

1. Another parable against Israel

- a. As if Jesus had been unclear in his previous parable- the parable of the tenants that we looked at last week- he followed that up immediately with another parable on the same subject.
- b. In fact, we know that he was crystal clear on what he had spoken because the verses following the last parable say, “(Matthew 21:45-46) When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.”
- c. So why does he retell this parable in a new way? He isn't trying to get them to understand that they (Israel as a nation and the religious leaders in particular) will lose their place as God's people. Instead he wants them to understand why they will lose their place. He is trying to show them that it is a completely just and warranted result based on their own actions.
- d. Jesus told them a parable about a certain king who wanted to throw a wedding banquet for his son. He had invited certain people, but when the time came, those people didn't arrive. The king sent out some slaves to call the people but still they didn't come. Then he sent more slaves, and this time the people laughed it off and went about their daily lives and activities. Finally some of the people invited to the wedding banquet- meaning they were people of high priority to the king- seized the slaves and killed them.
- e. What an act of defiance against their king. The refusal to attend the wedding banquet was to show that they rejected the son as the rightful heir of the king, and thus a rejection of the king himself. Jesus was being clear that the rejection of him- the Son- was a rejection of God- the King.
- f. This wasn't just a rejection by random strangers, but by the King's own people- Israel. First they simply refused to come. Ultimately they went as far as killing the slaves sent by the King- killing the prophets such as John the Baptist. These are people already in rebellion against God. And yet God had been patient in all their rejection.
- g. But finally his patience grew thin and he sent his army to kill the people and destroy the city. Just like last week where Jesus told of the killing of the son in the parable as a prophecy that Israel would kill him in the future; this time the statement about the king destroying the city was not just a literary device but a prophecy that would ultimately come true.
 - i. In 70 AD the Romans stormed Jerusalem and destroyed it, even destroying the temple and effectively bringing an end to second temple Judaism. The temple has never been rebuilt.
 - ii. Thus Jesus gave them a clear indicator to look forward to in the future as evidence of God's complete displeasure with their rejection of his Son Jesus.
- h. Thus when it was time for the banquet, the king said that the previous invitees were not worthy and he sent and invited new people.

2. Israel displaced by Gentiles

- a. In this case the king sent out and had his slaves round up anyone they saw in the streets and bring them to the wedding feast. The common man, not the originally intended “honored guests” were brought into the feast.
- b. Just like in the last parable, Jesus is showing them that Israel’s rejection of God by rejecting the Son will not only bring about the end as their racial claim as God’s people; but also that God will replace them with the people they despised most- the Gentiles.
- c. This would be terribly hard to hear- that the Gentiles would come in and find a seat at the banquet table. The banquet table was a clear biblical illustration for the kingdom of God, and Gentiles were not believed to have a place in that kingdom.
- d. Yet the previous invitees had been unworthy. They had rejected the king and his patience ran out with them. So he would invite- in fact bring in apparently with even little choice- new people. These new people weren’t invited because they were worthy. They were invited because the king wanted to have the banquet. Worthiness wasn’t a prerequisite. Instead, their worthiness came as a result of the invitation itself.

3. The garment of righteousness

- a. Even though the king sent out a call to everyone to come in, not everyone was allowed to stay. The king noticed a man not wearing a wedding robe. When the king asked him why, he was speechless. Literally, he was without an excuse. He had received a great invitation but hadn’t thought that the king deserved enough respect to actually dress appropriately.
- b. So this man was bound and thrown outside into the outer darkness, where there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
- c. This seems awfully harsh, doesn’t it? But let’s look a little deeper. The people were brought off the streets to the wedding right at the time of the banquet. They were people out and about their daily work when they were brought. It was the king himself who provided them with the wedding garment that they were to wear. So what was the reason for one of the people not having on a wedding garment when he was given one by the king?
- d. This shows that this man had rejected the king, even though he showed up to the banquet. Sure he was willing to come for the free meal and all the good stuff. But he didn’t respect the king enough to show the proper respect and put on the garment given to him to make him acceptable at the feast.
- e. Think about this. He wasn’t invited because he was worthy. Instead, in his unworthiness he was brought to the banquet and even given the proper attire. Likewise, we come to Christ apart from our worthiness, and then in order to be welcome at the feast we are clothed with the garment of Christ’s righteousness. We don’t even have to make ourselves worthy. We simply accept the worthiness of the one throwing the feast and clothe ourselves with it.
- f. And yet not all are willing to do this. Many will come for the good stuff but won’t show the respect to the King. Many will come to God for his blessings but won’t show him the respect of obedience and faithfulness, even when it is Christ’s obedience that they are ultimately judged by, and then they are filled with the Holy Spirit to empower them into righteousness of their own. The only logical way to see

it is that they don't really respect the King and therefore won't accept the simplicity of the gifts he offers.

- g. Jesus closed the parable by saying, "Many are called, but few are chosen." This seems to indicate the difference between the universal call of God versus those who respond to God's call and are chosen as his people. We see people all the time coming to the feeding trough of God's love and blessing without committing themselves to any kind of respect to him. They want his blessings, they want to be at his banquet, but they aren't going to let him have any say so or control over their lives.
- h. They have heard the universal call, but they haven't had the inward calling of the Holy Spirit that moves them to true repentance and a life with Christ. It is important to remember that we are all invited to the banquet, but not all who show up will be allowed to stay. Just like he didn't under the old covenant with Israel, even today the king doesn't tolerate those who abhor or reject him.
- i. Respond to the call. Accept the invitation to the banquet. And make sure to put on the garment of Christ's righteousness and be prepared to show the proper respect for the King who has called you to his table. It is the same King who sacrificed his Son for you to provide you with the wedding garment needed for the banquet.