

The Gospel of the Kingdom: An Invitation to the Great Wedding

I. THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

- A. Jesus' last public message to Israel defined the kingdom as a call to His wedding (Mt. 22:1-4). He called Israel to the first commandment in context to calling them to a wedding feast (Mt. 22:37).
²***"The kingdom of heaven is like a certain King [Father] who arranged a marriage for His son,***
³***and sent out His servants to call those who were invited to the wedding"...***³⁷***"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."*** (Mt. 22:2-3, 37)
- B. The Father "arranged a marriage" for His Son (22:2). His eternal purpose for creation includes providing a family for Himself and an eternal companion for His Son—an *equally yoked Bride*. He wants relationship with His people. He is raising up a prepared Bride for His worthy Son.
- C. God first *exhorted* Israel, through Moses, to love Him with all their heart (Deut. 6:5), and later Moses *prophesied* Israel would love God with all their heart in the end times (Deut. 30:1-6). Jesus' statement was both an *exhortation* and a *prophecy* that gives insight into God's zeal for our destiny.
⁶***"The Lord...will circumcise your heart...to love the Lord...with all your heart."*** (Deut. 30:6)
- D. The Old Testament prophets spoke of the Lord as a Bridegroom King (Isa. 54:4-12; 62:2-5; Jer. 2:2; 3:14; 31:32; Ezek. 16:13-15, 32; 23:1-45; Hos. 2:7, 14-23; 3:1-5).
¹⁶***"...in that day...you will call Me "My Husband," and no longer call Me 'My Master.'***" (Hos. 2:16)
- E. Jesus is a King with power and a Bridegroom with desire. The Bridegroom message is about Jesus' emotions for us, His beauty, His commitments to us (to share His heart, home, throne, and beauty), and our response of wholehearted, obedient love (Jn. 14:15).
- F. In this parable, Jesus revealed His desire for a relationship with His people that will last forever. This reveals the purpose of humanity, the design of history, and the highest focus for ministry.
- G. Jesus leads by love—He made known His desire for them to be His Bride and then called them to love Him. *"He won me over entirely by giving Himself entirely to me."* (Bernard of Clairvaux)

II. BRIDAL PARADIGM OF THE KINGDOM

- A. The core kingdom message is an invitation calling people to participate in His great wedding.
³***"...sent out His servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. ⁴Again, he sent out other servants, saying, "Tell those who are invited, 'See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen...are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding."***" (Mt. 22:3-4)
- B. The Father sent servants or messengers to invite people to a wedding. The gospel message is first a call to deep relationship and partnership with God as the Bride of Christ, and secondly it is a call to escape hell (1 Jn. 1:3). We are saved *to something* glorious and *from something* terrible.

- C. A Bridegroom perspective of the kingdom changes the way we present the salvation message, counsel people in difficulty, and disciple young believers. It affects how we view ourselves and other people, and how we speak about salvation, holiness, judgment, and ministry. Jesus referred to His messengers as *friends of the Bridegroom* (Mt. 9:15)—John the Baptist echoed this (Jn. 3:29).

¹⁵*Can the friends of the Bridegroom mourn...as the Bridegroom is with them? (Mt. 9:15)*

III. NEGATIVE RESPONSES TO GOD'S LOVE: PASSIVITY AND HOSTILITY

- A. Some reject God's desire for relationship in a passive way by making light of it. They see their refusal as being practical, that they may care for their farm or business. There was nothing practical about the incarnation. God went out of His way for love. Others reject salvation in a hostile way by killing the servants that the King sent to bring them the invitation to participate in the wedding.

⁵*“But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. ⁶And the rest seized His servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. ⁷But when the King heard about it, He was furious. And He sent out His armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.” (Mt. 22:5-7)*

- B. We can understand Jesus as Judge as we see Him as the Bridegroom. His judgments will remove everything that hinders love. They are an expression of His passion for His Bride. God's judgment is also in context to ingratitude that refuses to receive His intense love and desire for relationship.

IV. THE FATHER'S DESIRE FOR ALL TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WEDDING

- A. Those refusing the invitation were not considered worthy because they did not respond with love. Wedding hall will be filled—there will be a great end-time harvest from all nations (Rev. 7:9).

⁸*He said to His servants, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹...Go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.” ¹⁰So those servants... gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled... (Mt. 22:8-10)*

- B. Wedding garments are required for all who will participate in the great wedding feast. Many are *called* (invited), but only few are *chosen* (by responding with faith). The “chosen” refers to the responsive who love Jesus (22:37). Divine election works together with human responsibility.

¹¹*But when the King came in to see the guests, He saw a man...who did not have on a wedding garment. ¹²So He said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the King said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called [invited], but few are chosen [chose to respond with faith].” (Mt. 22:11-14)*

- C. The gift of righteousness is given to us instantly at the new birth. Wedding garments will be given to each according to their actions (obedience). Our garments will proclaim the measure of our love.

⁷*For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. ⁸And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen...for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb! (Rev. 19:7-9)*