

Introduction:

- I read about an uncomfortable experience a pastor had at a wedding recently. Everything was going along as planned until it came time for the minister to ask that all-important question of the bride, "Do you ____ take so-and-so to be your lawfully wedded husband?" Just then, for some unknown reason, there was an incredibly long and unbelievably awkward silence. No one, at the time, knew for sure if the bride had just zoned out for a moment, or if she was actually contemplating how she wanted to answer. The pastor certainly hoped it was the former, but not being a close friend, he never found out. **APPLICATION** No groom deserves to have a hesitant bride on his wedding day. This incident made me think of how the Church is the Bride of Christ, and how we can be reluctant in committing ourselves to Him. Just as it would crush a groom for his bride to have second thoughts about her commitment, it must be so disappointing to Jesus when we hesitate in our commitments to Him.
- Mt. 22:1-14 Is also a parable about a Wedding...a feast to be exact. "This parable, like the two which precede it, speaks of people who do not live up to expectation and so lose their place of privilege, to be replaced by a more surprising group; the first are last and the last first." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 821). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co. This morning we will look into the Invitation of the Ages, The Response of the Ages, And Being Dressed for the ages.

I. The Invitation of the Ages!

A. Lets take note:

1. The event of the Ages is the Wedding Feast of the Lamb prepared by the Father! This is one event you do not want to miss. You can miss the Emmys, the Grammys, the CMA but do not miss this event. IT ONLY HAPPENS ONCE!
2. The banquet hall will not be filled unless an invitation is sent out and a call to summon people to come is given. A major part of this parable is the fact that people must be told about the Wedding event that the Father has prepared.
3. The church (the Kingdom) is not 'predestined' to be filled by the inactivity of the people of God. God has always worked through people and He still works through people. Especially when it comes to getting the invitations out.
4. We see the Father sending his servants out to do three things. To call, to tell, to invite.

B. Notify - Kaleo Gr. "To call" This action goes out to the first group. It can also be translated summon...meaning respond.

1. Call them to the wedding. Actually, in our parable, the invitation had been sent out. This probably meant that someone from the Kings house had went out on behalf of the King and let those people who were invited know about the wedding banquet for the son. The King was sending out a notice to all of those who had been invited. *"and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come."* (Matthew 22:3, NKJV)

2. Other examples of kaleo meaning to call.
 - a) *"Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them,"* (Matthew 4:21, NKJV)
 - b) *"But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.""* (Matthew 9:13, NKJV)
3. I am reminded of: *And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?* (Ro 10:14)

C. Tell - Lego Gr. vs 4. This action too, goes out to the first group. Another group of servants go to tell those who had been invited.

1. Those of you who have trouble RSVP'ing should be able to relate real well to this parable. But they had to receive a second email with a phone call before they actually responded.
2. Tell them that the banquet is ready. That it is ready now! When it comes to eternity and where people will spend it there is always an urgency!
3. Tell them that everything is prepared!
 - a) God is saying, "I have done my part!"
 - b) He simple desires us to respond. "Now I desire you to come and celebrate with me!"

D. Invite - kaleo vs. 9 of Mt 22, Greek, = to call, to call together, to invite. It is the same word used in verse 2. The difference is the difference between summon and invite. It has to do with the verb endings.

1. You can say to your dog, "Wanna go for a walk?" and the tail begins wagging. You can say to your kids, "Lets go get ice creme!" and they come running.
2. Jesus is saying in this verse, call people to come together; to go with you to the wedding banquet of the Lamb of God! In Lk 14 the Master invites people to a great feast. It was a call to come and join Him in celebration. An invitation is meant to bring people to someone or something. In this case it is too God. We have been entrusted with the biggest invitation of all...to know God. And to invite others to know Him.
3. Other examples of invited:
 - a) *"Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.'"* (Luke 7:39, NKJV)
 - b) *"Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding."* (John 2:2, NKJV)
4. Invite or summon them to come!

II. The Response of the Ages

A. There are three response: Those who wont answer the call. Those who will but wont dress for the occasion. And those who will answer the invitation and come prepared.

B. #1. Those who wont answer the call.

- a) They are the Pharisees in our passage. Religious people.
- b) They think they are already good enough and not in need of what God offers. These are the people who have a little bit of religious experience and feel like they are 'good.' "Hey you wanna meet God?" "No, I'm good."

- c) They are the people who do not see the value of what God offers. Therefore they make fun of, beat and even kill the servants who bring the invitation. Why would you do that? Simple: you do not see the value of what is being offered. In other words, "they had more important things to do." They *amaleo*-to not think about, to neglect.
- d) Jesus was speaking very directly to the religious of his day. In fact the two parable prior to this one have the same meaning.
- C. #2. Those who answer the call enter, but have the wrong garment.
1. vs. *"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.'"* (Matthew 22:11-13, NKJV)
 2. If you are invited to the wedding you must have the wedding attire on when you attend. In other words, you don't wear your everyday clothes and you do not come dirty. IE. When Kelly and I got married, her cousin Lucky (who rode with Hells Angels) said this to her when he was congratulating us. "Hey, Kelly...Got new bibs and T-shirt for your wedding!" He did, new pair of bib overalls and new white T-shirt.
 3. To come into the wedding hall you must have either been clothed or put on a new garment. Jesus is speaking spiritually. We can discover what this means by looking at Paul's writings.
 - a) *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."* (Romans 13:12-14, NKJV)
 - b) Put on Christ *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."* (Galatians 3:27, NKJV)
 - c) Put on new man *"and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness."* (Ephesians 4:24, NKJV) see also Col 3:10
 - d) Put on love. *"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection."* (Colossians 3:14, NKJV)
 - e) Put on fruit of Spirit *"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;"* (Colossians 3:12, NKJV)
 - f) Mph 6:14 put on righteousness.
 - g) When you read all of these scriptures you see immediately why the King could recognize the guy who was not dressed for the occasion. What are you wearing?
- D. #3. Those who answer the call enter the Kingdom. Third response of the ages is simply by faith answer the call to event prepared by God.
1. *"As the Scriptures tell us, **Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.**" Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in*

him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!" (Romans 10:11-15, NLT)

2. These are those who are willing to come. They see the value of the offer. They simply come. They have put on Christ.

III. Are Dressed For the Ages?

- A. To the first group who refused to come to the banquet. The King came and killed the murders and leveled their town. In hind sight this could easily apply to Jerusalem in AD 70 when the Romans level the city.
- B. To the man who was not dressed for the wedding, he was bound and thrown into outer darkness where Jesus said there would be much gnashing of teeth. He wanted a form of godliness but not the real deal. The eternal result was really no different than those who refused to come.
- C. To those who answer the invitation and are dressed for the occasion. They party on!
- D. To get in, you must come. To be dressed you must put on Christ.
 - a) It all happens by faith.
 - b) You simply believe the message and receive God's grace.
 - c) Notice that good and bad were invited to come to the banquet. This is the messiness of church. You do not have to be good to get in. You enter by faith in Jesus Christ. Of course, if you truly believe your life will show evidence or fruit of that.
- E. *""For many are called, but few are chosen.""* (Matthew 22:14, NLT)
 1. Who are the chosen? They are not the Jews, because the 'chose' have refused Him. So it is not the Israelite community that Jesus here speaks of.
 2. The 'many' and the 'few' refers to the 'weeding process' by which people are separated out.
 3. The 'few' who remain become the chosen, not because God decided who they would be but because they decided whose they would be. I.E. Judas was 'called' but not 'chosen.'
 4. "The chosen are the new tenants who will produce the fruit, who, as we have seen in the last parable, may be Jewish or Gentile; their chosenness does not depend on their racial origin but on their response to God's summons and their readiness to give God his due." France, R. T. (2007). *The Gospel of Matthew* (p. 828). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publication Co.

Two things in concluding:

- 1. Church you are the sent ones. Some will never hear unless you tell them. Some will never come in unless you invite them. Make sure you are patient with people. 2 Peter 3:9. God is very patient with people.
- 2. There is a wedding banquet for Son of God that is being prepared. The invitation has gone out. The question this morning is, "How will you respond?" I trust you see the value of making Jesus Lord of your life.