

An Invitation to Great Joy to All!

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Open your Bibles, if you would, to Matthew chapter 22. Matthew chapter 22. We're going to see this morning an invitation to great joy for all.

An invitation to great joy for all. We're going to read the story of a king. The king is God. He represents God. And he is going to have a wedding supper.

Jesus, his son's wedding supper. And he invites all of these people to come to the party. I think sometimes if you think of Christianity, you think of dull, drab, dreary, sad, had to give up all my fun to become a Christian.

But if you knew what the Bible said, you'd find out it's actually all the opposite. And you bought into a story that the devil told you that God was here to rob your joy when he is the thief of joy.

[1 : 01] So read with me the story of this great invitation. Matthew chapter 22, verse 1. Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding.

And they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them what you're bidden. Behold, I have prepared my dinner. My oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all the things are ready.

Come to the marriage. They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. And the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them.

But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth, very angry. And he sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden, they were not worthy.

Go ye, therefore, into the highways, as many as you shall find. Invite them, bid them to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all, as many as they found, both good and bad.

[2 : 14] And the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not a wedding garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?

And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him, hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

For many are called, but few are chosen. Father in heaven, I pray that you would work this morning. If there's someone here this morning who doesn't know you as their personal savior, I pray that today they would realize their sin, realize their need, and realize your great invitation to come to great joy, and they would be saved today.

And then, God, I pray for all of us as Christians that we would realize the opportunity you have given us to participate in the great things that you have prepared for us. I thank you for Travis and Terry Snowed.

Thank you for Terry being with us today. Please help her know that we love her as a church here, and we're thankful for her and the ministry that her family, she and her family, Travis and her, have there in London.

[3 : 21] And I'll give you praise for all you do. Thank you for every person here. Bless the Spanish church going on, the children's church, the nursery workers. Bless Bo and the service down in Cobb County.

And God will give you great honor and glory and praise for all you do. In Jesus' name, amen. Take your Bible, go to Matthew chapter 22. We are talking about a great invitation to great joy, and we're talking about what God's doing in the life of his people there.

So go with me, if you would, to verse 1. Verse 1, the Bible says, And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables and said. The first thing I want you to look at in our passage of Scripture that we've already read, starting in Matthew chapter 22 and verse 1, that he is using a parable, a story, to communicate a very hard truth to his people.

Jesus is clearly telling Israel, the Jews, of his judgment against them. He's setting them aside to bring the church to do the ministry of world evangelism.

The chosen people, Israel, the Jews, are being set aside temporarily. They'll be back. But in this moment, right now, Jesus is ending his earthly ministry.

[4 : 30] He is within the last week of his ministry, and he's letting it be known, Hey, Israel, you have not done what you were needing to do. I'm going to use another group of people, and that's what these stories are telling us.

Now, you've already been through two other parables. There were three parables, and each of them giving them this idea. So he's like, he's hit them, bam, bam, bam. He's giving them a left, right, left, and he's coming back at them.

So look at what he said. If you went to chapter 22 and verse 28, he gave you a parable about two sons. He gave a parable about two sons. It said a certain man had two sons.

And he said to one son, go to work today. And the guy said, I will not. But later he repented, and he went. He said to a second son to go to work.

And the guy said, yes, sir, I'm on my way. But he didn't go. And then Jesus looked at him and said, by the way, the son who said no and later went was the publicans and the harlots, the publicans and the prostitutes.

[5 : 29] But they're the ones that get into the kingdom of God before you. And John said, you know, you guys should have known. You should have believed. You should have accepted. You should have been there. But it's the sinful, wicked people who at first rejected the gospel but later accepted and were saved.

The religious leaders, they should have known the truth, but they did not want to obey. It would be better for you to be very openly rebellious and come from a really rotten background and come in and accept Christ for real than it would for you to be one of these southeastern cultural Christians who knows all the right answers but has never truly accepted Jesus Christ.

Those were prostitutes and tax collectors, and they didn't believe they could go to heaven. In Matthew chapter 9, Jesus had said, go and learn what it means.

I will have mercy and not sacrifice. Because I didn't come to call righteous but sinners to repentance. Sometimes I think that's a problem here in the southeast because too many of us were raised good.

We were raised right. We were raised thinking there's something special about us. We don't do what they do. And sometimes we don't want to admit our sin. And if you can't admit your sin, you can't get saved.

- [6 : 44] That's the truth he's getting across to them. These religious people acted like they loved God, but they didn't live it out. They'd been fully exposed to God's truth from the scriptures. They'd seen him from the very son of God, and they rejected it.
- The sinners who had rebelled later realized that they were wrong. Then he gave another story. You looked at these last week. Matthew chapter 21 and verse 33, he said another parable. He talks about planting a vineyard and renting it out to the guys.
- And it came time for them to give him his harvest. It came time for them to pay for what they were doing. And so he sent his servants and said, hey, I'm here to get what's mine. And they took and beat his servants and killed them and stoned them.
- He said, well, you know what? That's ridiculous. You've been mean to my servants. Maybe if I send my son, you'll treat him right. They sent the son, and they killed the son to seize the inheritance. So what's the lord of that guy, what's the owner of that property going to do?
- He asked these religious leaders, and they said, well, he's going to destroy them. And then he said, that's right. They said he will miserably, verse 41, destroy those wicked men, and he'll rent it out, let it out, his vineyard unto other husbandmen.
- [7 : 56] And then Jesus said, yep, we're talking about my kingdom. Look at verse 43. The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits of the parable of the vineyard.
- They should have given him the rent. They should have given him the money. They mistreated his prophets, his servants. They killed his son. And so they were supposed to get the gospel to the world, the nation of Israel.
- They don't do that. So he is bringing in the truth, the church. These parables teach great truths. We should hear and obey from our hearts.
- Playing church will never be enough with our God. By the way, this morning all over this country, people will be in church, but they will be playing church.
- It won't be from their heart. It won't be sincere. It won't be I want to serve God. It will be culturally correct, but not biblically correct.
- [8 : 58] God has given his people an opportunity to serve him and give him the fruits of his harvest. God rejects all of those who have the form of godliness.
- You look Christian, but you don't do it for real. If the nation of Israel will not do their duty, then God is going to move them off the scene and bring on the church.
- We are that group. He has brought us on the scene. But as a church, we could lose God's blessings on our church if we don't take seriously the responsibility of giving him the fruit of his harvest.
- That means world evangelism. That's our responsibility. We're responsible to evangelize everybody around us. We're responsible to not be saved, sit, soak, and sour, but to serve.
- It means that we're to be actively seeking to extend the kingdom of God. As a church, we should never take lightly this privilege and responsibility that we've been given as administrators, servants, stewards of the gospel.
- [10 : 01] Let me tell you before we get started from these parables. This is the third one we're about to read. Here's what God's got going on. There's a God in heaven. If you understand that, say amen.
- I mean, there's a God in heaven, and this is real. This isn't a religious get-together. This isn't a meeting of the Lions or the Kiwanis or the Rotary Club. Those are all good, but this is a meeting of God's people bought by the blood of Jesus Christ, whose responsibility is to carry the gospel message to the entire world.

And what's happening is he's showing the Jews, you didn't do your job. You did not get a hold of the idea of what I wanted done. You turned Christianity, or you turned God, because it wasn't Christianity with the Jews, you turned it into a thing for me and mine, for my family.

And he said, so I'm putting you to one side. So as a church today, as we read the scripture, you need to realize God has given us real responsibility. This isn't a game.

This isn't what we do on Sunday mornings. We are servants of the great God of heaven. That's the point. Now go with me, if you would, to chapter 22 and verse 2. Here comes the invitation.

[11 : 11] So we've seen he's talking parables. He's given us two more, and now this is the third. And now the invitation is given and refused. Chapter 22, verse 2.

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. And he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden, that were invited, to the wedding, and they would not come.

Have you got your Bible open underlined, kingdom of heaven? He's talking about the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is a Jewish term, and it's referring to those that are willing to, they think it only refers to them and those that are willing to be Jewish proselytes.

But what it meant is, that makes it clear in this chapter, I'm talking to Jews. This is your term. This is what you call yourselves. You're a part of the kingdom of heaven. I'm talking straight to you.

Kingdom of heaven was another term that was used in place of kingdom of God, because Jewish people wouldn't even say the word God. They were hesitant to use that. It's talking about salvation.

[12 : 16] It's talking about God's people and the work that God has. So this is a message to you Jewish people, he said. I'm talking to you. I'm doing something really crazy.

I'm setting aside one group of people to bring on a new group of people. That's us, the church that will carry the gospel around the world. The servants that go out are the prophets. They come from God.

They go to the Jewish nation. They say, hey, God's got a plan for you. God wants to use you. You're supposed to be responsible. You're supposed to be entering. Your Old Old Testament is a story of the prophets trying to call God's people back to God.

They've been told that Jesus is coming. They've been told that God's going to set up his kingdom. They've been told all of that, but they have rejected it. And in the story, the servants go out and they say, look.

He tells the story. He says, the king is going to have a supper. And he gives them two invitations, which wasn't unusual in their culture because what happens is, it's kind of like if you were getting invited to the White House.

[13 : 15] That first invitation would be like, are you believing this? I'm invited to the White House to eat a meal. And they send it out and say, we're inviting you. We want you to come on such and such a time. When that first invitation came, they should have been honored.

The king, the most powerful guy on the land, is preparing a special meal. They said, we're not interested. Then he came back out and he said, we want to go ahead and tell you everything's ready.

Come on in. It's a different day and time. You know how you say, RSVP, let me know if you're going to come to the party or not. Or you get that Facebook invitation. And then later on, they're saying, are you coming or you're not coming?

We've got food prepared and we want to know if you're going to come or not. And so the king goes back out and he says, and they don't want to listen. They actually kill the servants. He's talking about Jewish people. Look at John chapter 1 and verse 11.

He came unto his own and his own received him not. Those that were invited refused to come. They'd started refusing long before Jesus was on earth.

[14:13] They'd refused the Old Testament prophets. They cut off John the Baptist's head. Now the last invitation goes out. Look at verse 4. Again, he sent forth other servants saying, tell them which are bidden.

Tell the guys that have been invited. All right, everything's ready. I've prepared my dinner. My oxen and my fatlings are killed. We've killed all the animals. We've got them all prepared. All things are ready. Y'all come on.

Come to the supper. It was time. The gates are open. It's kind of like we sent the invitation out. We're all sitting out there waiting. And all of a sudden, the palace guards step out and open the gates.

They say, come on in, guys. But these guys that said, no, we're not interested in coming. And they refused it the second time. The invited guest rejected the invitation totally.

They didn't think it was important. Look at what it says in verse 5. Got your Bible open? It says, they made light of it. Would you understand? Underline, they made light of it. It was like not a big deal.

[15:14] Not a big deal. You get invited by the king. You get invited by the king to come to his house and eat a meal. And they were like, not a big deal. They weren't necessarily wicked.

They were just busy. They felt like they had things to do that took precedence over the king's invitation. The crops needed to be tended to. The business was important.

They just didn't think they had time for what the king wanted. That's the first group. Can you not see that? In fact, I see it sometimes in America. We're not necessarily bad people. It's not like people that don't want to go to church.

People that don't want to accept Christ. People that don't want to. They're not like, well, I don't believe none of that junk. And I'm an atheist. And I'm an agnostic. They're just like, I don't really have time for that right now. Let me get my business in line.

Let me. And that's what the verse said. It said they made light of it. They went their way. One to his farm. And another to his merchandise. I'd come to the party, but man, I got to sell some things here.

[16:12] I'd come to the party, but I got to plant my crops. I got to harvest my crops. I'd come, but I'm very busy right now. There's another group. They were really wicked. Look at verse 6.

By the way, most of us wouldn't fit in that second group. We're in that first group. We're just nice people. We're just too busy for God. Amen.

Silence. Rule the room. We're just too busy. You don't know all I got to do. You don't know how important my business is. I know he's the king, but I don't think it's that big a deal.

Why do you make such a big deal out of it? They made light. But in verse 6, the others were really wicked. The remnant, the other guys, the leftovers, they took his servants and they entreated them spitefully and killed them, slew them.

They mistreated them. They killed them. See, here's what happens. The invitation goes out. There's some really rough people out there. If you've ever gone out door knocking, if you've ever invited people, you'll meet some really rude people.

[17:14] You'll have a door slammed in your face. You'll get cussed out on occasion. But most people are pretty nice. They're just like, nah. Appreciate you coming by, buddy. I ain't got time for that junk. Amen. Kind of like what's going on in the story.

But that other group, they killed the messengers. They killed John the Baptist. By the way, they killed Jesus himself, the son who had come.

And so in verse 7, the king blew his stack. The story Jesus is saying is the king blew his stack. Look at verse 7. When the king heard, he was wroth.

He was super angry. And he sent forth his armies. He sent his troops out. He sent out the squadrons. And he said, kill them. Destroy those murderers and burn their city.

They had rejected his invitation. They had mistreated his messengers. They'd even killed him. And now they will suffer the consequences. Now remember who's here in the story.

[18 : 16] He's talking about the kingdom of heaven. Gentiles have been like, we don't even know what that is. He's talking to Jewish people. Religious people understand what's being talked about. You know, we got this religious ease we use.

You know, we get baptized. We get baptized. We get saved. We get redeemed. Our name's written in the book. And we understand those terms.

But a lot of people are like, I don't know what none of that means. Never heard it. Go to a Chinese guy and say, I'm going to baptize you. And he'd be like, okay, I never heard that word. What's that mean? So these religious people, they knew exactly who he was talking to.

It's a story about how the Jews had rejected the gospel. They had mistreated the prophets. They killed them. And they will kill Jesus himself. And judgment is coming, both personally and nationally.

By the way, the prophecy was fulfilled just a handful of years after that. Right at 40-something years later, it was handled. See, God won't deal with you. Even if you're sitting here today, you need to know this.

[19 : 16] Maybe you're under conviction. Maybe the reason you keep coming back to church is because God's dealing with you about being saved. You need to know that God's spirit will not always strive with man. Genesis chapter 6 and verse 3.

My spirit shall not always strive with man. God won't keep messing with you. If you keep being rude and you keep being rejecting him and you keep pushing him off, he will sooner or later leave and not deal with you.

In 70 AD, the Roman general Titus conquered Jerusalem. And he kills over a million Jews. The temple was burned and destroyed.

Just like Jesus tells in this story. So Israel, you didn't see how important it was.

You didn't see that God ought to take precedence. And so now God's moved on. Nationally, he's left the country. He's left the country and he's going to work with the church.

[20 : 14] Now Jews are going to make up the church, but they're going to be the ones who would believe. So now the invitation goes out to everybody. Look, if you would, in the story at Matthew 22, verse 8.

The Bible says, Then said he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden are not worthy. They were not worthy. The king tells his servants everything's ready.

They're not worthy. No one's worthy of salvation. No one's worthy of salvation. But just think about this. You aren't worthy of being invited, but if you refuse the invitation, then you are definitely not worthy.

He comes to you and says, Hey, I know you don't have the money to buy this gift, but I want to give you a free gift. The Bible says the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life. He comes and says, I got a gift for you.

They said, we don't want it. We don't want it. So in verse 9, he sends his servants to the streets to get anybody. He says, Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find bid to the marriage.

[21 : 12] Now you understand, let's think about this a second. Okay, all this is going to make a lot of sense in the story. The first people he invited would have been people that were just really big shots.

You know? I mean, who does the king invite? I've been living on this planet over 60 years, and no president or governor has ever called my house and said, Austin, planning a party.

I've never received one invitation. I've received them to give them some money. They don't even know who I am. It's just a mass bailout. But no one's ever said, hey, Austin, dear Austin, inviting you to the White House for a few minutes.

Never happened to me. Who gets that invitation? It's somebody. And the somebody's turned him down. Now the invitation goes out to a ragtag bunch of nothings.

That'll be the church. And they're invited. They're going to be allowed to be God's servants. Those who had no access to God will now have full access to God.

[22 : 10] This is the gospel invitation. Do you remember the story about the temple? We've been going through the Bible. You remember there's a court of the Gentiles? So like when you got to the temple, there was a 35-acre part around the temple that was a court of the Gentiles.

We could go there. That's where the buying and selling was taking place. We could get into that. But if we're not Jewish, we can't go any further. We stop. If you're a non-Jewish person, you get killed if you go through the next door.

The next door took you into the court of the women. And men and women could both go there because that was the place women were allowed to be. Jewish men, Jewish women, not Gentiles, not pagans, not us.

And then there was another door you went through, and that's only where Jewish men could go. And then you could go through another door, and you could get into a part where only the priests could go. And finally, you would get into the Holy of Holies, and you would get into the most inner sanctum, and only one guy could go there.

And now the invitation's been given. The Jews have said no. And he said, just go get anybody you can find. Thank God for that. Amen? That means he came and found me.

[23 : 11] That means he came and found you. You're not the right race, Jewish. You're not the right nation, Jewish. You're not the right social level, Jewish. You're just a Gentile dog. Sounds a whole lot like the Great Commission.

Remember what it says in Matthew 28, verse 19? Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you, and, lo, I'm with you always, even to the end of the world.

Amen. So they go out in the streets, and they start inviting everybody. Look at verse 10. Look at verse 10, Matthew 22, 10. So then the servants went out into the highways, and they gathered together, as many as they found, bad and good.

Maybe they didn't walk up to you and say, how much you got in your bank account? They walked up to you, and you might have had tattoos all over your body, or you might have been dressed like somebody that was a thief. You might have looked like somebody that had a little bit of something, but it didn't matter.

They were just walking up to you. Hey, inviting you. Hey, inviting you. Come on. Come on. Everybody, the king is inviting you to the palace, and the wedding was furnished with guests. They filled up the thing.

[24 : 21] Notice all are invited. Your status in life doesn't matter. What made these worthy of going to the feast was simply responding to the invitation. Look at the verse. They were both good and bad.

Nobody gets into heaven because they're good. He's just saying there's some people, man, that, you know, there's some people you just look at them, and you're like, that's a sharp-looking guy. Then people look at me, and they go, eh, not so sharp.

Come on. You can come, too. There's these really snazzy-looking people, you know. You can just look at them and tell they got it. Not everybody. Everybody got the invitation, not just those guys.

Can I remind you? This is an invitation to a feast, to a banquet, to a wedding feast. It's an invitation to joy and laughter and sunshine and happy fellowship.

In other words, you've got to understand that the king has invited me. I probably, and those Jews, listen, they've probably never been inside the palace with the king.

[25 : 18] Most regular people, we ain't never been there. You know, you might have been to the White House on a tour, but you probably hadn't been invited back to the family area. You probably haven't, you know, you might have been to England and seen the palace guards, but you might not have been invited inside for the queen to sit down and have a session with you.

So the word's out. He's taken anybody, y'all come. Can't you imagine what an exciting thing that would be? We're invited to a party at the richest, most powerful person in the country.

We're going to get to go there? That's exactly what the Bible says in John 10, 10 that he did for us. Look at it. John chapter 10 and verse 10, he says, The thief comes but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

That's Satan. By the way, Satan is just a thief. He will steal your joy, rob your life, leave you hungry, leave you hurting. He will mess you up. He said, but I am come, look at it, that they might have what?

Life, but not just life. He said, I'm going to give you salvation, but not just salvation. Buddy, it's good stuff. Come on to the party. Come on to the party. Let me tell you this. Some of you, you've not accepted Christ because somebody told you that serving Jesus Christ would be dull and dreary and drab.

[26 : 29] Somebody told you that serving Jesus Christ would be saying no to a whole lot of fun things. Can I give you a hint in the Bible? Saying yes to Jesus is like getting rid of all the mess and all the weight and all the guilt and everything that held you back and being invited to the most wonderful life possible.

Life and more abundant, he said in John 10, 10. If you refuse that invitation, you're refusing life and great joy.

Satan would tell you that Christ brings bondage and takes away joy, but that's the opposite of the truth. You don't understand what the devil does. The devil's always saying, if you guys ever serve God, it's really going to be bad for you.

What he's really saying is, I've got nothing else to do but slander him because I can't do anything he can do, so let me make him look bad. And God's just looking at you saying, I've got life for you.

Come on. Satan says, I'll give you life. He makes you think you're going to live, but he's really going to end up killing you. You're going to die in that. But you can't come on your own terms.

[27 : 32] Look, if you would, at verse 11. When the king came in to see the guest, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment. Now, everybody's invited.

But I want you to imagine now, they're downtown Atlanta, and they found a homeless guy. Well, they don't want that homeless guy to be in. What's the first thing people even say when it's time to go to church?

Well, what do I wear? I want to make sure I'll be okay. I want to make sure I fit in. I don't want to look bad when I go. Can you imagine being invited to the king's palace, and you're homeless, and you have no way to get anything?

When the king invited you, he said, I've got clothes for you, too. Just take a bath, buddy. I've got everything you need. When you walk in there, no one will know where you came from. No one will know what your status in life was.

No one will be checking out to see if you've got on Gucci's or not. You'll be wearing the right clothes because I'm giving you the clothes. When he got to the party, this one guy came in. And he came in his own clothes.

[28 : 32] The king had spared no expense. I mean, he bought tuxes for everybody. He bought the nicest clothes you could put on. The ladies' hall had their fancy garments to wear. Maybe this guy's too busy to change, and he rushed in at the last minute.

Maybe he thought his clothes were good enough. Maybe as he walked around the party, he was thinking, hey, I didn't have to have the king give me nothing. You see, I was already a rich guy. I just didn't get the first invitation. Maybe that's what was going on.

Whatever's going on, the king said, how'd you get in without one of my garments, without the wedding garment? Regardless, if you're invited by the king to the palace, you might ought to follow protocol when you go.

You can't get to God any way you want. I want you to go with me to Romans 10, 3. Now, we sing a song that says, just as I am without one plea.

That's true. You can come to Christ any way you are. But when you get to God, you'll go in the blood of Jesus Christ. You go in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, or you won't get to God.

[29 : 38] You can get to Jesus. You can come today and be forgiven. You can come today and put down your wicked sin. You can come today and put down your past. You can come today and put on the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

But the only way you get into God is through Jesus. You remember what he said, don't you? He said, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me. And here's what was going on with those Jewish people.

And I think it goes on here, even in vision. In Romans 10, verse 3, the Bible said, They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

You see what was going on? Some of these Jewish people, and some people even here today, would be going around saying, I really don't need you to give me clothes to wear. I look pretty good. I just bought these.

I have my own tux. I got my own clothes. I'll come my own way, and I'll be comfortable because I got the right stuff. But here's what the Bible says. Many of us are like, we don't want to get saved.

[30 : 37] You're like, saved? What do I need to get saved for? We say, you're lost. I ain't lost. I know exactly where I am. Saved? I'm not drowning. I was driving down the road one time and picked up a hitchhiker.

He got in the car with me. We were riding down the road, and I asked him, I said, do you want to be saved? And he looked at me and said, from what? And I said, well, you know, the Bible says you're lost. He said, I'm not. I know exactly where I am.

I said, well, what happened if you died? He said, are you fixing to kill me? No. But you see, the guy was totally, he didn't understand my Christianese at all.

But here's what's going on. Some of us come to God, and we're like, look, I'm a good neighbor. I pay my bills. I've been baptized, christened, sprinkled, everything you can come up with.

I've taken the Lord's Supper. I've taken the Mass. I've been circumcised. I said, glory to God, I'm going to heaven when I die. They used to come to me and prove. Sometimes they'd say, I've touched all the bases. I've joined every church around here, so I'll make sure everything's covered when I die.

[31 : 38] Establishing your own righteousness. He said, no. You've got to come knowing his righteousness. Look at verse 4. Romans 10, 4. For Christ is the end of the law.

For righteousness to everyone that believes. So here's what was happening. You've got to be, listen to me. You can't get to heaven if you ain't right. But you can't be right. But he can make you right.

You can't fix yourself. But he can fix you. That's what the story is. You must come in his righteousness, not yours. Look at 22, 12.

Friend, how came us out in hither? Not having a wedding garment. He was speechless. I think he knew. I think he knew.

Can you imagine when he got to the door? You know, the servants are at the gate and they're saying, come on in. We've got baths for you. Showers here. We've got perfume. We've got fancy shoes. We've got your size.

[32 : 32] We're ready for you. Everybody just, I'm the king. I can fix everything for you. Come on in. And the guy comes in and goes, I already take baths. I don't need nobody to give me no bath. I don't need to let me have shoes.

I'm in good shape. But when the Lord of the party comes out, he says, hey, what are you doing? He was speechless. Many people do good things. They think that God is pleased with them.

But no one gets to heaven without going through Jesus. Works, good works, good stuff, all your past will never get you to heaven. Ephesians 2, 8 says, for by grace are you saved through faith.

And that not of yourselves, it's a gift of God, not of works that any man should boast. Do you understand when we get to heaven? There will be nobody. You will not be walking around going, ha, ha, ha. What did it cost you to get here?

You won't be saying that. You won't be going around saying, I paid \$10,000. I came first class. I came back in the back end of the airplane. I only paid \$800 for my seat. That's not going to be happening.

[33 : 31] We get to heaven. We're all going to go in on his garments, his righteousness. We don't deserve it. He saves us, but we don't deserve it. Your clothes, your works, your righteousness, your goodness will never look good on you.

Now the story really gets sad. Verse 13. Then he said to the king, to the servants, tie him up, bind him, hand and feet, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You cannot come to God on your terms, or you will come up short. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. God, you just don't measure up.

When our children were small, we used to go to Six Flags. We'd only come home on furlough, and so when we came home, they wanted to ride every ride at Six Flags every time they could, and they'd always got that little guy with his hand or his ruler or whatever.

Man, Chris, our oldest son who's 40 in just a few days, our oldest son would walk up to that. He would fix his shoes. He would try to stand on his toes so they couldn't see. They'd even try to push him back down. He was wanting to make sure he measured up.

[34 : 49] Let me give you a hint. You don't measure up. You can stand on your tiptoes. You won't measure up. By the way, if you started doing right today and you never messed up again, you still have a past.

No one gets into heaven just being themselves. In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus told a story. He said, not everyone, verse 21, not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Just the guys that do the Father's will. Just the guys that do the Father's will. He said, there'll be people. Listen to this. People are going to die and be shocked that they're not saved.

They're going to die and be shocked they're not saved. They're standing in front of the judgment. And he said, they go, Lord, Lord, didn't we? Didn't we? And didn't we? And he said, I never knew you.

Did you know there's people that are not going to go to heaven? And they really think they are. They're doing the best thing in their mind. And he will say, I never knew you. Depart from me, you worker, you that work iniquity.

[35 : 47] They were doing good things. They felt good about where they were. But they weren't doing the will of the Father. So the consequences. Bind him. Cast him into outer darkness.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth. Not a place of joy, but of darkness. They'd be outside, not on the inside. Everybody'd be crying.

Crying. And gritting their teeth in pain and agony. A joyful feast had been offered. But many refused and suffered the consequences. Many are invited.

But not all are saved. Verse 14, he said, many are called, but few are chosen. So he goes out and he says, y'all come. And the first group said, we don't even think this is important.

Sent back out to get them. And they beat them up and killed them. Sent this guy out and he came and he said, I'll come on my own terms. They were all invited. But the only ones that got in, the ones that would trust and believe what Jesus Christ had done on the cross.

[36 : 50] And today is your day of decision. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 6, 2. He said, I have heard thee in a time accepted. And in the day of salvation I have succored thee.

I've helped you. I've nurtured you. Behold, now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. So you listen to me, what I'm going to tell you. Today's the day for you to be saved.

You've been coming to church long enough. You've been playing cultural Christianity long enough. I know you've been baptized. I know you filled out a card. I know you've even been through discipleship. I don't care who you are.

If you haven't come to a place in your life that you realize you were a sinner and you couldn't come in your own clothes. If you haven't come to a place that you realize you needed God, you're not really saved. I don't want you to be shocked.

Today's your day. Today's the day of salvation. You're still not dead. And Jesus hadn't come back and the gospel message hasn't been rescinded. You can be saved today. Be saved.

[37 : 45] Trust Christ today. And then as Christians, I say to you, the story is about God saying I'm tired of messing with people who aren't going to carry my message. Vision is a unique place.

It's an extremely blessed church. God has been so good to us in so many ways. But the church is blessed because we've understood our reason, our purpose, our calling.

The second this church forgets that, we will become a shell of ourselves. A church exists for Jesus. A church exists for God.

A church exists to carry out His pleasure and His purposes, not ours. And His purpose is make sure everybody knows how they can go to heaven. You're here today and you're not saved. You can be saved today.

If you're here today and you've been playing church and acting like you were serving God, I'm asking you to get out of your seat, find a place here at the altar and say, God, I mean business. I'm going to quit playing.

[38 : 41] I'm going to quit taking light what you're asking. I'm going to put you first. If you're not born again, I'm asking you today to be saved. Father in heaven, I love you. I thank you for the chance to talk to your people. And I pray that in every way you deal with our hearts and strengthen us and grow us and build us and make us as a church what we ought to be.

God, there's some people here that aren't saved. If they died right now, I know they'd go to hell. You know they'd go to hell. They know they'd go to hell. I pray, Holy Spirit, that you convict them of their need. Help them to overcome their pride and to humble themselves and to say, I need salvation.

I need somebody to help me. Let them be saved today. There are Christians in the room, God, that are playing with you. And acting like what you have to say is not important. I pray you'd shake us up, wake us up, and help us do right as a church.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, who in the room would say, man, I'm not saved? That was about me. I am culturally a Christian. Everybody thinks I'm saved, but in my heart, I have hearts.

I know I have never truly trusted Christ. I'm not committed to Him. I'm not serving Him from my heart. And today is my day. I want to take the salvation. I want to accept the free gift.

[39 : 54] If that's you, would you hold your hand up and let me pray for you? The Bible said there's none righteous. No, not one. And there's one hand over here. Men, if you're not saved, if you're not born again, if you're not sure you go to heaven, today's your day.

You can be saved. You can know for sure you'd go to heaven if you would today. Anybody else? Say, I'm ready. Today's the day. I'm ready to be saved. Somebody will come to you. They'll take the Bible.

They'll answer questions. They'll pray with you. They'll help you know for sure that you go to heaven if you die. Would there be anybody like that? Would there be anybody like that else? Just hold your hand up. Let us pray with you. Don't be a cultural Christian.

It's from your heart. It's real. You've got to come to him on his terms. Would you trust him today? Would there be a Christian here and say, I have been playing. I've been making light of the things of God. I haven't seen the things of God as important as they are.

And today I realize that I've been messing around. I've been playing with the things of God. I want my life to really count. Would you hold your hand up? Let me pray for you. Anybody like that in the room? Thank you. I see your hand.

[40 : 51] Anybody else? Let's be honest. Why don't you find a place to pray? Why don't you find a place to pray today? Why don't you come today and say, God, I will not make light of the opportunities to serve you you've given.

Father, work in our lives. Magnify yourself and we'll give you praise. With heads bowed and eyes closed. If you're here and you're not saved, you can still come. And if you're here and you are saved and you need to get things right with God, I pray you'd do that.

Whenever you finish praying, you can stand and sing with us as Stephen leads us in this song. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia.

For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.

Thanks. Thanks. Please. Have a good day.