

✠ Matthew 22:1-14 ✠

IN NOMINE IESU

The King sent out His messengers, the prophets, to the House of Israel. They invited the sons of Abraham to the Table of the Lord. They invited the children of Isaac, the seed of Jacob to come and feast without cost, to eat what the Lord gives. They invited them to come and worship the Son. But they refused. They rejected the Son. They spent their time plotting the success and counting their money. They spent their time looking at all their worldly possessions and basking in their own glory. They did not listen to the prophets. Some even killed the messengers of the King.

For this the invitation as a people to come to the Table of the Lord was taken from them. Their city was burned to the ground and they were scattered throughout the nations. Their invitation was revoked and cancelled. Now they are no different than the nations into which they were scattered.

But God is merciful. He did not reject His people completely. He did not revoke His promises, for He cannot lie. He did not wipe them out completely. He saved for Himself a remnant; a chosen few. And to these chosen few He added countless men, women, and children from all the tribes of the earth. Once again the King has sent out His messengers with the invitation to come to the Wedding Feast. But this time the invitation does not go to one people, one tribe, it is given to every man, woman, and child, to those who are near and to those who are far off; to everyone the Lord calls to Himself. The invitation is to come, feast on bread you did not buy, but was purchased by the death of the Son. Come, drink wine you did not toil for but was made as the water into wine, wine into blood – the blood of the Lamb. Come, feast on the Meal of God set on the Table of the Lord, given to you for no price, made available to you free of charge. Everything is ready, come. Only make sure you come dressed in the proper attire. For those who come without the wedding clothes will be removed from the feast and thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen.

We feel sorry for the man caught without the wedding garment. He was there at the feast. He saw the food. He bore witness to the joy and satisfaction of the guests. Maybe he even had had a taste of the heavenly banquet. Certainly he rubbed elbows with the other guests and came to feel at home in this beautiful Banquet Hall. But now comes the King, His all-seeing eye always looking out for the honor of His Son, and sees that this man has no wedding garments and so dishonors the Son. Out He goes; into the darkness. Into the night were there are beasts that would scare the Frankenstein monster and monsters that would cause Dracula to shake with terror.

Poor man.

Why didn't the King give him the clothes then and there? Surely He would have had spares sitting around the man could have had. Or better yet, why didn't the King just overlook the man's clothing and not judge according to appearance but accept him for who he is? Wouldn't have that been fair and merciful? Why was the King so cruel; so exacting; so merciless? What if the man didn't even know he needed wedding garments?

Repent. God is not cruel. He is not unjust. He is not arbitrary. He is not looking to catch you without the garments of salvation. God is good. He is merciful. He is abounding in steadfast love. He looks at the heart, not appearances, and He gives you the wedding clothes with the invitation.

You pity the man, you feel sorry for him, because you are afraid that you are the one without the wedding garments. And in fear you do what all sinners do; you blame God for your sin and unbelief; for your hardness of heart. To excuse your sin and blaspheme you say things like, "Well, that's just the way God made me." Liar. God did not make you to sin and dishonor His Son with your life and body even as you pretend to honor Him with your lips. Your fear blinds your eyes to your own sin and guilt and your heart turns from God who can save you to yourself. You want to make sure that you're not that man without the wedding clothes and because it seems that God is so arbitrary and cruel, you look for the wedding garments in what you've done, who you've witnessed to, how much of the Bible you know, or how often you come to church and how much you do for your church.

But the truth is, that man who stood speechless before the King had been given the wedding clothes by the messengers. They give the right clothing with the invitation. The man just didn't put them on. He wanted to be at the King's banquet on his own accord. Or he didn't want to wear what the King had given. Or he didn't want to look like the other guests, he wanted to be unique. He wanted to stand out; he wanted to show people that he didn't need the King's clothes to be seen as a good and honorable guest. He didn't think he needed to bend to the will of the King to be welcomed into the King's Banquet Hall and eat at the King's Table. Whatever the reason he wasn't wearing them, he had been given the clothes by the King's messengers. Therefore the King asked, "Where are your wedding garments?"

The man was speechless. He didn't know what to say. What could he say? "I didn't get them." No, the clothes come with the invitation. "They didn't fit." No; they're one-size-fits-all. There is no excuse for not wearing the wedding clothes. There will be nothing to say on that Great Day when those without the clothes will be bound hand and foot and thrown out of the Banquet Hall and into the outer darkness. Don't pity him because of the King's actions; they are just and true. Pity him because he hardened his heart and did not listen to the King's messengers. So it will be with all who are called yet do not put on the wedding garments.

So what is the invitation? What are the wedding clothes? The invitation is the Gospel. According to His own will and because of His great love, the Father sent the Son. And according to His own will and love for the Father, the Son came born of a woman, born under the Law to redeem you from the curse of the Law. Obedient to the will of the Father, the Son purchased you with His own body and blood that He may extend to you the invitation of His Father: come you who thirst; you whose throats are parched with sin and guilt. Come to the living waters swirled by the angels of God and quench your thirst for righteousness. Come and buy wine, not with money but with your need. You need this wine that is not just wine, this Chalice of God, come and drink it. Spend your time wisely, reaping what you did not sow; eating what you did not toil for. All have sinned, and all are freely justified. You are invited to the Banquet Hall of the King. Come.

And with the invitation comes the wedding garment. It is faith. It is not good works or knowledge of the Bible or moral living. It is faith created by the Gospel. Faith alone receives what God gives. Faith alone makes you worthy to receive the food of the King. Faith alone

grasps the promise of God that you – yes, you – are invited to the home of the King where there will be laughter and joy, happiness and contentment. Come, wear the garments the King gives, and eat and drink to your salvation.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠