

Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.

Matthew 22:1-14

How is this a parable teaching about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like? What sort of behaviours and attitudes does it call for now? At a minimum it means: expect to have to hang out with non-elites - good and bad all together; take seriously the honour of the invitation and do it right.

Year A

Pentecost 17

October 9, 2011

Sunday Between October 9 and October 15 Inclusive

Proper 23, Ordinary Time 28

Canada Thanksgiving Sunday between October 7 and October 13 inclusive. See [Luke 17:11-19](#) for Thanksgiving commentary.

Read the passage at the bottom of this post: [Matthew 22:1-14, The Message](#) or [Matthew 22:1-14, The New Revised Standard Version \(NRSV\)](#).

Click here, [Matthew 22:1-14](#), for an easy to print or email Adobe PDF version of this note.

Sermon by the [Rev. Dr. George Hermanson](#), ". "

This parable is based on the social protocols practiced among elites.

Note that in **Verse 3**, the slaves go to "those who had been invited." That is, when the King first set the date of his son's wedding banquet, he sent out a notice to all the right people; the A List people he needed to attend in order to make sure his son's wedding was **THE** social event he needed it to be in order to ensure the King's own social standing, his own honour status.

Sending out a first notice like this, allows the invited guests to check around and see who else has been invited. If the right people have been invited and will be attending, they will also attend. And if the "right" people are not attending?

Well, the flimsy excuses offered are exactly that, flimsy excuses that the King would easily see through and understand were meant as insults to him, his son, and their social standing.

The result, in **Verse 7**, is an assertion by the King that he is not to be treated so scandalously.

Note: *It is dead wrong, and a total mis-use of this parable, to interpret this as Jesus meaning "Jews" refused the invitation. The invited guests are the elites - the religious leaders and secular rulers - and not all Jews. It is precisely Jesus' non-elite Jewish followers who would understand that it is **THEY** who now get into the banquet. For more on this, please read my post, [It's "Judeans" Not "Jews"](#).*

Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.

The King now totally disrupts all social protocol and invites street people into the banquet - both good and bad.

And yet the invitation is not a free for all. The King would have supplied the guests with proper wedding attire. And the one found not wearing a wedding robe would be insulting the King by not accepting his hospitality. His fate is the same as the elites.

Let's face it, **Verse 14** is a non sequitur that makes no sense whatsoever as a conclusion to the story where many non-elites have been invited and only one has been rejected. Many have been invited and all but one have been chosen, would be a more fitting conclusion.

How is this a parable teaching about what the Kingdom of Heaven is like? What sort of behaviours and attitudes does it call for now? At a minimum it means: expect to have to hang out with non-elites - good and bad all together; take seriously the honour of the invitation and do it right.

David Ewart,
www.holytextures.com

Historical background information in this post is drawn primarily from Social-Science Commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, see link below, page 111.

* [Link to Amazon.com Bibliography for Bruce Malina, et. al.](#), Social Science Commentary on ... The Synoptic Gospels; The Gospel of John; The Book of Acts; The Letters of Paul; The Book of Revelation; and others.

Matthew 22:1-14 (NRSV)

¹ Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ² "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³ He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴ Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' ⁵ But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶ while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. ⁷ The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' ¹⁰ Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹ "But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, ¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless.

Holy Textures

Meeting Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.
Short, easy to use, faith-provoking insights.

¹³ Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen."

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. [Used by permission](#). All rights reserved.

Matthew 22:1-14 (The Message)

¹ Jesus responded by telling still more stories. ² "God's kingdom," he said, "is like a king who threw a wedding banquet for his son. ³ 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 "They only shrugged their shoulders and went off, one to weed his garden, another to work in his shop. ⁶ The rest, with nothing better to do, beat up on the messengers and then killed them. ⁷ The king was outraged and sent his soldiers to destroy those thugs and level their city.

⁸ "Then he told his servants, 'We have a wedding banquet all prepared but no guests. The ones I invited weren't up to it. ⁹ Go out into the busiest intersections in town and invite anyone you find to the banquet.' ¹⁰ 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 "When the king entered and looked over the scene, he spotted a man who wasn't properly dressed. ¹² He said to him, 'Friend, how dare you come in here looking like that!' The man was speechless. ¹³ 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.' "

Scripture quotations from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. [Used by permission](#) of NavPress Publishing Group.