THE WEDDING GARMENT (Matthew 22:1-14)

A. The kingdom of Heaven is like a wedding feast.

1. The King (God) planned a great occasion for His subjects (Jews) to share in a time of feasting with His Son (the blessings of the kingdom) & to rejoice in His marriage (to the church), but His subjects (Jews) would have no part of this feast (which they proved by rejecting Jesus), so the invitation was extended to everyone else (Gentiles).

   a. That’s the main message of this parable.

   b. But there are also lessons for those of us on the “extended” invitation list.

   [What is a wedding garment (11-13)? It’s certainly not a long white dress or a tuxedo. And why was it so important to wear one when attending a wedding feast?]

I. THE MAIN IDEAS

A. Jesus referred to the custom of a King providing robes to His guests. Why was it done?

   1. An honor bestowed.

   2. Social classes were erased.

   3. Attendants could distinguish guests from freeloaders.

B. “Invitation” – corresponds to the Lord’s invitation, i.e., the gospel call (Matt 11:28; Thess 2:14).

C. “Feast” – abundant life of spiritual blessings found only in Christ (Jn 10:10; Eph 1:3).
**D. “Wedding garments”** – indicate the state of righteousness that those who are in the kingdom possess.

*John 3:5* – Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, *unless one is born of water & the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.*"

*Gal 3:27* – As many of you as were *baptized into Christ have put on Christ* [in His character]

*Why is that the case?*

*Col 2:12-13* – *buried with Him in baptism*, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead… *He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,*

*Rom 6:17-18* – God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet *you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine* to which you were delivered. And *having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.*

[These are the main points of this parable.

**But** now let’s consider the main warning given therein: EVERYONE IS INVITED, BUT EVERYONE MUST WEAR A WEDDING GARMENT!

*As you can imagine, the King’s attendants were constantly inspecting the crowd at the wedding feast to make certain that everyone was wearing that special garment.]*

**II. THERE WAS AN ONGOING INSPECTION**

**A. Today, WE are at the King’s wedding feast.**

1. And that is true NOT because we are at the church building, BUT because our being here indicates that the King’s invitation has affected us in some way (*Matt 11:28*).

2. We may be here for many reasons: **Parents’** or friends’ interest. **Personal** interest. **Curiosity**. **Habit**.

3. Or, for the best reason of all, because we admire the King (**God**) & we wish to honor His Son (**Jesus**) – And we want more than anything in this life to wear the wedding garment & to be in the presence of others who wear the same garment.

**B. But** at this very moment we are being inspected.
1. “The King [is here] to see [His] guests (22:11).”

2. And His inspection in ongoing in our day to day lives.

2 Tim 2:19 – Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” & “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

And because this is true,

Matt 13:41  (Tares) – The Son of Man will send out His angels, & they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, & those who practice lawless.

Matt 13:49  (Dragnet) – So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just.

[God doesn’t wait until the end of time to inspect His guests.

His eyes are fixed upon everyone who claims to be in His kingdom. Each heart is transparent to His gaze.

Our actions, with regard to the teaching of His Son, will determine whether or not we are wearing a wedding garment (or truly in His kingdom).
1. **Ignorance** – they don’t understand the importance (Rom 10:2-3; 1 Pet 1:14).


3. **High Cost** – they don’t want to change (RYR: Lk 18:18-23).

4. **Pride** – they think God will make an exception in their case (Col 3:25).

5. **Impure motives** – they are at the feast for the wrong reasons (Acts 20:30; 2 Pet 2:13-14).

[Wearing a wedding garment was a very serious matter to the King – & thus it should be to us – especially as we see what happened next.]

**Matt 22:13** – Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand & foot, take him away, & cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping & gnashing of teeth.’

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**IV. INSPECTION WAS FOLLOWED BY A JUDGMENT & SENTENCE**

A. **The King** made a decree that everyone must wear a wedding garment.

1. Then He inspected His guests to make sure that everyone was wearing one.

2. And then He rendered a judgment of guilt & a sentence of death on those who did not comply.

**B. Verses 12 & 13 are an excellent depiction of the end of time & the Day of Judgment.**

1. Matthew 25 shows the righteous & the wicked speaking to Jesus on His throne at the final judgment (37-39, 44).
2. Matthew 7 shows the wicked making a final plea to the Lord on that great day (22).

3. But Jesus, the Judge, spoke the final words & brought down the sentence (7:23).

**Matt 25:21** – His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good & faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’

**Matt 25:34** – Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

OR

**Matt 25:30** – “And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.” There will be weeping & gnashing of teeth.

**Matt 25:41** – Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil & his angels:

**B. To the rest of us, let’s NOT be satisfied with mere appearances of righteousness.**

1. The penetrating gaze of our King can detect the honesty of our service.

2. But as Paul wrote

   a. Let us pursue things that make for peace, & things that edify (Rom 14:19).

   b. Let us be moved by love from a pure heart, a good conscience, & a sincere faith (1 Tim 1:5).

**CLOSING**

A. **Do you have on a wedding garment today?**

1. It is a robe of righteousness offered to you & made possible by the shed blood of Christ in His death.

2. You are invited to be baptized into His death & to become a servant of righteousness (Rom 6:3-4, 17-18).

[Because we are NOW living in a time of INSPECTION, & changes can be made to our lives.

But when we stand before the judge, it will be too late to change anything we have done.]