

What Are You Wearing?

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[0 : 00] Well, I just want to make sure you all know who Jiwon Rai is. So Jiwon, who led us this morning in worship, he and his wife, Caitlin, down here yonder, they recently came to our church.

Jiwon is from Nepal, and the way we like to think about it is we are praying for a worship leader, and God sent one from Nepal. But they are a dear couple. Their son Sammy is precious, and they've been staying with us for a little while.

And so Jiwon and I were riding our bikes over here this morning, and at one point Jiwon says, looks at my tie and is like, do I need to wear a tie this morning? And I said, no, of course not.

Have you ever been turned away from somewhere because you weren't wearing the right thing? Or maybe you've shown up somewhere before and you realized within a second, you're like, I am so overdressed.

Or it's like, oh no, I shouldn't be wearing flip-flops. Maybe you get, that wasn't aimed at you.

[1 : 07] It wasn't aimed at you. Now, if God wants to do a work, let him do the work. But it wasn't aimed at you. Well, maybe you get an invitation somewhere, and the first question you think of is, well, what am I going to wear to this?

Something happened in my life 22 years ago that changed how I dress. I married Jenny. With surprising regularity, I get a question on my way out of the house that goes something like this.

Are you really going to wear that? We all know it's not a question. God is at work.

Well, this morning, Jesus asks a question via a parable. And here's the question that he asks.

There's this king in this wedding feast, and a guy walks in, and this king says to him, friend, friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?

In other words, did you not know there's a dress code? Did you not know there's a dress code to this wedding ceremony, this wedding feast? Brothers and sisters, friends, did you not know there's a dress code to this wedding feast?

[2 : 46] To the kingdom of heaven? In order to enter the kingdom of heaven, there's a dress code. Do you know what you need to put on in order to enter the kingdom of heaven?

Do you know what to wear in order to come under God's saving reign? Well, this morning, we're going to look at a parable. And this parable tells us how to rightly respond to the gospel invitation that God the king is making to all sinners.

And he's saying, come into this party of salvation. So what are you wearing? Would you open up your Bibles to Matthew chapter 22, verses 1 through 14?

And I'll just read through this, and then we'll talk about how we're going to proceed. And again, Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.

And sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, and they would not come. Again, he sent other servants, saying, Tell those who were invited, See, I've prepared my dinner.

[4 : 05] My oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast. But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized the servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them.

The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.

And those servants went out in the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment.

And he said to him, Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? And this man was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, Bind him hand and foot and cast him in the outer darkness.

In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen. Listen, this passage is all about how we are to rightly respond to the invitation to come to the party of salvation.

[5 : 24] And so here's how we're going to go through this morning. We're going to, I'm just going to walk you through the parable. So I want to make sure all of us are on the same page of what Jesus is saying here. And then we're going to ask the question, what's the point?

What's the point of this parable? And then we'll close by saying, what does this mean for us today here in Kenosha, 2017? So what? Again, this is all about how to respond to God's gracious invitation to come into the wedding feast.

So let's look at this parable. Let's walk through it. In 22.1 we see, and again, Jesus spoke to them. The them are the Jewish leaders, both the religious leaders and civic leaders.

They're in the temple. We saw this last week. Jesus is speaking directly to these Jewish leaders. And it's to them he's going to speak this parable. Now remember, this is Tuesday of Passion Week. And it turns out that Tuesday is an extremely long day for Jesus and his teaching. So he goes back in the temple. He teaches these three parables. And then he's going to kind of respond to some questions of these religious leaders.

[6 : 38] And then if that weren't enough, he leaves Jerusalem, goes to the Mount of Olives, and he speaks what's known as the Olivet Discourse, Matthew 24 and 25. It all happened on Tuesday.

And then three days later, Jesus is going to get railroaded by the Jewish leaders, and he's going to be hanging on a Roman cross. This parable is a third parable in a trio of parables that Jesus spoke to these leaders.

And so they are very much confrontational. They're very much Jesus asserting his messianic authority. And there's this one other thing I want you to be aware of.

There is this huge kind of sea change going on with Jesus right now. Up until this point, John the Baptist was the last prophet of the old covenant. And Jesus' coming has come to initiate a new covenant.

Do you remember in Matthew 26, just a couple days from where Jesus preaches, he's going to be doing the Passover with his disciples, and he's going to hold up a cup, and he's going to say, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

[7 : 50] And so he's inaugurating a new covenant, a new way in which God will relate with a new people, the church. And so here we are on this kind of, the old covenant is gone out, and the new covenant is coming in, and Jesus is bringing it in.

So all this to say, there's a lot going on. And when we turn our attention here to this parable, you've got to know up front, this is a rather elaborate parable.

In fact, Jesus develops this parable along three stages. The first stage, he addresses this invitation malfunction, verses 2 through 10.

And then he addresses this wardrobe malfunction, in verses 11 through 13. And then he addresses some thinking malfunction, in verse 14. It's his concluding statement.

So let's dig in. Verse 2, Jesus begins the parable by saying, the kingdom of heaven can be compared to. And so, right out of the gate, we've got to remember that this parable is making a point about something.

[9 : 00] Jesus is using the parable to teach about a reality. The reality of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is God's active, saving reign in which God is bringing people to himself and entering into a saving, life-giving relationship with the living God.

When you come under the saving reign of God, you get rescued. You're delivered from sin and delivered into life. The life of God in Christ.

And so, what we see here is, Jesus is setting up this whole thing by saying the kingdom of heaven can be compared to, and then in verse 2, we read what he's going to compare it to.

The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son. The salvation is being compared to a party!

A wedding party. And back in the day, these wedding feasts would go on for days. They were big deals.

[10:06] But this is no ordinary wedding feast. This is a royal wedding feast. This is a wedding feast a king is giving for his son.

For us, this would be like a once-in-a-lifetime event. Back in July 1981, I'm not sure of those of you who would remember this. Princess Diana, Prince Charles got married.

Do you remember that? Big deal for those of you who do. Remember that? That was a big deal.

And it wasn't a wedding feast, but in St. Paul's Cathedral, there's this video of the guests who were there, who were watching Diana come down that red carpet.

And those guests were the privileged invitees of this wedding event. Unforgettable. It was a royal event, and the whole world watched.

It was once in a lifetime. And so what is going on here, this parable of a wedding feast thrown by a king for his son? If we were living there, it would be like this is the event of our lives.

[11:14] The king's son is getting married, and it's a picture of salvation. In verse 3, we see the king sending out his servants to call the privileged who had been invited, literally called, to this wedding feast.

Now, you've got to remember, back in the day, they did not have cell phones. There was no email, no watches. And so what would happen is, the protocol is, for an event like this that happened, you're the host, you send out invitations, and then the day of the event, you send out your servants to say, hey, it's happening today.

Come on, it's ready. Let's rock. And so what we see going on here is that the invitations have gone out, the host, the king, sends out his servants to go invite, to call these people to the feast.

Christ. But the first surprise that we see is, the privileged invitees would not come.

They were unwilling to come. Now, just to give you a sense already of who the characters are in this parable, the king, of course, is God the Father, the son is Jesus, the guy speaking this.

[12:40] This is kind of like an autobiographical parable. You know, he's referring to himself. The privileged few who are invited to the wedding feast are represented by the Jewish leaders, the one Jesus is actually speaking to.

And it's them that are unwilling to come to the party that the king is throwing for the son. This wedding feast is a picture of salvation, and at the center of this feast is the son.

Jesus is at the center of our salvation. In verse 4, after the king gets word back that nobody's coming, he resends graciously, reinvites everybody, sends his servants back out, and he says, make sure you make it sound really good what it is.

He's like, tell them about the oxen and the fattened calves, tell them everything's ready, it's going to be a blast, tell them that it's all ready to go. Come to the wedding feast in honor of my son.

Make sure they all know. What we see here is this king wanting to share, these people to share in his goodness. Come into my celebration over my son.

[13:54] Come into this wonderful event. I've provided everything you need. You just come. Come into this. And what's shocking is that these people don't come. In fact, in verses 5 and 6, we see descriptions of their not coming.

In verse 5 we read, but they paid no attention to the servants, and they went off, one to his farm, another to his business.

It's essentially saying, you know, I've got more, thanks for the invitation, I'm sure it's going to be a blast, but really, I need to get back to my farm.

I need to get back to my business. That's got priority over this once-in-a-lifetime event thrown by the king of all. I'm just going to say no. And then the rest of those invitees, we read in verse 6, that they treated the servants shamefully, even killing them.

Now that should ring a little bell from last week in the parable of the tenants. In the parable of the tenants, we have this father who sends these servants to the vineyard, and those working the vineyard, remember what they do to the servants?

[15:12] They beat them up, they kill them, like whatever. And so what we have here is a thread being Jesus is pulling through these parables. And so what these servants represent are the Old Testament prophets.

John the Baptist, of course, was the last prophet of the Old Covenant. And do you remember how he died? He had his head removed because he was speaking to Herod about the unrighteousness of taking his brother's wife, Herodias.

And it was John the Baptist who was proclaiming, repent for the kingdom of heaven is near. So we see these responses and they're surprising responses.

And then in verse 7, if you look at verse 7, the king was angry and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Their rejection and their treatment of the servants kindled the king's wrath.

So in this parable, we see God's, this gracious invitation as well as authoritative justice. He sends a detachment of soldiers who kill those people who murdered the servants and he sets ablaze their city.

[16:44] And I don't know about you, but when I was initially reading about this, I'm like, man, that's a seriously strong reaction for people not coming to your party. But it's more than that.

There's more going on here than people refusing a party invitation. This is more than saying no to a party. This is a rejection of authority.

This is a rejection of the authority of the king. This is a rejection of a gracious invitation from the one king to come and participate in the events of the lifetime.

What it is, is rebellion. It's insurrection. The killing of his servants. It's an unwillingness to live under the king's reign.

The reference Jesus makes to the setting ablaze of the city. Some theologians believe that it's an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem, which will just take place a couple decades from Jesus saying this in 70 AD.

[17:57] And I'm a little bit, I'm a little bit, I lean that way because Jesus, on this same day, on the mountain of olives, speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem in Matthew 24, verse 2.

There's judgment in the air with these words. And what our sense is, the backdrop here, is God is turning away from the people under the old covenant who've refused him over and over again.

And he's now turning to a new people of a new covenant who will receive him. But what we see going on here is a God who is, a God who invites, come to the wedding feast.

And then there are consequences for rejecting his invitation. Verse 8, the king says to his servants, the wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.

Referring to all those people who've rejected the invitation. They were unwilling to come. That word worthy shows up in Matthew a few different times. And there's one point where it shows up in concentration.

[19:08] Listen to Matthew chapter 10, verses 37 through 38. Whoever loves father or mother more than me, this is Jesus speaking, is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. If you reject the invitation of God to come to the wedding feast of the son, you're not worthy of the son.

Verse 9, after rejecting those who were initially invited, he says something, another surprising thing to his servants. He's like, okay, these folks aren't going.

Let's regroup. Here's what I want you to do. Go, therefore, to the main roads and invite, literally call, to the wedding feast as many as you find.

Those main roads, those would be like the distance road. That's like the, that would be like the intersection on 94 and 75. Way out there.

[20:14] That big intersection, those crossroads, the byways and the highways. Jesus is like, you guys go out. The king's saying, you go out and you get as many as you're willing to fill this, this marriage hall to celebrate this wedding feast of my son.

In verse 10, we see the servants go out into the roads, into the crossroads, and they gather whom they found. And what Jesus in this parable makes clear is they're both bad and good.

And what that is getting at is there's a mix of guests in the wedding hall. They have responded.

They have come, but it's a mix of people in the wedding hall.

So the king fills the wedding hall in verse 10 with those who've responded to this second invitation to a bigger group of people. And by this point in the parable, we've had three surprises.

Surprise number one, those who were originally invited refused to come. Second, those who refused to come were destroyed. Third, their judgment and destruction, their refusing, it opens the door to a whole new group of people on the crossroads to be invited to the wedding feast.

[21:36] the first invitation to that original group. Think of that as like the old covenant established in Moses.

And this second invitation is the new covenant, the gospel invitation that goes to everyone on the planet. The parable doesn't end here though.

The parable continues. So there's a second stage of the parable and that's in verses 11 through 13. Verse 11, the king comes to the wedding hall to survey all the guests that his servants have brought.

He wants to check it out. And the part of the parable, this part of the parable has some similarities with some other parables in Matthew, Matthew 13. The parable of the weeds in the parable of the dragnet.

And what happens in those parables is that there's this big harvest of something and it's a mixed harvest and as a result there is a sifting out, a sorting out.

[22 : 44] And so what it looks like is going on here is there's a bringing together of a mixed group of people and now what we're going to see this king do is do a little sorting out. It happens when the king's eyes fall on those invited and one stands out because he's not wearing a wedding garment.

Now, I'm sure you've got an invitation before to go somewhere. And on those invitations, oftentimes, there's some instructions for what you should wear. For example, you might read something like business casual dress requested or formal attire necessary or just come as you are, very casual.

The attire of a first century royal wedding feast would be you wear a wedding garment. you wear something different than your normal everyday work clothes.

You've got to change out of your sweat outfit and you've got to change into some clothing that's appropriate for this event. And so, as the word went out to invite all of these people from the byways and highways and crossways, it would have been understood that to come to a royal wedding feast, you've got to change before you come in.

You've got to put something else on. Well, if you didn't, it would insult the host. It's like this man at this wedding feast is saying, hey man, I don't have to change for you.

[24 : 36] Oh, but you know what? Those bacon wrapped water chestnuts, I love them. I'll have another one of those, but I'm not changing. In verse 12, look at what the king does.

He asks for an explanation. He asks for an accounting. He starts with friend. How did you get in here without a wedding garment?

Did you not know about the dress code? Did you not know that a wedding garment is required to enter this wedding hall in order to celebrate the wedding of my son?

And what we read in verse 12 is that this man's response is he was speechless and the original language behind that is he's muzzled. He didn't have anything to say and it wasn't a speechlessness like, oh, I had no idea.

Mom's the word. Not that kind of speechlessness. It's not the kind of speechlessness that comes from saying he couldn't afford his wedding garments. That's not the issue here. He was speechless because he thought he could skip over the need to change and he didn't think anyone would notice.

[25 : 49] But who noticed? The king noticed. It's another snapshot of judgment. There's a requirement to enter into the wedding feast of the son.

There's a requirement to enter the kingdom of heaven into salvation. What is it? Do I have to do good works?

Do I need to show myself as worthy and so live this perfect life and maybe he'll let me in? John the Baptist and Jesus, when they started their public ministries, they started preaching the same thing. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Repent. Repentance is a kind of change. Repentance is a change of heart from trusting in something that is unable to save you.

In fact, if you're trusting it, it condemns you and so you move from trusting in something other than God to trusting in the only one who can save you.

[27 : 03] It shows up in things like from trusting in alcohol to make everything just right. You turn from that, you repent of that from trusting and buying things in order to scratch that itch you got inside.

That's not going to save you. Trusting in the next sexual encounter, that's not going to fulfill your life. You've got to turn from trusting in your own obedience to God's commands in order to make you acceptable in God's sight.

You've got to repent of that kind of thinking. This man is in the wedding hall but he's not wearing the right clothes.

He didn't come in right. He didn't come in with the right clothes, posture of heart. His confidence was in something else.

His sense of calling was somewhere else. He wasn't there for the wedding feast of the Son. In Matthew 16, Jesus talks about this as, hey, if anyone would come after me, they need to deny themselves.

[28 : 16] Deny yourself. Take up your cross and follow me. This is another way of talking, hey, are you willing to deny yourself to be a follower of Jesus? Jesus?

And in verse 13, what the king does next is somewhat surprising. He has his servants bind this wrongly dressed man and cast him out of the wedding feast into outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And we've come across that phrase before in the Gospel of Matthew. And what that phrase talks about is the agony and pain that takes place in the place of eternal judgment.

And so this is one of those points in this parable where this parable bleeds into reality. The consequences of trying to enter the kingdom of heaven without repenting.

Trying to come in on my terms, not the king's terms. The consequences of that is so severe. Our legal system in the United States is broken.

[29 : 23] I think we realize that. Different people are treated differently based upon who they are. We know that. But still, there is an intention in our legal system to make sure a punishment fits the crime.

So part of what the job of a judge is to make sure a punishment fits a crime, fits an offense. And so this morning, let's just ask the question, does this guy getting kicked out of this wedding feast because he's wearing the wrong clothes, is that fitting?

Is that fair? If the wedding garments represent repentance, then yes, it is fair.

The punishment does fit the crime. There's more going on here than just a wardrobe malfunction. It's a posture of heart. It's a willingness to say, there is no way I can get into this party on my own. There's nothing I can do. In fact, all the things I've done would keep me out. I've got to turn from those. Recognize those.

[30 : 45] So if you're unwilling to turn from your sin, what Jesus is saying is you're not allowed into the wedding feast. You must acknowledge your sin before God so that you can be saved.

So the second stage of the parable focuses on one guy who responded to the invitation for anyone to come, but he did not respond rightly. He came in thinking he wouldn't be noticed.

He came in skipping the thought that he needs to actually change his clothes. And by doing so, he offends the king.

He wasn't coming in on the king's terms. The king noticed. He notices you.

He knows your thinking. He knows your posture of heart. He knows what you're wearing.

[31 : 56] In both of these stages of this parable, we have two examples of what keeps people out of the kingdom. The first are those who don't even respond.

The second is one who responds but doesn't respond according to God's requirements. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is near. And therefore, both are excluded from the kingdom.

They're all invited but only a few get in. Which brings us to 14. Jesus concluding summary of this parable.

He says, for many are called but few are chosen. This idea of being called is the sense of being invited. And we see it throughout the whole parable.

Invitation after invitation to varying groups of people. Come to the wedding feast. Come. Come. Under the new covenant, God extends the invitation to everyone.

[33 : 03] Everyone from everywhere is welcome to come into, invited to come into the party of salvation with Jesus at the center of it. Many have been invited.

Theologically speaking, this is known as the general call of the gospel. The gospel is sent out generally. You don't know who's going to respond. You proclaim it and it goes out to everyone you can.

That's what we want to do here in this church. We want to get the gospel out. We don't know who will respond but we want to get it out to every nook and cranny of the city. We don't know how people are going to respond and so from our perspective, the general call goes out and we're extending the invitation of the king to come to the wedding feast of the son.

Many are called. Many. But few are chosen. The few that Jesus is speaking about is a subset of the many. Of the many invited to the wedding feast only a fraction will come in.

Only a few will be saved. And this should maybe ring a bell from Matthew chapter 7. Enter by the narrow gate for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction and those who enter by it are many.

[34 : 32] For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life and those who find it are few. Many. Few. Many are invited.

Few are chosen. And that word chosen gets at this sense that these are the legit of God.

These are the ones God himself knows belong to him. We see the same word show up in Matthew 24. There it's used in terms of the word elect.

And when Jesus uses it in Matthew 24 that way he's talking about those God knows who are generally his. Those who belong to him. These are the folks that Jesus talks about in Matthew 11 where he has chosen to reveal the father to that Jesus chooses to do that.

In theological terms this is getting at the idea of effectual call. When the gospel is proclaimed those to whom the son has chosen to reveal the father they will respond in repentance and faith.

[35 : 40] God knows that he has elected them from the before the foundation of the world. When the gospel is proclaimed to all in general only some will respond effectually.

those whom the son has chosen to reveal the father. And so what Jesus is saying here is hey many are called this parable shows as many are called but few are actually chosen.

Few actually belong to God. And so what Jesus seems to be saying here is don't confuse the invitation with the response. And for those Jews who are hearing Jesus say that he is radically shifting their understanding.

You're not chosen. You've rejected the son. So what is this point of this parable?

The point is this. You've got to rightly respond to the gracious invitation to the wedding feast of the son. It's all about how you respond.

[37 : 01] God's gracious invitation calls for an appropriate response. how we respond to the king's invitation matters.

The first group they rejected the invitation and they suffered a severe justice for it. The second group represented by the one who was not wearing the wedding garments.

He was invited. He came. He showed up. But he wasn't wearing the right clothes. He wasn't responding in repentance. You think he could get in on his own terms.

How you respond to the king's invitation matters. You must respond rightly. And so what does this mean for us today? What does this mean?

What is this parable? How does this show up in our lives today? Well here's how. The God that Jesus was referring to in this parable is the same God today.

[38 : 10] He's a God who is gracious and is extending the invitation to the wedding feast to everyone today. To you. He's inviting you to come into his celebration of his son.

Come. If you have not responded to the invitation by God himself to come into the kingdom of heaven, come into the kingdom.

Respond. Say yes, I'm coming. He's a gracious, wonderful God who invites all to come.

But the same God is a God of authority and justice. For those who reject the invitation, he speaks of it as destruction, casting into outer darkness.

To reject his invitation outright or to try to twist it to make it fit your life is met with severe justice.

[39 : 14] God. But there's one thing else I want to point you to about this God that Jesus speaks of in this parable. This king is a father who delights in his son.

This king is a father who delights in his son. We see it in the other parables as well. The parable of those two sons, there's father-son theme. The parable of the tenants, there's a father sending his son theme.

And here, we have a father delighting in his son. In fact, God the father set a plan in place from before the foundation of the world to unite all things together in his son Jesus.

It's the greatest party ever. So you've got to remember that the God of this parable is the God who is reigning today.

The second thing I want to call you to, is to honestly examine yourself. To take stock of yourself. It's possible to delude yourself into thinking that, hey, I'm in.

[40 : 26] Maybe you're not. What are you wearing? What are you wearing? In 2 Corinthians 13, 5, Paul writes to a church, a people who profess to be followers of Jesus.

Jesus. And he urges them to examine themselves to see if they're in the faith, to see if they are in Christ, to see if they're in the kingdom. them. Paul were to use the words of this parable, he's like, hey, are you guys sure you're wearing the right stuff?

And this morning, I just want to give you two questions to be asking yourself to examine yourself to see if, in fact, you are in the kingdom. Here are the two questions.

Question number one, where is your confidence? What does your salvation depend on? If you think that your salvation depends upon your work and actions to get you into the wedding feast, you've got the wrong clothes on.

Your confidence is not in what you do, it's what the Son has done. Three days from what Jesus speaks this parable, he will be hanging on a cross and he will be bearing the wrath of God for the sins of all those who would believe in him.

[41 : 58] That's the work. That's the confidence. you must turn from trusting in yourself and set your heart on Jesus.

Where's your confidence? What's your calling? Second question, what's your calling? What's your aim in life? If your aim is to advance yourself, you're wearing the wrong clothes.

If your aim is Christ's glory, welcome to the kingdom. Come on in. What's your confidence?

What's your calling? Repentance means turning away from trusting in yourself to get into the kingdom. It turns away living for yourself.

Whoever would follow me must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. take stock of yourself. There's one other piece of application here.

[43 : 14] And it's secondary but significant. Do you remember what happened when Jesus was speaking this parable and that initial group that was invited to the kingdom, they rejected the invitation?

The king sent out the invitation to anyone. We see God's heart to invite anyone into the wedding feast of the son.

Here's what that means for us. There are people all over the city that are waiting on an invitation. and we get to say, hey, do you want to come to the wedding feast?

Do you want to come to the wedding feast? God over all has invited you to come to the wedding feast. And all you need to do is wear the right clothes.

And what those clothes are is to humbly acknowledge your need for God. To repent and trust him.

[44 : 27] This morning, maybe you're realizing that you have been responding to God's gracious invitation on your own terms. Well, you don't need to be speechless like the guy that we saw in the parable.

To respond rightly to God's gracious invitation is to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus. And all that you need to say is, Lord Jesus, change me, change me, and welcome me in. Let's pray. God in heaven, we do thank you so much that you are a gracious God who warmly invites sinners into the kingdom of heaven.

God, you part of that invitation is a call to repent, to don the right clothes to enter in. God, would you help us to see ourselves as you see us and to respond rightly.

God, for those of us who by your mercy and grace have come into your kingdom, all glory and praise and honor to your name.

[45 : 49] Jesus, we say to you, thank you. Amen.