

Dressed for the Occasion

Matthew 22:1-14

Introduction

Tony Campolo wrote a book titled, *The Kingdom of God Is a Party*. He describes the kingdom in terms of joy and even fun. Jesus says here it's like a party, a wedding banquet. The king in Jesus' parable had two problems with the wedding banquet, this party for his son. People he invited who said they would come refused to come and one man tried to crash the party.

Party Customs

It was customary to send out two invitations for an event or party like this. The first one months in advance so all concerned would have plenty of time to prepare. Guests would have time to mark their calendars and hosts would know how many guests to prepare for. The first invitation was "Hey, I'm having a party on this date; do you want to come?" The second one was, "Hey, everything's ready. Come on and have fun!" Gregory the Great says that these represented the prophets and the apostles. The prophets told the people to get ready because God's Son was going to come. The apostles told the people that God's Son is here. It's time to come to the party, to come to Him.

Refusal of the Guests

The guests refused to come. They paid no attention to the invitation; one went to his farm and another to his business. Gregory says about these that the one who went to the farm was concerned about earthly toil and the one that went to his business was concerned with the business of the world. This, of course refers to the Jews, the chosen people of God who refused to accept Jesus; they refused to come to the party. The truth is some still refuse His grace today. People find other things that seem more important to them than Jesus. Just look at the pandemic. There is so much fear out there. Why? Because people are fixated on this world. They are so concerned with the business of this world that they're ignoring God's invitation to come to His party.

The Invitation to All

The king has had enough and sends his servants to bring anyone they can in off the streets, good and bad alike. The party is open to all who will come. After the Jews refused His invitation, God opened the door for all. It's a grand occasion; the banquet hall is full. Many have answered the invitation of the King and have come to the party

The Party Crasher

That's where we come to the second problem. There is one who tries to crash the party. How do we know he's trying to crash the party? He's wearing the wrong clothes. When I was a boy, you dressed up when you went to places like parties or weddings. It wasn't to put on airs; it showed respect. Dad had to wear a jacket and tie to work every day. So, on Sunday, he wore a white dress shirt, tie, and suit. Dressing better for church than he had to for work showed respect for God. Things are different, now. I performed a wedding at a country club one time and saw a man at the reception in shorts and a polo shirt. To me, he could have been a golfer looking for a free meal.

Clothes Provided

Why did the king make such a big deal out of wearing the wrong clothes? The host at such events provided clothes for the guests to wear. This way, people of lower means didn't have to be self-conscious about not having good enough clothes. Likewise, people of means couldn't try to outdo everyone else in their fancy attire. (Read **Galatians 3:25-28**) Here, we see the clothing that God has provided for His party. We put on Christ in our Baptism. We are clothed in His righteousness. We are all one in Him. At the foot of the cross, it doesn't matter whether you're rich or poor, black, or white, Republican or Democrat. We are all the same in Christ.

Party Crashers

Party crashers are those who try to get into the party some other way than by putting on Christ. They may think their life is good enough. They may think they can earn salvation. They may think it doesn't matter who your faith is in, as long as you're sincere. Jesus, Himself says in **John 14:6**, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" You can't crash this party. There's only one Way in.

Means of Grace

Among all the things that Communion is, it is also a foretaste of the wedding banquet to come. Having put on Christ at Baptism, we come to the Table **DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION**. Christ is here. Come to the party.

*May the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
