



**The Parable of The Marriage Feast
(Matthew 22:1-14)**

The passage goes this way:

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle are killed and all things are ready. Come to the wedding."' " But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business and the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully and killed them but when the king heard about it, he was furious and he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they

found, both bad and good and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

"But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

"For many are called but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:1-14).

This is not a very exciting parable for a few people, especially for those who mistreated the servants—those who murdered the servants and who suffered when their city was burned. It is not a thrilling parable for the man who was found in the wrong garments. At that time, Jesus was talking to the Jews. He was saying that His Father was going to prepare a supper. Many times in history, God sent out prophets to deliver His message but the people killed the prophets and the servants. Jesus Himself even came and they killed Him too. The Apostles and Prophets, who started the New Testament Acts, were killed too. Eventually, God had the city of Jerusalem taken by siege. The armies of the other countries killed the people. The feast in this parable was referring to the Wedding Supper of the Lamb. The Son of the King is Jesus Christ. The King said that the people he had originally invited were not worthy and so He sent out messengers to invite the good and the bad. In other words, everybody was invited, but not everybody accepts the invitation. As a Christian, one day you will be a guest at this great occasion in Heaven. There will be a place card, with your name on it, ready to put on the banqueting table, so that you will be seated in your rightful place!

There are certain people who feel that they are justified by the Law. Some people feel that they need to be justified by their works of self-righteousness. This is what was illustrated in the wedding garment. Every person in those days who had a wedding would give all of his guests a garment. This way, the rich and the poor who came to the wedding would not be discriminated against; everyone would be well-dressed and felt worthy to be at the wedding.

Unfortunately, some people would reject the garments and would choose to enter, wearing their own clothes. This speaks of a person who has been offered the righteousness of Christ but expects to be able to inherit salvation through their own works of righteousness. It says in Scripture that our works of righteousness are as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). A couple of teachers I listen to often, Joseph Prince and Andrew Wommack, have described that the filthy rags in that verse actually mean (pardon me ladies) the rags that were used by

women during menstruation. It is talking about the sort of rags that are full of dirty blood.

If you came into a wedding supper and any person was not in a clean fresh white robe of Jesus Christ's righteousness, it would be quite easy to see that sort of rag. That sort of garment on a person would stand out. So, too, we stand out when we try to earn our salvation through our own works.

This is a subject I know very well. For many years, I have read the prophets and I have felt that I was called to be one. I spent copious amounts of time in the Old Testament Prophets learning much of the Law. I felt that we still serve God like that. I felt that I had to achieve my own sense of holiness. I thought holiness and righteousness were not assigned or naturally given to me through the death of Jesus Christ. I believed that I had to earn my righteousness. I had to do good works. I was busy making videos, writing articles and running a prophetic ministry website. All busy. I was trying to minister in order to have an insurance policy against the possibility that my sin was too much—against the possibility that I was going to have to go to Hell. I was trying to insure myself against Hell.

Jesus' Gospel—the Gospel that Paul preached—said that Jesus Christ's righteousness is enough. It says that His death on the cross was enough for our past, present and future sins. A person who does not believe this is a person who trusts that they can inherit salvation through their own righteousness. Essentially, they believe that all their sins up until when they were saved or born again were forgiven, but from that time on, they had to read the Bible, attend church, pay tithes, be holy and not sin in order to get into Heaven. These works of self-righteousness are filthy rags.

The only thing that passes God's standard is His own righteousness, the righteousness of His own Son. I used to feel disgusted when I would hear people say that I had the righteousness of Christ. When God looks at me, all He sees is His Son. I used to laugh at that. I used to get angry at that. I knew I was a sinner. I thought that any idea of me inheriting eternal salvation without my works was stupid—was foolishness and folly. I used to think that people who believed in the promises of God in the Old Testament, but did not believe the Law, were people attending a smorgasbord and merely picking the verses that pleased them and ignored the rest.

I spoke to many people about how foolish it was—to think that we are saved by Jesus Christ's death on the cross and His blood alone. I was like the wedding guest who took Jesus' robe of righteousness and salvation, but shed that robe of righteousness and walked into the party thinking I deserved to go there with my own works of

righteousness. This is folly. This is something that Jesus—whether you know it or not—was clearly warning us against in this parable. He was saying that you are not going to measure up.

It says in James 2:10, he who is guilty of breaking one of the laws is guilty of breaking them all, for a person who thinks that they can achieve their own righteousness or achieve their own holiness in this life only has to break one law to be guilty of all of them. This is a passage in the Scripture that used to bring me a little bit of conviction but I could not do anything with the conviction because I was so convinced that I had to earn my own salvation through my own works of self-righteousness.

Can you understand that this parable is talking to people who think they are going to measure up? The purpose of the Law was to show you and me that we could never measure up to the standards of God. The Law was something to point us towards a Creator, towards a Savior that would save us from sins and give us the power to resist them and something to stand in our place.

Jesus Christ did not come to earth merely to die on the cross for you to pray and work out your salvation with your own works of righteousness. Jesus came to be your righteousness, to clothe you in righteousness. As you confess that you are the righteousness of Christ in God, as you believe that you are saved by His grace, as you believe your sins are forgiven in the past, present and future, your thoughts and your lifestyle will start to conform to that way.

What I am saying is not a license to go out and sin your life away. It has certainly brought me a lot of joy and peace to know that I am saved by Jesus Christ and His death alone. I do not have to measure up because Jesus Christ already did it for me.

You have been invited to the party. Are you willing to lay off your own works of self-righteousness? Are you willing to lay down your own cross, a cross that you feel that you have to bear? Are you willing to take Jesus' sacrifice and His cross upon your shoulders and come in to the party that you have been invited to by God Himself? Are you willing to come? Because whether you are good or bad, you are invited to the party.

Come on, you Christians who are bound up with legalism, the Law and this idea of having to measure up to certain religious standards. Give it away. Stop trying to wear your own robe into the celebration. Put on the robe of Jesus Christ. Look up Joseph Prince and Andrew Wommack on DVD and on the internet. Andrew has a five DVD teaching which he taught in Minneapolis USA on Law and Grace. I think it's even better than the one by Joseph Prince on "Condemnation Kills."

Start to live in the fullness and abundance that the grace of God provides for us.