

THE KING'S SON IS TO BE WED

Matthew 22:1-14

I. THE ROYAL PREPARATIONS.

Much must be done to provide so great and sumptuous a feast as shall be fit for the wedding of a king's son. But all these elaborate preparations have been completed. Much was needed to make ready the gospel and its privileges, the new Christian blessings, the festival of the marriage of the Lamb with his bride the Church. But God has made all ready; he has provided the Bread of life and all the bounties of the gospel. They have been produced at the greatest possible cost, and now they are spread out in readiness for the guests. We have not to manufacture our own highest blessings; God offers them freely to us. We have not to wait for them; they are all ready in this happy Christian era.

II. THE SHAMEFUL, FRIVOLOUS REFUSALS.

A. Those first invited refuse to come. Their conduct is scandalous, and that for several reasons.

1. *The feast was important.*

It was for the wedding of a king's son. The king was the host, and a king's invitation is a command. Yet the guests made light of it. They who reject the gospel reject the gift of God, and insult him.

2. *The guests had previously consented to come.*

This is plainly implied, because the message sent to them is merely a reminder that all is now ready. So was it with the Jews. So is it with those who once showed interest in Christ and have since grown cold.

3. *There was no valid excuse for refusal.*

The men went their ways, one to his farm and another to his merchandise. There is no good excuse for the rejection of the gospel of Christ. Too often the most commonplace worldly interests are preferred to it.

4. *The messengers were cruelly maltreated.*

A certain irritation arising from a consciousness of being in the wrong makes people angry with those who would lead them into the right way.

III. THE GUESTS FROM THE HIGHWAYS.

The king must have his feast stocked with guests, if only with tramps and beggars. This suggests to us a desire on the part of God to find those on whom he can bestow his kindness. It is as though they were possessed with social sympathies and could not endure to be alone in his joy. Thus we see the best of all reasons for accepting his grace. There can be no doubt that he will welcome all who come, because He hungers for souls. Observe further:

1. *The rejection of Christ by the Jews led to the opening of the kingdom to the Gentiles.*

This would have happened in any case, but the conduct of the Jews expedited and facilitated the process (e.g. see Acts 13:46).

2. *It is not man's desert, but God's loving-kindness, that invites to the gospel feast.*

IV. THE WEDDING GARMENT.

The dramatic incident with which the parable closes gives us a shock of surprise. Here is an additional, most important lesson. All lands of people are invited, and some are in a very unfit state to appear at the wedding feast. But the king provides a seemly garment, that the dingy dress of everyday life may not mar the beauty of the festival. God invites all sorts and conditions of men to the feast of the gospel, and even the very lowest may come at once. But God provides them a new character. If a man will not take this, if he

seeks the privileges of the gospel, but will not submit to its changing influence on his character, he must be cast forth. He can come just as he is; but he must not remain just as he is, especially as God provides for him a better way of life.