

LOOKING AT LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPEL



www.orlaghinthecity.ie

TWENTY EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

11th October 2026

Matt. 22:1 Once more Jesus spoke to the chief priests and pharisees in parables, saying: ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.’ ⁵But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his slaves, ‘The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.’ ¹⁰Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Matt. 22:11 “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.”

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

In this parable, the main story seems to contradict the final paragraph! It is interesting to note that the same parable is found in Luke 14:15-24, but this time without the appendix, leaving us with the image of the kingdom of God open to all comers. Matthew's version makes the parable “edgy” and uncomfortable to read.

All of this means that the final paragraph was added by Matthew to the text to speak to some situation in the community for which he was writing.

This editorial fingerprint is confirmed by the strange insertion of the story of a war in the middle of the parable. The very difficult v. 7 produces a dissonant combination of nuptial and bellicose imagery. (On a practical level, interrupting the gathering of guests by a mini-war would surely have created problems for those preparing the food!)

So, all in all, a lot of “interference” by Matthew to get the old parable to speak again to his community. He may be anxious that the story of the rejection of the original guests (the Jews) and their replacement by the new guests (the Gentiles) might lead to undue complacency and so he introduces the guest “not dressed” for the occasion. Hence the scary warning at the end: many are called but few are chosen.

Thought for the day

In the parables of Jesus, wedding feasts are mentioned from time to time. The original parable may have ended with the words “invite everyone you can find to the wedding.” The detail of the troops—highly unlikely as an actual part of a wedding invitation(!)—realistically portrays the later destruction of Jerusalem, which Christians did indeed look back upon as punishment precisely for that rejection. The final verse is difficult for us today on a spiritual level. However, it is meant to provoke (re)conversion in a possibly (!) complacent church.

KIERAN O'MAHONY OSA - www.tarsus.ie

REFLECTION

‘There is no such thing as a free lunch’, or so the saying goes. The underlying thought here is that you get nothing for nothing and it is, no doubt, an accurate reflection of many people's experience. However, when the prophet Isaiah (1st reading) was looking for a way to show his downtrodden contemporaries just what their God was really like, he chose the image of the free sumptuous banquet. Like us, they had been so drawn into the ways of the world that they had forgotten the unparalleled generosity of their God. Like them we need to turn around and sit at God's table and let him serve. We also need to make a connection between accepting the generosity of God and witnessing to it in our own lives. So, let's turn up properly dressed!

SEAN GOAN - Let the Reader Understand

Jesus understood his life as a great invitation from God. He wasn't forcing anything on anyone. He was proclaiming the good news of God, awakening their trust in the Father, taking away their fears, infusing them with joy and a desire for God. Everyone should receive his invitation, especially the people most in need of hope.

Today many people no longer hear any call from God. Perhaps one of the most important tasks facing the Church today is to create spaces and facilitate experiences in which people can listen simply, transparently, and joyfully to God's invitation as it is proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus.

All studies today say the same thing. Religion is in crisis in the developed societies of the Western world. But we believers need to remember: God is not in crisis. The religious crisis cannot stop God offering himself to us all, in the mysterious depths of our consciousness.

But where do people today look for happiness? When people are only looking for more material well-being they lose their ear for any sound that comes from outside the world of their self-interest. They have no eyes to see other dimensions beyond material well-being, possessions, and social status. In the words of Max Weber, they have "lost their ear for religion".

Jesus' parable reminds us again that at the deepest level of life there is an invitation to seek other paths to freedom and fullness. Our greatest mistake would be to make light of God's call, and go off by ourselves to our lands and our businesses.

JOSÉ A PAGOLA - The Way Opened up by Jesus

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

There are two parables here that Matthew has joined together. Looking at the first one:

1. Scripture often speaks of the kingdom of God as a banquet. The image of people being at a meal where everyone is happy and welcome and where all hunger and thirst is satisfied gets across the idea that God loves, accepts and welcomes us and wants us to make that experience available to one another. Think of times in your life when you have had "banquet" experiences and when you have felt accepted and loved?
2. The host enlists the help of his servants to invite people to the banquet. We are commissioned by the Lord to invite people to the banquet of the kingdom, to the fullness of life – as parents, teachers, friends, etc. What has it been like for you to play a part in leading others to a fuller life?
3. As in the parable last week there is a message about being alert to invitations that offer a fuller life and the danger of losing out if we neglect to respond to such invitations. Perhaps there have been opportunities offered to you that you missed, and now regret. Think also of the blessings you received because you seized the moment and took an opportunity that presented itself.
4. The second parable puts the focus on how we respond to invitations. Some invitations are ones that challenge us to change, to conversion, to put on a 'wedding garment'. What has been your experience of changing in response to an invitation you received?

JOHN BYRNE OSA - Intercom

Jesus is in Jerusalem and the atmosphere is tense. The "chief priests and elders of the people" continue refusing to accept Jesus' call to conversion; they will soon decide to hand him over to the Romans - a decision which leads to their own destruction.

We can identify similar crisis moments in our lives,

- times when, like the chief priests and elders, we refused to read the danger signs - looking back now, we recognise that we were on the road to ruin, in our spiritual lives, in family or community life, in personal relationships;
- times when, like Jesus, we had to continue calling people to repentance even though we were deeply frustrated at their blindness.

The image of the parable is of "a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding". This is a special kind of feast therefore, one which celebrates the establishment of harmony. The parable therefore evokes a moment when a community (or an individual) is "invited" to make an end of "separateness" and a beginning of "oneness" - within ourselves, in the world and in individual communities.

Very often, as we know from experience, people prefer to remain divided. They are caught up in their own affairs. We recognise that it is a moment of truth - as it was in the life of Jesus (see above). If the invited guests continue to reject God's invitation, they will themselves be "destroyed".

Our meditation can focus on the "guests" who eventually come in. They are ourselves when we experience a moment of grace in the form of a "wedding". Surprise is essential to these as to all experiences of grace.

This second part of the parable has two characters: The king and the guest. The guest is insensitive and uncouth; he has no respect for the occasion or his fellow guests. His basic problem is that he does not feel awe at the privilege conferred on him. Identify with the terrible moment when his arrogance finally catches up with him and he who was to be part of a royal occasion is unceremoniously "thrown out into the dark", where there is "weeping and grinding of teeth".

MICHEL DE VERTEUIL - Lectio Divina on the Sunday Gospels