

Sermon Discussion – 5 May 2024

Read Matthew 22:1-14

Getting Started *Sharing from personal experience*

We've all received invitations that we were excited about. We've also all received invitations that we were NOT excited about. What factors determine our excitement to say "Yes" to some invitations while we say "No" to others?

Observation *Discovering the context*

A parable is defined as a story that compares two things that may have multiple meanings. Parables have also been described as "earthly stories with a heavenly meaning." Jesus did most of his teaching using stories. Jesus knew how people think. He knew that listening to stories is one of the best ways to learn and Jesus was a Master storyteller. His use of everyday objects, events and people made complicated issues seem simple.

- Why do you think Jesus used stories, or parables, to teach?

Interpretation *Discovering the meaning*

1. Discuss the significance of the invitation to the wedding feast and the responses given by those invited in v. 1-6. How might their responses reflect attitudes you've seen or felt toward God's invitation to partake in His kingdom?
2. In the parable, the king extends the invitation to everyone, regardless of their social status or moral standing. What does this reveal about the inclusivity of God's kingdom?
3. Reflect on the mercy provided by the king in the parable, particularly in the provision of wedding garments. Why is it necessary for guests to wear it? How does this relate to the concept of salvation in Christianity?
4. The parable emphasises the distinction between being loved as you are and being accepted as you are. What do you think is the difference, and why is it important to understand this in the context of the gospel message?
5. Consider the final verses of the parable where those without the wedding garment are rejected. What do you think Jesus is trying to convey with this imagery? How does it challenge our understanding of salvation and repentance?

Application *Putting knowledge into practice*

- Reflect on the invitation extended to each person to be a part of God's kingdom. How does this invitation challenge your priorities and perspective in life? Are there steps you can take to respond to this invitation more fully?
- In light of the parable, how do you know that are "dressed in Jesus and His righteousness alone"? What steps can someone take to ensure that they are?