

Christ Episcopal Church, Columbia, MD
Sunday, October 11, 2026 8 & 10:30A.M.
Matthew 22:1-14

“Dressed for the Occasion”

The wedding industry is quite an industry. Has anyone paid for a wedding recently, or attended a wedding recently and heard about the costs? The rising costs of weddings are actually pretty shocking. There's been a growth in the industry and there are rising expectations and social media has helped with some of that. There are special venues you have to rent, there are dinners you have to provide. So now the average cost of a wedding today, according to the reports I read, is between \$32,000 to \$36,000.

Now, on the other hand I attended a wedding last summer and it was fairly simple. At the rehearsal dinner they had food brought in from Costco or Sam's Club and family members supplied the desserts. Even the banquet was all served in the fellowship hall of the church. There was a small guest list with no frills.

But that's not how it is today. Actually that's not how it was in the first century.

Here in our parable, Jesus is going to talk about this wedding banquet.

In the first century, a Jewish wedding involved a big feast, and that feast went on for several days. People in the community and countrywide would have been invited. Here you have a king's son

who's going to have a wedding banquet. So you can be sure that some important people were invited by the king, his peers and associates. And in first century wedding celebrations like this, there was a 'two-step process.' Some kind of a 'save- the-date' form would go out. And today, we're doing that more and more, right? And when the date came, everything was prepared and they sent people out to say, okay you can come now, the banquet is ready.

And you have some people who received the 'save the date' and probably gave their rsvp and when it was time to come to the wedding they probably said 'oh I don't have time for that right now'. And in this parable, the king is outraged, and then he takes some extreme measures here with the people that shunned his invitation.

But what is going on here in this parable? What is Jesus trying to teach us?

What Jesus is showing us here in these parables is how God interacts with the world in a saving and gracious way. ...and how we are supposed to respond to that.

How do we respond to God as He interacts with this world in a saving and gracious way? I want to show you three things about the **salvation** that God wants to bring to humanity. This grace and mercy and salvation that God is offering everyone.

Here's the first thing:

Salvation is a relationship with God's Son. Salvation is not about church membership. It's not about being born into a religious family. It's not about attending religious ceremonies, or experiencing certain religious experiences. What it really comes down to is, salvation is you and I having a very real and personal relationship with the Son of God. This triune God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The father has sent his Son into this world and salvation is a relationship with Him.

Let us not miss the first line of the parable. "The **kingdom of heaven** is like a certain king who gave a wedding feast for his son."

This is the story line of the entire Bible. The triune God. The father wants a people for his son and it has been his eternal plan for his son to come and save the people from their sins and make them his own people.

And the scriptures describe Jesus's relationship with his people as a bridegroom to a bride. But he has to make them fit to be his bride. Now you may watch those romance stories on the Hallmark channel, but they don't stand a chance against this amazing romance story in this parable.

You've got this perfect holy king who's going to marry a woman with all sorts of baggage, with all kinds of brokenness, all kinds of poverty and all kinds of history. Listen to how the scriptures speak of how Jesus is going to make the bride fit for himself.

Ephesians chapter 5 reads, “husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, to make her holy by cleansing her by the washing of water by the Word. He takes her sin and He gives her, his holiness. Christ is the bridegroom, the church is the bride.

He gives us his righteousness. He takes our sin and is crucified in our place.

This means that salvation is about having a relationship with Jesus. He takes on our debts and punishment and provides us with his riches.

He takes all our bad and gives us his good. receiving his love and forgiveness. Do we know, love and trust Jesus?

Here's the second thing,

Salvation is a feast freely provided.

Here it is presented as a feast. It's a celebration. And there's a forward looking dimension to this. God is giving us imagery so that we can relate to and understand how he works in the relationship he wants with us. The church in a sense, is engaged, is legally bound to Jesus. And there is a wedding day and banquet that is coming. It's in the new heavens and new earth, so there is a future dimension to this. There's a future wedding banquet being prepared for us. Notice it says this in Revelation chapter 19: (5-9)

“And from the throne came a voice saying, Praise our God, all you servants, all who fear him, small and great.” “Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory; for the marriage of the Lamb has

come, and his bride has made herself ready; “to her it has been granted to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure.”

The wedding feast is coming and it will be like no other.

We’re seeing all kinds of dances these days at wedding banquets. We’ve seen Choreographed dances, line dances, and square dances. I don’t know what you’ve seen, but none compares to the banquet that God is preparing for us.

Listen to Isaiah: 25:8-9

“The Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

He says There will be Boundless joy, the best of wine, eternal life, uninterrupted peace. This is the feast the parable is talking about.

Our life is full of pain, and hardship and trials, But as Christian’s who know our God, that he is for us and not against us, It’s one of sorrow, yet always rejoicing.

There’s a sense of celebration in our hearts, because we know how this whole thing ends.

Even in our difficult circumstances, we wake up every single day and say this is my God. We have the joy of his presence. We have the forgiveness of sins. We have the fellowship of his people. Sin, satan and death have no power over us.

We have to stop looking at what we don't have, and see what we do have.

We have to stop looking at our circumstances and start looking at what's true about ourselves in Christ.

What we have in Jesus cannot be taken from us. Notice in verses 2 and 4, he says I have prepared it all. Everything is ready, all we have to do is just come.

Listen to this theme in scripture,

Isaiah 55:1-2 "everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat. Come buy wine and milk without money and without price." This is an invitation to abundant life.

This is the beauty of the gospel. This invitation is to come.

Here's the third thing:

Salvation is offered indiscriminately to all.

This parables shows three responses:

There are those who reject the invitation - v.3 out of indifference, they refuse to come. They went off to other things that had their attention. Jesus is shocking his audience with this response. He's making a point that there are consequences to rejecting him.

There are those who accept the invitation and there are those who come on their own terms but are rejected in the end.

He gives no criteria, anyone you can find can come. Go and invite the good and the bad. He says this is for everyone and anyone. It doesn't matter what you did 10 years ago or 10 seconds ago, The gospel is for everyone who wants it.

The guests are required to dress in these festive robes assigned by this king. There was a dress code. all that was required and the king provided.

The king would not leave the poor in rags or accept the wardrobe of the rich.

Everyone is gonna be dressed in the garment that the king provides.

Jesus is making the point. In his mercy God provides all that we need. But if we reject his provision, then we will bear the consequences of being found in our own righteousness before God.

Philippians 3:9 ...I wanna be found in him not having righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, The righteousness that comes through faith in Jesus."

Clothed in the garments of righteousness.

This image is clothed through the Bible.

From Genesis Adam and Eve in the garden to Revelations 19 where the bride, the church, is given fine linens.

The constant theme in scripture is righteousness.

God dresses us, he cleanses us, he washes us, he gives us
grace and he let's us live.

Just say yes to Jesus. This life with Jesus is a feast.

UM hymnal number 616

Charles Wesley

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast

Come, sinners, to the gospel feast,
Let every soul be Jesus' guest.
Ye need not one be left behind,
For God hath bid all humankind.

invitation.

I wonder, or I leave you with this question: Is there anyone you
may know, who does not know Jesus Christ and they need to
hear this invitation? If so, invite them to the Table, to the Feast, to
the Banquet to share this meal with us.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

