why did he call them murderers? Well remember this is a parable, an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. They were murderers because they, the religious leaders, were leading people astray; leading them to eternal condemnation and eternal death. And at the same time, the people did not hold their leaders accountable, and they wanted a different message and they did not pass the truth onto their children, their grandchildren. And so, they become spiritual murderers. So, the king destroyed them. And we see that both literally and figuratively. We see it in the eternal, spiritual aspect but in AD 70, Rome absolutely wiped out Jerusalem. What did the king say? They weren't worthy. Then he tells his servant, 'go invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.' And so they gathered all, both good and bad and filled the hall. Now what is meant by good and bad? Listen carefully, the good are those who were wearing the wedding garment that was provided. When you went to a wedding, especially a royal wedding, the host provided a wedding garment. So, here we see now, an image of heaven. We are clothed in Christ's righteousness. That's our wedding garment. The church is the bride for all eternity. if we are wearing His righteousness, behold we are good because we have His goodness.

But the bad, are those who are not wearing the wedding garment. It represents the judgment of the Gentiles as they did not repent themselves and fall on the rock. It shows us that this is judgment of the bad Israelites the bad Gentiles. And this judgment is to be cast out to the outer darkness. What is meant by that? Christ is the light of the world. We are cast out of the presence of God. God is a God of order, not disorder and we are cast into a place of chaos which is the root word for the Hebrew word for hell. What happens in this outer darkness? There

will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is where Jesus gives the warning, “for many are called and few are chosen.” That invitation goes out to everybody, but few get in because too many went off to their business to their field, wherever. Some just flat out refuse to treat the church as the bride. This is prophecy, prophecy fulfilled, prophecy given again.

In Isaiah 25:6 we see God holding a feast, in verses 7 and 8 we see what this feast is about. It is about something God has done; a celebration of what God has done. He has swallow up the covering over all peoples. What is covering over all peoples? He has swallowed up death forever. Sin covers all, the wages of sin is death and God says, come to my feast and celebrate that I have swallowed up death. I have personally taken it on and taken it away and I will, “wipe away tears from all faces, and I will wipe away all reproach.” He’s taking all sin, all grief, everything we experience, taking it all away, all the negative, and He’s taking it away everything that causes us to have tears in our eyes. What is the people's response in Isaiah? Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him that he might save us. What are we waiting for? For God, that He might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice his Salvation. Do you see what's? There he saved us it's not our work he done it all for us and we are invited. We are given that garment, Christ’s righteousness. We are covered in his righteousness and goodness and death is swallowed up forever.

And so, we come to the feast. Now remember the beginning, the kingdom of heaven is both temporal and eternal we've come to the people today we have kind of here to worship to rejoice, to celebrate that Christ has swallowed up death, that He has given us that white robe of righteousness. We have it right now. And dear brothers and sisters in Christ, this is His wedding feast. It's a foretaste of what is to come; and that was why when we sing, “At the Lambs we sing, praises to our God and King, Who has washed us in the tide, flowing from his riven side, Alleluiah! Praise to God! Welcome to His wedding feast. Amen.