

+Vespers+

Guitar led Lutheran Worship

InContext



The Parable of the Wedding Feast

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In Context: The Parable of the Wedding Feast

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This is only two sections of our usual bulletin. Because of copyright issues, we have included only the study portion of this bulletin.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

The Gospel According to St. Matthew, the 22nd Chapter

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again 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. But they paid no attention and went off one to his farm and another to his business while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully and killed them. The king was angry and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, “The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you can find. And 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.

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then 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. For many are called, but few are chosen.

The Parable In Our Context – The Marriage Feast

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to...

Jesus spoke in parables throughout His teaching career as he went through Judea. His parables were simple ways of communicating the truth of the kingdom to people who just couldn't get it (because they weren't God). However, sometimes today, the truth that Jesus was trying to get across isn't as understandable as it could be. For that reason, for the next 5 weeks we will be looking at 5 of Jesus' parables. We're going to ask what isn't as understandable as it could be. We're going to take a look at what Jesus is saying in His parable. We're going to update some of the language and form our own parables.

Because we're going to be writing new parables, it is important to understand that we don't know God as well as what Jesus did. Our parables aren't on the same level as Jesus', they are just ways for us to understand the parables that Jesus told us some 2,000 years ago.

- **There are many different translations of the Bible. Some of these are called “paraphrases” because they don't actually translate the Bible, but they try to get at their basic meaning. Consider verses 5-7 from a paraphrase, “The Message,” along side a translation, “The English Standard Version”. What differences and similarities do you notice?**

The English Standard Version	The Message
But they paid no attention and went off one to his farm and another to his business while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully and killed them. The king was angry and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.	They only shrugged their shoulders and went off, one to weed his garden, another to work in his shop. The rest, with nothing better to do, beat up on the messengers and then killed them. The king was outraged and sent his soldiers to destroy those thugs and level their city.

“...a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again 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.”

We don't have kings who throw wedding parties for their sons and daughters in our every day lives anymore – and if we did, they probably wouldn't go on and on about oxen and fat calves. We do throw parties though, and we still get rejected sometimes.

- Have you ever thrown a party or planned an event that nobody came to? What was that like? Why did you throw the party in the first place? Why were you hurt if only a few people or nobody showed up?

But they paid no attention and went off one to his farm and another to his business while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully and killed them.

Chances are that nobody has put a hit out on you after you facebooked them with an invitation to an event, but they have given you excuses and done other things.

- What kinds of excuses really make you mad? Do you ever use excuses? What's the last time you made up an excuse not to do something?

Then he said to his servants, “The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you can find. And 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.

If you threw a party for the best of the best in society and nobody showed up, would you consider inviting everybody? What if you were the person who was invited after other people declined?

- If you got to go to a party because Bobby Bowden or Oprah or whoever turned down their invitation, what kinds of feelings would you have about that?

But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

Sometimes we turn things down and then regret it later. Rather than owning up to the fact that we were wrong, sometimes we just try to let it slide and hope nobody will notice. If they do notice, then we're often in trouble.

- Have you ever tried to let something slide hoping that nobody would notice? Did they? What was that like for you?

Contextualizing

- What elements of this story are foreign to our context today?
- What do you think Jesus is trying to say in this story?
- Join in writing a contextualized paraphrase of the parable.
- How does Jesus express forgiveness for you in this parable?



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Please don't throw this away. Take it home and use it devotionally or leave it for others.