

## Bible Notes for Small Groups WB 20<sup>th</sup> October 2024

Visiting speaker.... Bob Dyson

- What kind of clothes do you like to wear when attending a wedding?

### **Matthew 22:1-14**

This parable is about a wedding but not like any wedding I have ever been to. It was a wedding where there was violence, murder and judgement. Hearing this story some might ask the question 'Is this about a loving God? It doesn't sound very loving.' But it actually is a message of grace.

Both good and bad people are invited to this wedding. In fact, we are all invited. None of us is cast out providing our eyes are fixed on Jesus. So let's go back through the parable.....

1. Some were invited but said they were too busy to come.
2. Some were invited but made light of the whole event.
3. The servants who invited others were murdered by the ones they were inviting. [This could be a reference to the prophets in the Old Testament and the Apostles in the New Testament.]
4. The King becomes furious and destroys the murderers then tells his servants to invite everyone they might meet.
5. The servants gather good and bad and fill the wedding hall.
6. Now something strange happens. A man arrives who is not wearing special wedding clothes. How could he have known he would be invited to a wedding? He was just going about his daily business when he was invited and taken to the wedding hall. But when he is asked why he has no special clothes he refuses to answer and is cast out into the darkness.

Let's think about the characters.

- Who is the King ?
- Who is the son?
- Who are the invited first guests?

Are the other guests the gentiles? How would they have known about the wedding clothes and do you wonder why only one of them was cast out?

Each person would have been wearing an individual outfit and would have been judged on the merit of what they wore so they could not have come in under a communal garment or umbrella but in their individual clothes.

- Some of the people at a wedding wear identifiable outfits. What might the bride look like? ..... The groom?..... The bridesmaids? ..... The mother of the bride?

The wedding garments in the parable represent degrees of righteousness. When we are invited into the presence of the King of Kings and stand before Him, we must not be wearing our own righteousness which can never be pure enough. We must stand in the righteousness that only Jesus can give us. When we put our faith in Jesus and His cross and salvation we are accepted, forgiven and clothed in His righteousness. We come in worship and in prayer and we find ourselves clothed by Him.

So, this is a parable of grace as we receive  
what we can never earn or deserve.

When Jesus taught His disciples using parables, they would ask questions thrown up by their desire to understand the meaning. They felt challenged by the teaching. This parable may cause us to ask questions. Take a minute to ask yourselves the following.....

- Am I clothed in Christ's righteousness?
- Am I acknowledging the need of His cross of salvation in my life?
- Am I depending on my own righteousness?

Martin Lloyd Jones was interviewed during the 1960s and was challenged about his uncompromising approach to his faith. The interviewer intimated that he should rather adopt the Universal Approach to God that was much more popular. He answered by quoting Jesus when He said 'I AM The Way, The Truth and The Life. No one comes to The Father except through me.' In this way Jesus assures us of the promise that we will live eternally with Him because of His grace.

- Have you come across anyone who wants to think that it doesn't matter which way we come to God?
- Why do you think they hold that opinion?

God's law and rules for living a holy life show up our need for redemption. The centrality of the cross in our faith shows us the way to enter into His presence with acceptance. This is why we must come individually before God. Universalism says we do not need the cross. But this parable makes it very clear that we do.

- How do some people react when you tell them that Jesus loves them? What do you think they might be thinking?

Many do not see the significance of the love of Christ in the cross because they are too comfortable with their lives and the 'stuff' they have accumulated. They don't understand sin or the reality of the effect that any sin brings into our lives. They do not realise that we will be judged by God. Jesus died a violent death to save us from a violent judgement. The only way we will be accepted and welcomed is to be clothed in Jesus' righteousness.

In Revelation 21 it describes the wedding of The Lamb where His redeemed bride is prepared to dwell with God. The work of the cross is not for material possessions but for Eternal Life.

#### **Romans 5: 1-11**

One day we will come face to face with Jesus, the Son of God who redeems us. Many who think they know about Jesus do not recognise who He really is.