

Isaiah 25:6-9

Psalm 23

Philippians 4:4-13

Matthew 22:1-14

The Wedding Banquet

In our gospel for the day Jesus speaks of a Wedding Feast. "The Kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son." Wedding feasts were different in Jesus' day than they are today. Especially a royal wedding. The focus, first of was on the groom, not the bride. Instead of a one-day affair, these events went on for several days. One did not need to bring gifts or even worry about what to wear. It was provided. As you might imagine it was quite an honor to be invited to one of these weddings. It was an invitation you would take seriously if you got one.

To update this just a little and give it some shock value let us just say that a king threw a wedding for his son. He bought some land and built a grand hotel complex, complete with luxury suites for everyone, with all the amenities that one could think of. With it a large dining hall, and the best kitchen and hired the best chefs in the world. This would be a destination wedding in a place of paradise for his son's wedding. I ran across a face book post that had a preacher standing before a couple to be married. The preacher says, "dearly beloved we are gathered in the presence of God in this exotic place and in the presence of your friends and family who spent their life savings to be here." Not with this destination wedding. The king is paying the way and even providing transportation to this place of paradise. The king wants this huge place to be filled, sparing no expense on decorations, only the best of dining cuisine will be served. The king wants the entire place to be full of joy. The king is overwhelmed with excitement just planning it.

The invitations go out and the preparations are made. The invitations will not be mailed. There will be no RSVP cards. They will be delivered by his servants. The invitation list is the A-List. It's a ten day all-expense paid celebration. No one need to pack clothes for they will be provided, bought, and paid for by the king. The place is stocked up with everything that you will need. It will be a time of celebration. No worries, no phones, just an ongoing party. Sounds like great deal doesn't it? How could such an invitation be ignored?

With everything ready, the king sends the servants to pick up the guests. Out they go. There is one problem the limos arrive back empty. No one showed up! The servants tell the king everyone ignored the invitations. One guy said, "I've bought a brand-new combine and I have to go try it out." Another one said I got a tee time. Another said he needed to balance the company check book. Another had an appointment with the hairdresser. Another had to catch the last episode of American Idol. Then some had no excuse and some of the fellow servants were met with violence. Not all the servants returned because they were even killed. The huge banquet hall is empty. A rich supper is ready to be served with none there to eat and drink.

Shocked does not begin to describe the reaction of the king. How about shocked times ten thousand? There will be justice. You better believe it. Those who mistreated the servants will be dealt with. That was the easy part, the king gives the order, and it is done. But there is the matter of the luxurious hotel

and the empty banquet hall in the place of paradise. The King will not have an empty wedding hall. There must be rejoicing and rejoicing there will be.

As shocked as the king is, he is still full of joy and he has to share this joy. So, sends out his servants to gather anyone who knows how to eat and drink to celebrate with him. I don't care who it is, just so they are living and breathing bring 'em. So, they do. Those we consider good, and those we consider bad. The king did not care. The king just wanted to give and celebrate and rejoice.

First of all, the bell boys show up, then those living under the bridge, teachers came next followed by ladies of the night. Then carpenters and stone cutters. Then bakers and candlestick makers. Then the guy who stands at the freeway ramp with the cardboard sign, "Will work for food." One servant brought in the entire crowd from a homeless shelter. All could not believe their good fortune. They all arrived and received their wedding clothes and rushed to their suites to get cleaned up and dressed.

The king was overjoyed, the banquet hall was filled. The place was full of joy, it was quite a scene.

But the king spotted one who was improperly dressed for this wedding. "Friend," the king called him friend, "how did you get in without a wedding garment?" And the man was speechless. He had no excuse. A simple, "I'm sorry," and quick run to his suite to change I believe all would have fixed the situation.

The king is shocked once again, to put it mildly. The look that man gave the king said all. You mean my own clothes aren't good enough for you? The king just wanted to give and give so all could celebrate. So, the man is thrown own into the darkness.

What can we take away this morning?

1. The first thing is the generosity and graciousness of the king. Our Heavenly Father.
2. Second there is the shocking rejection, and the A-List winners end up as losers.
3. Third, the king keeps on inviting. The King desires to give and give all he wants is to give his gifts.
4. Fourth, it is the losers and sinner who receive the king's gifts and they end up being winners.
5. Finally, this paradise place is huge. The Kingdom is Large enough for all people. We heard it from Isaiah this morning. All people were in those for verses 4 times.
6. Then finally, there is one who wanted to come on his own term and receive the gifts of the king.

Like he was good enough. Like he was doing the king a favor by showing up. He gets thrown out.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a King who wants to give to you. We have a God who loves to give. This world. Your life. And finally, your salvation from your sin soiled life. For that God, the Father gives his Son Jesus, who gives His life on the cross taking our dirty soiled clothes on himself on a Friday afternoon. By trusting in His work, He takes your dirty, sinful life, and dirty sin soiled clothes and exchanges them for His life. He gives you the clothes of righteousness, the festal garments of salvation. The Son is the Bride groom who does this for you.

And he provides the feast of never-ending joy. We what do here is just a prelude of what is to come. For us, this place is for you. It really does not matter if you are A-List or below that, blue collar, or white collar, or new to the faith or long time Christian. Or good or bad in the eyes of the world. Here we are, nothing to give but our sins. And receiving forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Once we realize that we can begin living like it. Then you know the value of things of this life are nothing compared to the gifts that God has waiting for you. Then you will rejoice , not only rejoice but live in the peace which surpasses all understanding. The things of this world come and go, but the gifts of the Father are safe and waiting for you.

In Jesus name, Amen