**Matthew 22:1-14**

**Wedding Invitation to All**

# Read Matt 22:1-14

* There's a difference between not **understanding God's** word, and **finding it hard** to receive.
	+ Sometimes we say we don't understand, when we mean it's hard to receive. **ILLUS**: Like receiving a bad medical prognosis

# Context

* General population of Israel rejecting Christ - through this, the message of salvation will come to the Gentiles (Rom 11)
* **APP**: Privilege to hear today again the Invitation of God!
* ..and to **Exult** in the salvation of God through Christ, which will never be hindered no matter what man does. **cf 21:42**

# Intro

* Just **1 parable**, and **1 simple lesson**: **13b-14 - Read**.
	+ i.e. *Why will there be an outer darkness of weeping and gnashing of teeth*? **A:** For many knew they were called... who never came.
* The Parable is not difficult to understand; but it may be hard to receive!
* Let's understand it best we can, and then we'll be able to see if we'll have faith to receive it.

# Understanding the Parable

A parable is an allegory - be careful not to read all weird and wonderful ideas into it. Normally they have 1 main point - described in a fictitious story - and often Jesus plainly states the point anyway.

4 insights to help us understand and receive from the parable. The Parable is about...

## the Messiah

* 'messianic' = about the Messiah hoped for in Israel.
* Spoken to the Jewish leaders - cf 21:45, 22:15. and They would've connected what Jesus was talking about:
	+ the Kingdom
	+ the Son (Messiah)
	+ **even the Wedding Feast**, to OT passages like **Isa 54:5**,

For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. (Isa 54:5 ESV)

* + **Hos 2:19**

And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy.

* + ... and Ps 45 - a Love Song to the King
* (**PS cf 9:15** Jesus calls Himself the Bridegroom!!)
* So the parable is about the Messiah. The story anticipates the Messianic Marriage Feast... **Marriage Feast**!! *What does that convey?* Hope realised, Love, Yearnings fulfilled, Completion, Uniting and Joining, Celebration, Satisfaction, Great Joy, Relief

## The Parable is about...Rejection by Israel

* Something we can't **understand**. *Legitimately* can't understand. Because it makes no sense.
* **3** invitations go to the same city ("*call*", **v14**) -
	+ 3b, (PFT tense)
	+ 3a, (2nd call as ready)
	+ 4a, repeated a 3rd time
* How can they not accept the feast, the celebration, and rejoice with the Groom - they are so privileged to have the invite. **Because**... the people have no authentic desire to come.

THE REJECTIONS

* **1st rejection.** When the feast is ready, v3: '*would not come'* **=** *'not willing'*. Held back by their own affections. Didn't feel like it. (NIV = refused)
* **2nd rejection.** When the repeated call comes in **v4** that refusal blooms into 1 of 2 kinds of responses
	+ A: **At God's invitation, some are unphased**
		- ILLUS: Ever put out a invitation to a feast, and only 1 person comes? We have. When that happens it makes me think of this parable. Dinners. Bible studies. And I think, "People are dying to feast on God's word - I'll go and look for those!" A great motivation for many missionaries from the West to unreached peoples.
		- But these people had a higher esteem for Business and *Emporiums* (Lit!) - their malls were more attractive than the King's feast.
	+ That's offensive - but **it's unfathomable** what **the rest** do, **v6**. "*My special and privileged friends have murdered my wedding announcers*" (And they would murder the Son too).
	+ ..
	+ That's a powerful illustration..[]
* The murderers are killed by the king's soldiers,
and the commerce which the others loved is burned and comes to nothing.
* Here's the message: **Israel failed to obtain what they sought (even what they were called to), because they rejected their Messiah, cf 21:43**

Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.

* **Not because they didn't understand Jesus** - **they found it hard to receive His claims**.
* The city understood the King's invitation. It came 3 times. The 3rd time it was elaborated, motivated: **v4,** "***See***.. =BEHOLD"... **Read**
* **It was HARD** because they **desired something else**. Do you also? That makes no sense.

## The Parable is about...Fulfilment in the Nations

* Here's Something I receive easily: the feast is made open to all who may be willing!
* **v9**: "*main roads*" - the city is destroyed.. ie= outer roads to other cities. =Gentiles. =Onlookers.
* Some observations worth catching
	+ (9) "*invite as many as you find*" - (10) "*gathered* **all**" - kind of understandable if they were in the road observing the army of the King and the fire of the city! Who wouldn't come?!!
	+ (10) '*all whom they found,* ***both good and bad'*** - very shocking to the religious superiors.
	+ [\*\*] - the Hope to Israel is for the Nations - Hope realised, Love, Yearnings fulfilled, Completion, Uniting and Joining, Celebration, Satisfaction, Great Joy, Relief

## The Parable is about... Accountability

* The parable is not ended! A 2nd climax!
	+ The 1st was the judgement on the city
	+ The 2nd is an interrogation of the guests.
* One man is singled out, for instance, without a wedding garment. Here will be another man who joins those '***weeping and gnashing'*** their teeth.
* Not much said about Garments - what's obvious : he's dishonouring the Son and the Wedding Feast.
* **The 4th insight**: **Gentiles are AS accountable as the Jews to honour the Son**.
* *the message of salvation has come to the Gentiles, BUT not every Gentile will be saved. Only those who Honour Christ, the Son of God.*

# The Main Point!

Jesus' main point: **13b** " *In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few are chosen*."

* + '***weeping and gnashing of teeth***' 8x in the NT **- 7** of them in Matthew, ... always in the context of someone [privileged], ***mingling among*** God's Kingdom - yet finding themselves cast out. Regretting, Painfully, the privilege they gave up. Can't imagine the pain in that e.g.
		- Mt 8:12 - Jews ("Sons of the Kingdom" cast out)
		- Here, in 22:22 - the Gentiles too!

[Now I want to talk about **calling** and **choosing**, because I'm sure we may see the doctrine of predestination here : that except God chooses, elects in His sovereign power, no one will be saved. Now that is true. But I don't think that's what Jesus is talking about here. That is taught elsewhere, in scriptures like John 6 and Romans 8. Rather, I think this is a very close challenge to us who have become quite comfortable in our Gentile Christian identity - and maybe even in holding on to this 'chosen privilege before God'.]

**Israel** considered themselves ***chosen*** by God. That ***meant*** "elect for a purpose", Distinct, choice and excellent - **Israel** was considered a Divinely ***chosen*** race: a royal priesthood, a holy nation - those with the elect privilege and honour of declaring God's praise... But the parable teaches that only few are Chosen because **being Chosen is not determined by anything except a response to Christ**! [re] ... In Truth, there would be **Gentiles** who were chosen too. Those who belong to Christ alone, would be a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation (1 Pet 2).

In truth, many who brag in God's calling will be bitterly regretful because they count God's invitation as their acceptance. But **an invitation** is not equal to **election**. 'want to know if you're elect?'... Election is determined solely by our response to Christ.

**Even today His invitation is going out through this scripture, inviting us to continued repentance and faith in Christ. We mustn't pay little attention, thinking that it's OK, we're already "Christian"! >> How do you relate to Christ?**

**It's not difficult to understand. It's plain.
Will we receive it?**

Let us close with **2 appropriate responses** to Jesus' parable and explanation... - Depending on how you relate to the Son

1. If you love Christ with all your heart and soul and find nothing more desirable in your life than Him, **fall on your face** and give thanks to God for His grace to you!! You wouldn't know Christ apart from His choosing. ***Exult*** *in the Sovereignty of God whose salvation will never be hindered no matter what man does*
2. Whatever the alternative is - if you're like the Gentile without his wedding garments, or like the preoccupied merchant, or like those who defiantly opposed the Son, the Invitation is Extended to you, again, today - but know *it's not the invitation that will save you* - only the impossible work of salvation only God **can** do and **will** do for all who call out to Him, *Good and Bad*: **He will save**! Rom 10:9-13

if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. 11 For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. 13 For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."