

For Many Are Invited, But Few Are Chosen (Matthew 22:1-14)

For Your Life in Christ the 18th Sunday after Pentecost

October 12th, 2014

Saint Paul's Lutheran Church of Irvine, CA (LC-MS)

Pastor Espinosa

Introduction: the Chief Priests and Elders = Attitudes that Persist!

- A. Two Sundays ago we heard about these leaders questioning Christ's authority (Matt. 21:23-27).
- B. Last Sunday we heard about these leaders rejecting the prophets and Christ Himself (Matt. 21:33-46).
- C. Questioning and rejecting Jesus. Does this sound familiar? Today's parable of ***The Wedding Banquet*** continues to teach what God does about this situation.

Part I: The Parable Speaks to Us!

- A. The parables are remarkable & represent oratory genius & yet we mustn't get too comfortable and forget that through these parables God continues to speak and He is speaking to us!
- B. There are two parts to this parable:
 - 1. Vss. 1-7: Christ is teaching that when God's call is rejected, there are catastrophic results; it quite simply leads to hell, being separated from God and life for eternity.
 - 2. Vss. 8-13: Jesus teaches that sometimes some people pretend that they've been called – they become a part of the visible church; they go to church and participate with those known as "Christian" – but in fact they are hypocrites. *Yes, God's Word teaches that there are real hypocrites in the visible church of Christ; He tells us so in this parable.* And this parable is God's way of confronting each of us so that each one of us would ask ourselves the question, ***"Is it I?!"***
- C. So, in response to this parable, we ask ourselves the first question, "Have I continued to reject God's gracious call?" And then we ask ourselves the second question, "Am I one of the hypocrites only pretending to be one of the Christians?"
- D. And Jesus wraps up this parable and the inherent two questions with this astounding statement:

Matthew 22:14: *"For many are called, but few are chosen."*

Part II: What Do The Figures in the Parable Represent?

- A. God the Father is the King.
- B. The Wedding Banquet is the banquet of redemption and salvation.
- C. It is for the King's "Son" = we all know who The Son is! It is the Savior King who is given all glory, power, dominion and authority! The banquet is for Jesus Christ!
- D. Another title for Jesus Christ is "Bride-Groom"...now guess who His "bride" is? Answer: YOU/The Church!
- E. So the parable is answering a very important question: exactly who is the Church? Who are those identified with "Bride?"
- F. Who gets to stay? Who gets thrown out?

Part III: We Have Reason to Be Anxious:

- A. For example, take the concept of faithfulness in marriage and to the family. Today, the epidemic of adultery, divorce and the epidemic of child abuse (to the point of committing murder) continues to be rampant in our country. These are stark reminders of the fact that faithfulness is becoming less and less popular. One Hollywood actor said in an interview that I witnessed, *"people are not meant to be in a single relationship for life, but to have many relationships."*
- B. This by the way is the result of atheism, agnosticism and the fundamental rejection of the Lord. If one lives this way, then the guiding principle is "what I want," so that we follow our urges much like animals do and this is precisely the enormous danger of Darwinian Evolution because at the end of the day

we are just animals following their instincts and you just can't change your stripes so you may as well go along with the crowd! This is a terrible, horrendous way of thinking and it is utterly destructive to one's self, to others, and to society.

- C. The reason I am discussing these moral aspects is because in the Old Testament idolatry (false worship and the rejection of the true God) was described as ***spiritual adultery***.
- D. You see God has put you here so that you would know Him as your first love, your only God, and the One and Only One to whom you are called to be faithful to. And by the way, if you are faithful to HIM, then faithfulness to others will follow like being faithful to the one you are married to.
- E. But the world resists this message more than I can say. The culture today says in so many words, *"We are not meant to follow One, we are to be open to all, following all, committed to nothing, serving ourselves and uniting to whatever seems most attractive, appealing, and beneficial at the time."*
- F. Now this mentality is not simply reserved for the irreligious, being religious or not really has nothing to do with it. ***The chief priests and elders were very religious, but they had no idea what being faithful to the Lord was about. They may have been religious, but they were very far from God!***
- G. So in telling this parable, Jesus makes it clear that they have just been hard-hearted and unfaithful.

Part IV: Two Terrible Reactions to Jesus:

- A. It is humbling to realize that the Jews Jesus is speaking to had already been invited to the wedding banquet. They had already known of the wondrous and miraculous signs; they had received the holy covenants. God had in fact invited them many times!
- B. But here God was inviting them AGAIN! At verse 3, God sends His servants ***"to call those who were invited."*** God had prepared ***"[His] oxen and [His] fat calves"*** = images of the "fat" and full and rich Gospel "fattened" with every blessing from God. And yet – and this is the terrifying part – ***"but they would not come."*** (v 3) But notice how their refusal is described in two, different ways in verses 5 and 6:
 - 1. From verse 5: Some were just plain disinterested, some could care less about the Gospel. Their reaction was like, "What are you talking about? This religion stuff again? Look, I've no time for that, I'm too busy with the stuff of the here and now...with all these things which will rot and fade and turn to dust...this is my life, all of these toys which will never last...all of these worries which will amount to nothing...all of these ambitions which are meaningless apart from my Creator...I'm too busy for the One who created and redeemed me...I'm not interested, I don't care, I'm too busy.
 - 2. From verse 6: Some were just angry and violent, "How dare you shove your religion on me, I will therefore fight back at you. I will ridicule the Christian faith and I will exalt all of the philosophies and other religions which stand against it; I will salute the atheist and congratulate the agnostic; I will say that immorality is good and I will defend our rights to murder the unborn and I will defend the lifestyles of all regardless of their rejection of God's Word. I will say that your faith is intolerable even as I can't tolerate it. And if you're not careful, I will destroy you too Christian!

Conclusion: The Gospel Confronts It All

- A. But the Gospel faces "I don't care!" and "I hate you!" because all of these are included in "for God so loved the world!" Every one of these are invited for Christ died for all, Christ loves all.
- B. And you are BOTH invited and chosen! How do you know? This is what makes the Sacraments so precious to us! You have been baptized...you've been invited (and received)! You receive the Holy Supper...you've been chosen!
- C. These put Christ before you. Think of the blood of Christ you receive. Luther said, "Gaze upon the wounds of Christ and the blood shed for you; there predestination will shine forth." (St. Louis Ed., II, 181; on Gen. 26:9)
- D. In these Sacraments Christian your disinterest has been covered by the blood of your Savior who was more than interested in you! Your rebellion has been covered by the blood of your Savior who was obedient to overcome your rebellion. In Christ – and in Him alone – you have been invited and you have been chosen! Hold to Him Christian, the One who has taken your unfaithfulness and covered it

with His absolute faithfulness...in Him, you are pure; in Him, you are holy; in Him – once again – you are invited and chosen!