

The Invitation | Matthew 22:1-14

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we are encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. I'm Pastor Patrick Daly, and each week I share sermons that balance the grace and love of Jesus Christ with the truth of the Word of God.

Together, we'll explore Scripture using observation, interpretation, and application. This helps us discover practical ways to live out our faith every single day.

Let's dive in together into God's Word. Well, good morning, everyone. It is great to be here with you as we are almost done with January of 2025.

Didn't that just fly by real quick? I don't know about you. I feel like I blinked, and it was just here we are at the end. Today, we're doing a message titled, The Invitation.

If you want to turn your Bibles and be proactive, go ahead and do so. You can turn on your ESV Pew Bible. It's going to be page 983.

[1 : 04] It is the parable of the wedding feast. But before we begin here, when was the last time, I don't know if my handwriting is visible to be seen here, when was the last time you received a letter or an invitation to a birthday party?

Maybe the last time you received an invitation to a wedding. You think of the last time that happened. When we get these invitations, this is just an example.

It's not an actual party, but it's a representation of what we're going to go over today. And I want you to think for a moment how exciting it must be to receive an invitation that someone thought with intentionality to invite you to a birthday party, to a wedding anniversary, or a wedding celebration. Maybe it's some sort of, someone got a promotion. Maybe it's something completely different. Or maybe it's a baby shower. We can think of all these events where we receive these invitations. Sometimes they're really simple. Or sometimes they're very over the top and fancy. I know we've gotten those before. And the feeling that we have when we receive an invitation is something that is something that's significant.

[2 : 27] Maybe it's that milestone celebration. Did you feel nervous the last time you received an invitation? Maybe you felt excited that someone did think with that intentionality, with you.

And what I want us to think about when we think of these different emotions that we have when we receive different invitations, let us think of the greatest invitation that we have, and that's to come to the feast.

Or in this case, it is to come to the wedding feast. Because God invites us, as we can see here as a realistic example, God invites each and every one of us to come to the feast, to taste and see that the Lord is good, or just as Jesus said in the Gospel account, to come and see.

Let us turn to Matthew 22, verses 1-14, whether that be your ESVP Bible or your Bible of choice, your mobile device.

And we see that Jesus is telling a parable about a king who sends out invitations. So let's read together. And again, Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, Would they come?

[3 : 59] They would not come. And again, he sent other servants, saying, Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, 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 his servants and treated him shamefully and killed them.

That's a pretty drastic scene here, if you think about it. Killing the messengers here. The king was angry, and so he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned the city.

Then he said to his servants, The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore where? To the main roads, and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.

And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both what? Good and bad. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

[5 : 07] But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw, and this is interesting, I always thought this was a very interesting part of the parable. He saw there was a man who had no wedding garment.

He just invited everyone to the feast, and there's this guy who has no appropriate clothing. And he said to him, Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? And he was what? He was speechless, right? Then the king said to his attendants, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him out into the outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. It kind of ends, really. You're like, what just happened here? You have all these people at the wedding feast, and there's this one guy there, doesn't have the proper clothing, and you just throw him out, right?

But we'll see in just a moment here. Cast him into outer darkness. In that place there will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth. I've always, even as a kid, I never liked that kind of imagery, right?

[6 : 06] The gnashing of teeth. And verse 14, it ends by saying, For many are called, but few are chosen. And I want to go to this next slide here, because when we're reading this specific parable, like many parables, you'll find, first off, there's a list here, and second off, I was very thorough in my notes.

Full disclaimer, you'll see probably the most footnotes references I've probably ever done in a sermon before. And we're not going to go through all the footnotes. That's for you in your own study.

But the thing that we find here is that there's the king that represents God. And the wedding banquet represents the kingdom of heaven.

Then we go on to the Son, Jesus Christ. And the servants, which represents most specifically the prophets, but also later the apostles.

Remember how there was mentioning of the murders that happened? Think about that. The invitation then is an invitation to come to the wedding banquet, to come to salvation.

[7 : 14] And it's very important to note, we see that this wedding feast is a representation of the biblical account. The entire narrative, all jam-packed into a few verses here.

The first invitation is a representation of Israel to the people of God. And the second invitation, remember what the verse said, to everyone good and bad.

The second invitation then is to all people. And then we have the guests, all who responded.

Isn't this interesting? And we think for a moment that there's finally the wedding clothes, Christ's righteousness. When we think of how we become Christians, we put on the new clothes, right?

The new identity in Christ. Think about that. It's as though you're putting on the wedding garment for this great feast. Do you realize that when we look at the entire biblical account, it's a love story between God and his people, and it goes all the way until there's the wedding feast, there is the amount of time where eventually not enough time will happen, and there will finally be judgment representing what's happening in this great wedding.

[8 : 46] Just like how we, some of us may know, and this is, it's simple, but it's complex. When we think of Christ being the bridegroom and the church being the bride, the representation of the marriage that will happen.

Do you see it? And then finally you have outer darkness, which is the final judgment. And you'll see in your notes here, that section, if you want to pull out your notes real quick, that Jesus speaks in parables, which are simple stories revealing deeper spiritual truths.

The king God prepares the wedding banquet, for his son, Jesus Christ. The king's servants, the prophets and apostles invite guests, Israel, the people of God, but they refuse.

Okay. A second invitation shows God's patience, yet some guests make excuses, and others kill the servants. Do you see how it's kind of showing the whole narrative within scripture?

The invitation then is opened up to anyone willing to come, both good and bad. It shows that the gospel invitation is greater than the first invitation. And one guest is found without wedding clothes, which symbolizes the lack of Christ's righteousness, which is no different than when we find, Lord, Lord, when did we, when did you ask, when were you hungry, and we didn't feed you?

[10:28] Right? In those verses where it says, Lord, Lord, and God said, the Lord, Jesus says, I never knew you. The difference between authentic and inauthentic faith, those that truly believed in Christ, and those that didn't.

And this is a parallel with that. So, symbolizing lack of Christ's righteousness, in other words, it's a works-based system that he followed. He is speechless.

He is shocked at the fact that he gets called out. The improperly clothed guest is cast out into outer darkness, and this foreshadows the final judgment to those who lack true salvation.

And then finally, many are called and few are chosen, shows that the invitation is available to everyone. And so this goes into, what can we learn from this?

Right? We can see here, as I mentioned, it's part of the narrative of Scripture. It shows to, what we can learn is that God's invitation is for the good and the bad, as it were.

[11:43] We think about it, we need to see that this invitation, just as I showed the letter, salvation is free for all who believe.

And it's the question of whether or not you are going to respond to the invitation or not. So we have to think that every moment and every day of our lives is an opportunity for us to respond to God's invitation, come to the Lord, and respond to it.

We then also have this idea that we must wear the right garment, Christ's righteousness. So what does it mean? Do I need to change my clothes and just put on a coat and tie, or I need new jeans or some shiny shoes?

What does that mean? We're talking about that when we believe in Jesus Christ, we put on the new self. There's a verse that's in Revelation, blessed is the man who washes his robes, representing how sin gets washed away by believing in Christ.

And that kind of imagery is the kind of imagery we can think of when we are putting on the new self, talking about transformation that comes from the Lord, being restored unto Him, being reconciled unto Him, and realizing it's not about the shirt that I wear, but it's about whether I believe in Jesus Christ or not.

[13:10] And upon that belief, when you put on the new self, are you going to grow in Christ? Are you going to act upon what you are learning? That's the question that you have to think about.

We cannot... It also goes to show us, when we look at the man that didn't have the proper clothes and the people that did, is that it has to do with, are you relying on your own works or your own merits?

Or are you trusting what has been done for you? In a simplistic way, it would be said, what can you do versus what has been done for you?

And we believe as Christians that Christ died on the cross, He was buried, and He was raised on the third day. It was in accordance of the Scriptures to fulfill the prophecies and to show it's not about what we can do, it's about what has been done for us.

And we respond by receiving that invitation, right? We respond to the invitation, being saved by grace through faith. We need the new clothes that God provides, and it's the putting on of the new self.

[14:26] And I want you to ask yourself for a moment, what does it look like to put on the new self? Realize there is inner transformation when we think of the attributes of the new self.

Laying aside the former things and the former darkness, the sin that once existed, all of these things. How many of you have had that one shirt or that one pair of pants you just refuse to get rid of?

Right? Think of it like that. You got to get rid of it. You got to move on to what, in this, in the spiritual sense, I have them too.

The one that God provides. And to put on the new self is to exhibit Christ-like qualities. Living and loving like Jesus.

Sharing in the gospel and your testimony. When we studied Colossians, there are specific attributes. When we think of our Advent season, we think of the peace that surpasses all understanding, the inexhaustible, inexpressible joy, the love that comes from Christ, the hope that's in Him.

[15:36] That should shine for others to see. Right? Just like that song. Hide it under a bushel? No. I'm going to let it shine.

And then we go into that next point, which says that rejecting God's invitation has consequences. It's just like rejecting any invitation. Right? Are you going to go to the birthday party or not? You know? I get it. Sometimes we don't like the people who are there, so we reject it. But when we think of spiritual matters, when we're thinking of this invitation to salvation, you have a choice on whether or not you're going to respond or not to respond. That is a decision that only you can make. And I pray that if you haven't responded to the Lord, that you will. That you'll respond to this invitation. Because we don't know how long our life will be. So take every moment and think for one moment or one day.

[16 : 39] Do you believe in Jesus? Do you follow in His footsteps? Have you responded to the invitation? Have you put on the wedding clothes? Are you ready to partake in the feast? I mean, when we think of a feast, it sounds like a wonderful time.

If you guys can ever think of those commercials where it shows a Thanksgiving and the turkey looks just right. You've got that fancy cranberry sauce, the mashed potatoes. You guys are going to probably be hungry in this, right? But you get that image, right? Of a Thanksgiving celebration, right? Now, we think of that being like a feast in the physical world. But in the spiritual world, it's something that's in abundance. And then finally, it says that many are called and few are chosen.

Now, we must keep in mind that the call for salvation, to be chosen is to respond to that invitation. [17 : 39] Response involves receiving this gift of salvation and living it out. Let us have not just faith, but a living and active faith.

Let us be like the soil that receives the seed in the ground, but let us grow having those deep roots and growing to the point where we bear fruit.

It helps us understand. Learning these parables helps us understand the simplistic, but the deep truths of how our God works.

Isn't it remarkable? We can look at plants that grow in the ground and think of how we should be like a plant and grow and be cultivated. Much like when we ever, if you ever go to a wedding celebration, a reception, you can think of this parable about the invitation.

And ask yourself, have you, again, have you responded by receiving salvation? Are you living out your faith? Let your light, the light of Christ, shine for others.

[18 : 55] We now go to the next, which is the application. And it's how can I apply and live out these verses? And it's very important. No matter where you're at in your life journey, I pray that you come to know who Jesus Christ is.

That you receive that gift of salvation. And upon receiving that gift of salvation, may you grow in him. And may you be moved to do good in the name of Christ.

And so here we see there are specific people. Maybe you identify with one of them. Maybe you have been invited and you haven't responded.

Maybe you identified with the unwilling. This is a call for you to, if you're either of those, to respond to the invitation. If you have been invited, respond in faith.

If you have been unwilling, let this be a call for you to be open to receive that free gift of salvation. Let's face it.

[20 : 07] There are many people who have been invited. Have they all responded? And there are some people that are unwilling. Even for us as Christians, we should pray for those who are unwilling. For a changing of the mind.

A softening of the heart. Much like how we were praying earlier for these terrible things that happen in the community. We have got to pray for the hearts and the minds of those that do naughty or evil things.

Right? I can say that as a parent. Right? Don't be naughty, kids. We pray for hearts to be changed. And so, for the invited and the unwilling, it is respond to the invitation.

No matter what your background is, even if you've said no up until this point, you can still respond. Don't wait until it's too late.

God welcomes you to his feast. And ask yourself the question then, what if today is the day that you respond and say yes to the Lord?

[21 : 13] What if you say yes to God's invitation and trust in him for salvation? Well, then, there's the gathered and the unworthy to return to the banquet.

Some of us have been gathered. We might have walked away. Some of us have been unworthy. I want you to know, specifically, it doesn't change God's ongoing invitation for your life.

God's call for your life. Like I've mentioned before and I'll mention again, man will fail you. People will fail you. But God will never fail you.

And our faith should be much stronger and much deeper than what man does. We place our trust in the living God, the firm foundation for our lives.

And so, perhaps you identify with one of those two. Remember, when we read that, it is the good and the bad that we're invited.

[22 : 28] Think about that. The good and the bad were invited. Maybe it is time, maybe you identify or maybe you know someone that it's time to step back into the body of Christ.

To step back into church. Maybe it is time to ask God for healing. But in any case, I want you to know that God loves you.

No matter what people have done or what people are doing or even what people will continue to do, God is our constant and he will never abandon you.

So come to the feast. Return to the banquet. And then finally, for the guests and the unprepared, we can think of what that means, right?

Those who are wearing the wedding clothes and those that are not. Examine your garment. It is the call for us to not to rely on our own works or on our own merit to save us.

[23 : 32] It is what Christ has done for us and us responding to that. To be clothed in righteousness, to be clothed in Christ, to put on that new identity, that new self.

It is saying yes to Christ and believing in him and be saved. Sometimes we get too much into the groove.

Sometimes people forget that it's about us believing in Christ. Sometimes we focus more on rituals or we focus more on routines rather than who Christ is.

And I pray that doesn't happen to any of us. let us focus on the death, burial, and resurrection, the power of the gospel, the transformation that comes from him rather than just rules and regulations because there is freedom that is in Christ.

Think about that. Sometimes it's good to examine your garment and especially, most especially if you're unprepared. Maybe you've been invited but you didn't really get it.

[24 : 47] Maybe you didn't realize that you do have to believe in Christ. Maybe you were told something contrary that you know, it's about how much money I donate, it's about how many times I pray, how many times I read certain literature and books.

No. It is about what Christ has done for you. I pray that if you identify as a guest or unprepared and you do examine your heart, examine your garment, that you do have a genuine and authentic faith in Jesus.

And then finally, for the servants and for the chosen, it's to extend the invitation to other people.

When we think about this, just like the king's servants went out into the world, we too are called to go out and to invite others to the wedding feast.

And I want you to really think about that. Maybe you identify with the servant or the chosen. Let us tell our friends, our family, even our neighbors, about the invitation to the feast, that they too may come and see that the Lord is good, or that they may experience his love and hear from the word of God.

I pray that if you are a servant or you identify with the chosen, that you will extend that invitation to others. Ask yourself then the question, who do I know who has not been invited?

[26 : 33] Or who do I know maybe has been unwilling? This is a question that you can answer. Think of those who are in need. Think of those who are yet to be invited or those that maybe they just need you to show up.

Be present with them. Be authentic with them. Not saying go in, guns a-blazing, you know. It's all about relationships. It's all about that.

We cultivate healthy relationships. So who do you know that needs to hear of God's invitation? Only you can answer that. And in all of this, I want us to remember this parable of the wedding feast.

The king wants to put on a wedding feast for the son and sends out all these invitations which shows the old covenant, how it was with the Old Testament, with all the laws, but yet it was rejected.

And then the invitation happened where it was for all people good and bad. May you receive that invitation. May you respond by saying yes to Jesus Christ.

[27 : 52] And upon that, may you grow and be like the chosen and like the servants to extend the invitation to others. Let's pray together.

Lord and Heavenly Father, we thank you that we've had this opportunity for us to go over this amazing and well connected section of verses from the Gospel of Matthew.

I pray, Father, that our minds are open to you, our hearts are open to love like you and that we will be transformed in knowing you, growing in you, and doing good in your name.

I pray, Father, for anyone who may have been invited but hasn't responded yet. I pray that there will be a response. I pray for those who might feel unworthy or they might have left the feast as it were. May they return. to the table. And I also just pray that there will be healing. There will be restoration. You are the God of miracles and just as this parable has shown how connected everything is within the context of the biblical narrative, we pray that we can receive this parable, that it will help us grow in you and motivate and move us to act upon it.

[29 : 31] Let lives be transformed. Let minds be changed. Let hearts be softened. Let growth happen here. And let us be moved to live and love like you.

It is in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray and we all say together, amen. Amen. Thank you for listening for this week's message from Ontario Community Church.

I pray that you are encouraged and strengthened in your walk with Christ. For more sermons and resources, visit OntarioCommunityChurch.org. May God bless you as you live out his grace and truth every single day.

God bless you as