

THE GRANDEST INVITATION

MATTHEW 5:3-12

Matthew 22:1-14 The Message (MSG)

1-3 Jesus responded by telling still more stories. “God’s kingdom,” he said, “is like a king who threw a wedding banquet for his son. He sent out servants to call in all the invited guests. And they wouldn’t come!

4 “He sent out another round of servants, instructing them to tell the guests, ‘Look, everything is on the table, the prime rib is ready for carving. Come to the feast!’

5-7 “They only shrugged their shoulders and went off, one to weed his garden, another to work in his shop. The rest, with nothing better to do, beat up on the messengers and then killed them. The king was outraged and sent his soldiers to destroy those thugs and level their city.

8-10 “Then he told his servants, ‘We have a wedding banquet all prepared but no guests. The ones I invited weren’t up to it. Go out into the busiest intersections in town and invite anyone you find to the banquet.’ The servants went out on the streets and rounded up everyone they laid eyes on, good and bad, regardless. And so the banquet was on—every place filled.

11-13 “When the king entered and looked over the scene, he spotted a man who wasn’t properly dressed. He said to him, ‘Friend, how dare you come in here looking like that!’ The man was speechless. Then the king told his servants, ‘Get him out of here—fast. Tie him up and ship him to hell. And make sure he doesn’t get back in.’

14 “That’s what I mean when I say, ‘Many get invited; only a few make it.’”

Last week we began looking at Jesus most talked about topic;

- The Kingdom of God - Heaven...
- What we focused on was that the Kingdom has 3 things;
- **King - Domain - Effect....**

Jesus tells this parable in Matthew 22 and it is parallel in Luke 14 that begins with these words in Red....

- **The Kingdom of heaven may be compared to a King.....**
- Who gave a wedding feast for His Son....

Now typically when a wedding feast was thrown 2 invitations went out;

- The first was the invite to attend.....’hold the date’ if you will
- The second was to ‘come’ as the feast was ‘ready’

In both accounts the King encounters **guests who are unwilling to come....**who **ignore** the invitations given....in Luke’s account they even abuse the messengers sent....

Now for Jesus point in this parable is clear from the scripture....

- **The first invitation** was given to His people through the Prophets.....
- And now through the Son.....*the Messiah* - who came saying the Kingdom is here...
- The main point I want to spend most of my time talking about today was the largeness of the Invitation that Jesus describes...

And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips

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An invitation rejected and eventually sent to ALL.....

- To the unworthy and unable.....were not left out...
- Not based in ability or performance...
- Luke records Jesus saying bring the lame...the poor - the crippled and the blind....

Now this was huge....

- Jesus was talking about an invitation that included everyone that most had seen as completely unqualified.....

In this example of a King....

- Jesus is speaking to a dominant narrative in the heart of every Jewish man and woman.....that the **real Invitation to the Kingdom of God was LIMITED.....**

Limited to those who had ability.....to do or be what was required to enter.....

- The Powerful
- The Wealthy
- The accomplished.....

So entrance to the Kingdom was based on a prescriptive list.....that you may or may not qualify for....

- in their view Kingdom has a King....but entrance and participation in the Domain of that Kingdom.....was based upon what the person had done or not done....

Interesting....for much of my Christian experience I have heard a common Christian Narrative....

- Here is what I have to do.....to be 'blessed'....
- Here is what is missing to get the full blessing and inheritance of God in your life....

In this mind set the scripture is not seen as a letter that is descriptive of the Relationship that God has freely invited us into....

But as a series of requirements.....that are seen as Prescriptive to a life that is blessed....

I remember when I first memorized the Sermon On the Mount in Bible College.....

- I had a choice to memorize the Sermon On the Mount or the Life of Christ outline....I choose the Sermon on the Mount....

Like so many before me....I began to digest the words of the Sermon on the Mount...beginning with the Beatitudes.....

- I saw the words of Jesus as prescriptive of what was required to be blessed and have God happy with me.....and its not like this is an awkward place to land....
- Jesus seems to be saying that those with these inward attitudes and outward behaviors are the Truest of believers....
- So those who practice them are well ' a cut above the rest'Sermon on the mount lifestyle....
- That is not an uncommon take on the beatitudes or prescription for blessedness...

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But this does not align with Jesus opening and most consistent sermon...

Mark 1:15

The time is fulfilled (koinonia) repent (change your mind) and believe the good news....

- Jesus seems to be more passionate about a repentance that involves what they believed.....and who they believed.....especially when He is talking about the Kingdom!
- You see this sort of ‘cut above the rest’ thinking is exactly what Rabbi’s taught in Jesus day concerning the Kingdom.....

Last week we highlighted the 4 linear positions about the Kingdom....political, spiritual, future and present...

In Jesus day it was commonly taught and understood not only these linear time positions but **WHO would be qualified to enter the Kingdom of Heaven...**

Most believed it included at least 5 things

- Had to be a Jew
- Male
- Religiously upright
- Whole and Healthy
- Wealthy

So the opposite would mean you were not qualified for the Kingdom

- Non-Jew
- Woman
- Impure
- Sick
- Poor

Little wonder why Jesus ministry was so....shocking....it was not just signs and wonders but it was WHO He ministered to...

- Samaritan Woman.....seriously?
- Impure.....Leper - adulterous woman
- Blind
- Poor
- Demon possessed...

So while Jesus is answering the chief Priests and elders of the people....Matthew 21:31

“Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you”

....For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him’ but the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him.....and you did not!

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Kingdom has a King

Entrance to the Kingdom is the King - John 10:9 I am the Gate, John 14:6 the way the truth and the life

- And so we have Jesus ministry filled with the marginalized...the outcast....the poor....women... climbing trees, tearing open roofs, crawling to touch His garment.....**all to encounter this Man...**
- **Who is freely offering the Blessing of the Kingdom....**

The word blessing = ‘those for who things are good’ is freely given to everyone...

- **So by Jesus life and Ministry....He proclaims that The Kingdom is for those who did not believe it could be.....**
- **This Jewish Rabbinic Teacher is saying and living something they have never heard before....the broken, and marginalized are included!**

So coming back to the Sermon on the Mount....especially this opening verse of the Beatitudes.....

Blessed are the Poor in Spirit.....for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.....

Beloved the Beatitudes are not Prescriptive but Rather Descriptive of the Largeness of the His Kingdom!

1. The Poor are included.....These are invitations of Inclusion.....In This Kingdom the Poor are invited included.....

- Poor in Spirit = **Those who have nothing going for them!**
- Dallas Willard’s definition = Spiritual Zeros!
- Luke’s Account - Luke 6:20 - ***Blessed are the Poor.....***

Can you imagine the corporate gasp.....

- In a world that looked down on the poor....as living poverty was the result of the persons life....
- Jewish interpretation - Poverty was a curse....

The King of this Kingdom....just made an amazing proclamation.....the Poor are included!

In This Kingdom...

2. Those who Mourn are comforted....

- Mourn = **Those who situation is wretched.....**
- I have been in countless ‘inconsolable’ moments of sudden loss and grief
- This King is declaring that an inconsolable place can be comforted....and blessed...

In this Kingdom.....The Poor qualify - those who mourn are comforted....

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3. The Meek - Gentle are Blessed

- Meek = **those who cannot retaliate when harmed**
- Jesus is speaking to an audience filled with Men and Women being taken advantage of by land owners....
- These are for the most part men and women who had no capacity to retaliate.....now look at Jesus words....***Blessed are the Meek.....for they will inherit the Earth!***

In This Kingdom's domain will provide for those who cannot retaliate when harmed.....

In The Kingdom.....The Meek Inherit the Earth...

4. In this Kingdom - Those who hunger for righteousness...are filled

- Those who Hunger = **People** starved for something they do not have.....who year to have wrong things made right...
- Interesting one of the words John hears in Heaven....Revelation 21:5
- I am making all things New.....

In the Domain of this Kingdom....He will make wrong things right.....

5. In the Kingdom - The Merciful - receive Mercy....

- Those who have lived out of generosity.....and even felt taken advantage of...will receive immeasurable Mercy!

6. In the Kingdom - The Pure in Heart....See God!

Lets be honest....

CS Lewis 'I have never had a completely selfless thought....'

- We may long to do right....read Psalm 24....
Who may ascend the hill of the Lord only he who has clean hand's and a pure heart.....

So Jesus is speaking to people who like us know they would never be Perfect enough.....

- No matter the resolve.....it eluded them....
 - The Pure in heart
 - They will SEE God
 - Not just in future but in the Present Encounter God....

7. In the Kingdom....the Peace-makers for they will be called sons of God.....

- Peace-makers - **those who are caught in the middle -**

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Those who have chosen to stand in the middle to offer themselves for the sake of Peace....

- Beloved Using Force to make an enemy bow is NOT peacemaking....
- **being willing to suffer or die in the middle....is a peacemaker....**

This is exactly who Jesus is.....and we are included with Him and are called Sons of God...

8. In The Kingdom

The Persecuted are Blessed.....for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.....

Beloved when we align our lives with the values of the Kingdom we will likely be rejected....

Again the question....

In the Kingdom are we Blessed because of Conditions.....?

- Poor
- Meek

Or because of a Person - who is the Kingdom - Jesus

The point is that Access to the Kingdom is from a Person - who is the King of this Kingdom!

In the Kingdom

We are Blessed.....truly well off because of the King....

The Values of this Kingdom are all about the King

- He was poor in Spirit
- Gentle
- Meek
- Hungered for Righteousness.....

My point in all of this is this....

Jesus gives the same word to us.....

That we are invited to become what He was.....a Living beatitudes....

We began looking at Matthew 22 - ***Kingdom can be compared to a King....who Sent out invitations.....***

Beloved the Boldest and what should be our most repeated statement about the Kingdom.....

The Invitation has been Given to ALL!

Now we read in Matthew 22 that this same King comes into the banquet and finds someone dressed in something other than wedding garments.....question is asked...verse 12..***how did you get in here without wedding clothes.....?***

- At first blush this looks harsh....and almost unkind....

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Yet we have clear understanding what Jesus is referring towards here....

Ephesians 5:25-27

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

Wedding Clothes were not a trick question....

- Are you going to accept the Garment of His righteousness or trust insist to trust you own?
- The Garment is the Kings!
- Offers Freely and openly!

His Grand invitation is that we are all invited in....will you accept the invitation?

Invitation is not to a Labor Camp - to a Feast!

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