

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP CURRICULUM

Week 16 - April 15 through April 21

TODAY'S LESSON: *"The Great Invitation"*

TODAY'S PASSAGE:

Matthew 22:1-9 (NLT) Jesus also told them other parables. He said, 2 "The Kingdom of Heaven can be illustrated by the story of a king who prepared a great wedding feast for his son. 3 When the banquet was ready, he sent his servants to notify those who were invited. But they all refused to come! 4 "So he sent other servants to tell them, 'The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet!' 5 But the guests he had invited ignored them and went their own way, one to his farm, another to his business. 6 Others seized his messengers and insulted them and killed them. 7 "The king was furious, and he sent out his army to destroy the murderers and burn their town. 8 And he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, and the guests I invited aren't worthy of the honor. 9 Now go out to the street corners and invite everyone you see.'

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: What did you learn from what we just read?

1) The Invited Guests and Their Responses

- In this parable, Jesus tells the story of a king who invites guests to his son's wedding feast. However, those who were initially invited refuse to come and even mistreat the king's servants.

Matthew 22:3-5 (NLT) - "The king sent his servants to bring the invited guests to the wedding feast, but they all refused to come."

- The guest saying no at first shows how people reject God's invitation.
- Their mistreatment of the king's servants highlights their disregard for God's messengers and their lack of fear of God.

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: What can we learn from the initial guests' responses to God's invitation, and how might this apply to our own lives?

2) The Inclusive Invitation

- When the invited guests reject the invitation, the king sends his servants to invite anyone they can find, both good and bad, to fill the wedding hall.
- This shift in the parable signifies God's love extended to all people, not just a select few.

Matthew 22:9 (NLT) - "So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests."

- God's invitation is inclusive, reaching out to people from all walks of life.
- The parable emphasizes God's desire for a full banquet hall, symbolizing the expansion of His kingdom.

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: How does the inclusiveness of God's invitation challenge our own assumptions about who belongs in God's kingdom?

POINT #3: The Wedding Garment

- In this parable, the king notices a guest without a wedding garment, and he is speechless. The king instructs his servants to bind the guest and throw him into the outer darkness.
- The wedding garment represents righteousness and preparedness for God's kingdom.

Matthew 22:11-13 (NLT) - "But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. He asked, 'Friend, how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' But the man had no reply. Then the king said to his aides, 'Bind his hands and feet and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

- The parable highlights the importance of being spiritually prepared for God's kingdom.
- It emphasizes the significance of a transformed life and righteousness in response to God's invitation.

INTERACTIVE QUESTION: How can we ensure that we are spiritually clothed with the "wedding garment" and ready to partake in God's eternal banquet?

CLOSING QUESTION: What is one thing from today's lesson that you will apply this week?