

# Are You Dressed for the Occasion?

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Salem

Matthew 22:2-14

By Kevin Morkassel

## INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:

- WELCOME!
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## INTRODUCTION:

A week ago, Friday, Katie and Kelsey were able to attend their first Franklin Park Middle School dance.

- They dressed up in some of their nicest Sunday dresses and headed to the dance concerned that they would be overdressed for the occasion.
- After all... nobody wants to stand out like a sore thumb!
- When they pulled up to the school and began seeing how some of the other young ladies were dressed, they realized that they were not “overdressed” at all.
- As a matter of fact, the opposite was true for them.
- Nobody had informed us that the young ladies dress up in the full “hoop” dresses and as it turns out they were not properly dressed for the occasion.

This morning, I would like for us to consider a parable in **Matthew 22** that Jesus told, where He gives an excellent illustration about salvation.

- In this illustration, we find that a king invites people to a special occasion... a wedding feast.
- He goes through all the effort and makes many preparations for people to enjoy; however, many of them did not accept the invitation, while yet another, actually came to the feast, but he was not dressed for the occasion.

It is significant to note that Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem was in **Matthew 21**... meaning that Jesus told this parable within the week leading up to His crucifixion.

- Jesus, knowing that His day was drawing near, shared this parable with a crowd of people including the chief priests and Pharisees.
- This parable is also in the wake of the parable of the Landowner where the servants and even the son of the vineyard owner are beaten and killed. We looked at that parable three weeks ago.
- You may recall... according to the last couple verses of **Matthew 21**, that parable was addressed against the chief priests and Pharisees and it was at that point that they had decided to seize Jesus.
- So... here Jesus is... He’s about to be crucified... He has just told a parable that points out that the Jews had been guilty of not heeding God’s warnings and had even rejected the Son of God.
- As we begin reading in **Matthew 22**, we will see that Jesus doesn’t hold back and He continues to teach about the consequences that they will face if they continue to reject Him.
- He also teaches about the necessity of being dressed for the occasion—As we get deeper into our study this morning... you’ll understand better what that means to us!
- Let us read the parable of the wedding feast in **Matthew 22:2-14**... Jesus said to the multitudes...

*2 "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.*

*3 "And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come.*

*4 "Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.'"*

*5 "But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business,*

*6 and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them.*

*7 "But the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.*

- 8 *"Then he said<sup>^</sup> to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy.*  
 9 *'Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.'*  
 10 *"Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.*  
 11 *"But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes,*  
 12 *and he said<sup>^</sup> to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless.*  
 13 *"Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*  
 14 *"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

As always... when we look at a parable of Jesus we need to look at the parallel message that Jesus is really intending.

- He is not talking about an actual feast prepared for the son of a king.
- There are many who feel that the king is God the Father.
- The special occasion is for His son, Jesus.
- And the guests for this special occasion are the bride of Christ... the church.

The preparations that were made were Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

- The feast being the reward for obedience to the king.
- When the Jews were invited to attend the feast, many of them paid no attention.
- Some of them didn't care... they had a farm and a business that were a higher priority to them.
- Others, that mistreated and killed the messengers, were blatantly rebellious to God and wanted nothing to do with His feast.
- The first people to be invited were the Jews. And when they refused to accept the invitations (in **verse 8**) God said they were "*not worthy*".
- So what we find in **verses 9-10**, the King opened up the flood gates and began inviting all that would come.
- Clearly we see this represents when salvation would be offered to the Gentiles.

What I would like for us to specifically focus our attention on this morning, is the responses that different people had to the invitation.

- The invitation that would be made to the people of the kingdom is the same invitation that people today can receive.
- As we think about the different responses today, we need to each evaluate our own lives and ask ourselves which way have we chosen to respond to the invitation.

We find in this parable that there were three invitations to the people.

- It was customary in these times for a king to send out two invitations to the most distinguished citizens.
- The first invitation would be one that gives the guests enough fore-notice that they would have plenty of time to get cleaned up and prepared for the feast.
- The second invitation would come when the food was all prepared and the feast was about to begin.
- In our parable, we find that these elite invitees flat out rejected the invitation.

## **I. SOME FLAT OUT REJECT THE INVITATION...**

In **verses 3**, tells us about those who received the initial invitation and the end of that verse we find that "*they were unwilling to come.*"

- The king... the most important person in the kingdom... the most powerful of men... the man who is supposed to be the most respected of people... was treated with great indifference!
- Upon hearing about the king's invitation for His son's wedding, the people should have responded with excitement.
- They should have responded, at the very least, with enough respect to at least come to the feast.
- Put instead, the moment they heard about the feast, they immediately decided not to attend this special occasion.

- They flat out rejected the invitation.

As it pertains to the gospel invitation today... isn't it true that a lot of people around us will show the same kind of indifference toward God!

- He should be the important thing in all our lives! He is far more powerful than all of man kind.
- As the King of Kings, He certainly deserves our deepest of respect and yet He is often treated with great indifference!
- As soon as people hear the topic turn "religious" there are some people who simply don't care about what we have to say.
- They don't care about the gospel message... they don't care about God!

When John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Christ... to let people know that the preparations were being made, we find that the Jews were guilty of not fully considering all of the evidence that Jesus was the Christ.

- For their own selfish reasons, they were convinced that He was not the Christ and they did not care to open their hearts to the truth.
- Therefore, they flat out rejected the invitation.

When the second invitation to the feast was given, it was a more urgent plea by the king's servants.

- This time, all the preparations were ready... and we find again that the response was a flat out rejection.
- **Verse 5** says "*But they paid no attention and went their way...*"
- "**My farm is more important!**" "**I've got business needs that I need to tend to!**"
- "**I don't care that the king has made all kinds of preparations for me... My own needs are my highest priority.**"

Doesn't this sound like people today?... Always thinking of self first!

- When we share the gospel truth with people, isn't it true that so many times, they pay not attention and they put their own wants and desires as a higher priority?
- "**I don't care that God has made all kinds of preparations for me... my own needs are my highest priority.**"
- Many today will flat out reject the invitation... They don't want to hear the gospel truth.

Let's take a closer look at the parallel that Jesus meant when He told this parable.

- If the first invitation represented John the Baptist who was preparing the way for the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, who was to deliver the second invitation?
- This invitation had to have been after Christ was resurrected!
- I would like to suggest that the king's servants now are actually Peter and the apostles in the book of **Acts**.
- Notice that in **verse 4** what it says... "*Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, 'Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready...'*"
- Notice a couple of things... "*he sent out other slaves...*"
- Notice also that it says, "*Tell those who have been invited...*" The gospel message is still being directed at the Jews at this point. The flood gates have not been opened yet.
- Notice one other thing from **verse 4**... when He talks about the preparations that were made for the feast, He uses the word "*butchered.*" Isn't that about what they did to Christ?

On the day of Pentecost (In **Acts 2:36**), speaking to the Jews, Peter made reference to "*this Jesus whom you crucified.*"

- In **Acts 3:13** and following, Peter spoke again of Jesus saying, "*the one whom you delivered up, and disowned in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release Him. But you disowned the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murder to be granted to you., but put to death the Prince of life, the one whom God raised from the dead, a fact to which we are witnesses.*"
- You see... the "*oxen*" and "*fattened livestock*" were "*butchered*" just for the Jews!
- But, they wanted nothing to do with this special feast that had been prepared.

As we move forward in **verse 5** of our text we see that not only did they pay no attention, but in **verse 6**, there were some who seized the kings slaves and mistreated and killed them.

- In **Acts 4**, Peter and John were seized by the Jews and arrested and put into prison.
- Again in **Acts 5**, some of the apostles were put into jail and mistreated (just like in the parable).
- According to **Acts 5:40**, they were ... "*flogged*" and "*ordered...to speak no more in the name of Jesus.*"

- In **Acts 7**, we see that one of God’s servants was killed... Stephen was the first of many who were killed by the Jews because they were delivering the 2<sup>nd</sup> invitation to God’s reward that He prepared.

The Jews paid dearly for these actions that they took as they flat out, rejected the invitations.

- Not only did they not participate in the feast, but we find in **verse 7** that, “*the king was enraged, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire.*”
- Looking back in history, we know that the city of Jerusalem was set on fire and destroyed in the year 70AD.

What I find particularly interesting about this entire parable is that Jesus knew all of these things well before they happened.

- He knew that John was delivering the initial invitation, but He prophesied that Peter and the other apostles would be seized, and mistreated, and killed for delivering the second invitation.
- Jesus knew that He would be “*butchered*” so that the Jews would have opportunity to come to God’s reward.
- As **verse 8** says, He knew that the Jews would be deemed as “*unworthy.*”
- He knew they would reject the chief cornerstone (as Peter puts it) and that the Gentiles would be given opportunity to come as well.

The third invitation was therefore offered unto everyone....

- **Verse 9** shows us that everyone was invited... “*As many as you find, invite to the wedding feast.*”
- **Verse 10** says that the servants “*gathered together all they found, both evil and good.*”

Here is where we begin to see a different response to the invitation...

- We begin to find some that actually come to the wedding feast.
- Although... we find that some only come because they feel obligated.
- They are not there for the right reasons. They do not respect the king and they do not show honor to him.

## II. SOME COME UNPREPARED AND ARE REJECTED...

**Verse 11** tells us that “*the king came in to look over the dinner guests...*”

- I’d like for us all to pause for just a moment and to very seriously contemplate our motives for being here today.
- Are we here because we feel obligated? Are we here because of our desire to show God our respect and honor toward Him?
- Are we here because we sincerely desire to fully submit ourselves to Him?
- We need to remember that our king is constantly evaluating us. He’s looking over the dinner guests!
- He knows our hearts and He is identifying if we are properly dressed for the occasion.

In the parable, when the king sees the man not wearing the right garment, look at **verse 12** and see how gently he approaches the man... He begins by calling him “*friend.*”

- He then simply asks, “*how did you come in here without wedding clothes?*”—A question to which the man had no response.

Have you ever noticed that when you have caught a child “**red handed**” in something they know they are not supposed to do... they have nothing to say about it?

- When the king asked the man to be accountable for his actions, the man was speechless.
- He had been caught “red handed” and there was nothing he could say to defend himself.

I would like for us to take a moment to consider the motives of this man.

- Since this passage was originally written in Greek, the translation into English doesn’t give us quite the same impact. We lose a little something of the man’s motives.
- Here’s what I mean... Take particular notice that the word “*not.*”

- It is used twice in **verses 11-12** in the KJV...*“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.”*
- The first time the word, “*not*” is used it very simply means that the man wasn’t wearing the garment.
- The second time is a different Greek word, which means “**willfully did not**” or “**intentionally did not.**”
- “**Why did you come in here and intentionally not wear a wedding garment?**” might be a more accurate translation.

When we understand the history of this time period better, we can take this even a step further.

- History from this time period indicates that it was customary for Kings and princes to give clothing to their guests as a gift.
- It was expected to be worn when they came into the presence of the one who gave the gift.
- And to refuse to receive such a gift was an expression of highest contempt.
- So, even though this man had opportunity, he had specifically chosen not to wear the wedding garment.
- Perhaps he just thought the king would be more lenient. **“Oh, surely... He won’t mind! After all, He is so loving and so gracious... He’s a king of love, and He wants all to receive His reward...”**
- Yes... He does want all to receive the reward, but only if they are humble enough to come to Him on His terms!

This man, did not honor the king! He did not show respect to the king! He didn’t care what the king thought!

- He didn’t make an effort to do as the king wanted!
- The king had made great preparations and much effort, but this man couldn’t even do the most simple of things.... Put on wedding clothing...

How many people today are attending worship services, but they are not truly repentant.

- They have not fully submitted to the will of the king. They have neglected even the simplest of tasks.
- And have not shown the king the honor and respect he deserves, because they don’t realize he’s going to hold them accountable for that attitude!

Many today, will try to claim they are due the reward, but at the same time, they want to do it on their own terms.

- They even believe they have done what they need to do, however, we need to realize the king is looking over the dinner guests.
- And those that are not dressed for the occasion are going to be cast out.

Over the past couple of months, I have been giving a short questionnaire to those that come to the church here asking for food from the food pantry.

- Six out of seven people believe there will be a 1000 year reign of Christ.
- Three of the seven believe that baptism is not necessary for salvation and a fourth one didn’t know.
- Six out of seven answered that they know that they will be going to heaven
- And yet only one of the seven actually attend worship services on a weekly basis.

So many people today have so many different beliefs that are contrary to the Bible.

- They don’t think they need to be baptized and they don’t even attend church and yet six out of seven people that I surveyed are certain that they are in a saved condition!
- They have accepted the invitation to the wedding feast, but they are not properly dressed for the occasion.

Let us take just a couple moments to try to understand what it means to wear the wedding garment.

- I believe that we have an answer in two different passages given to us by the apostle Paul.
- In Galatians 3:27, the apostle Paul said, *“**For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**”*
- Also in **Romans 13:11**, the apostle Paul is warning the church telling them to, *“**awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed...**”*
- In **verse 12**, he says, *“**the day is at hand**”* and in **verse 13**, he says *“**let us behave properly...**”*

- Clearly, indicating some thing they need to do for salvation!
- In the very next verse, he tells them that they need to “...*put on the Lord Jesus Christ...*”

Each of us here this morning need to be asking ourselves if we are truly clothed in the royal garment of Christianity?

- Have we submitted to the simple requests of the king and have we come before him with respect and honor?
- We need to at least acknowledge that the man who was not dressed in the royal garment according to **verse 13** was bound and thrown into the “*outer darkness, in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*”

### **III. SOME COME PREPARED AND ENJOY THE REWARD...**

The good news is... there were many that had a third response to the invitation and they did fully submit to the king... they were given the opportunity to come to the feast... they were literally given the garment... and all they had to do was submit to the king and put on that garment

- Ladies and gentlemen... that is all that I am asking you to do this morning...
- The lord has prepared for us a feast of inconceivable delights...

Even in the OT, the prophet Isaiah spoke of this feast in **Isaiah 25**, saying...

*6 The LORD of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine.*

*7 And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations.*

*8 He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.*

*9 And it will be said in that day, "Behold, this is our God for whom we have waited that He might save us. This is the LORD for whom we have waited; Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation."*

Those of us who have been clothed with Christ, have an assurance of a “feast” beyond our wildest imaginations!

### **SUMMARY / CONCLUSION:**

The garment of salvation is available to all. It is dyed in Christ’s blood, and people need to accept the invitation and they need to submit to the king and they need to put on Christ.

- At this point you have three options regarding the invitation that I am about to give.
- You can flat out reject the invitation.
- You can come to the feast, but not be truly prepared.
- Or you can come and you can fully submit to every want and desire of the king, and you will receive a great reward from the king.

### **INVITATION:**

If there is anyone here this morning, that would like to be clothed with Christ and would like to wash away your sins, please come forward as we stand and as we sing...