

SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 22:1-14.

INTRODUCTION:

1. Wedding bells – they've been ringing for some, they'll soon be ringing for others.
2. On some level, we can all relate to weddings. That's why Jesus used them to teach us important spiritual lessons.
 - A. Jesus performed His first miracle at a wedding. John 2:1-11.
 - B. Jesus used the choosing of a seat at a wedding to teach us not to exalt ourselves. Luke 14:7-11.
 - C. Jesus used a groom's anticipation of his honeymoon to teach us how ready we need to be for His return. Luke 12:35-38.
 - D. Jesus used a wedding to teach us that once He returns it's too late for us to get ready to go to heaven. Matthew 25:1-13.
3. As most of you know, my daughter, Elizabeth Norman, will, Lord willing, become the wife of Nathan Bartlett this Saturday afternoon at 2:30 p.m. at the Cone Chapel on the campus of Harding University. You are all invited to attend.
4. Obviously, I've been thinking a lot about weddings of late.
5. On top of that, while getting ready one morning last week, I heard today's scripture reading. It made me stop and think.
6. I hope a lesson on this text help us all stop and think.



ANALYSIS:

1. **God the Father is giving a wedding feast for His Son and He's invited everyone to attend.** Matthew 22:1-3A.
 - A. When Nathan "popped the question" he did two things. He proposed marriage to Elizabeth and he invited her to a wedding – their own.
 - B. Jesus has done the same with us. He's invited us to a wedding, but not as mere guests, but as his bride.
 - 1) Jesus is the groom. Mark 2:18-20.
 - 2) The church is the bride who's readying herself for the wedding. Ephesians 5:25-27.
 - 3) The wedding will be in heaven. Revelation 19:6B-9.
 - 4) God the Spirit and the church want everyone to attend. Revelation 22:17.
2. **Many people are unwilling to attend.** Matthew 22:3-6.
3. **God does not take kindly to people who refuse to attend.** Matthew 22:7.
4. **It's not enough to just show up for the wedding.** Matthew 22:8-13.
5. **Many are called, but few are chosen.** Matthew 22:14.

APPLICATIONS:

1. **The effect of refusals on God.** "To refuse offered hospitality was a calculated and deliberate insult. The refusal of the invitations, and that at the last moment, was a bitter insult flung in the face of the host" (Barclay).
2. **The effect of refusals on people.**
3. **The importance of communicating invitations.** Matthew 22:3-4.
4. **The importance of paying attention to invitations.** Matthew 22:5A.

(OVER)

5. **We must never be too busy to do what's truly best.** Matthew 22:5; Luke 14:16-20.

- A. "It is possible to become so obsessed with the activities of the world that the thought of the unseen thing gets crowded out altogether. A man can live a life in which he has got himself so preoccupied with the things of the world that he has left himself no time for prayer, worship and devotion" (Barclay).
- B. "One of the great dangers of life is that it can be good things which come between us and Christ. If the things to which we were tempted always looked clearly and undoubtedly bad we would seldom fall to temptation. The great temptation of life, the most insidious of all, is to let the good interfere with the best. Into that danger we will never run if we put first and foremost the claim and invitation of Jesus Christ" (Barclay). I put it this way – the greatest danger to the most important thing is the second and third most important thing.
- C. "It is possible to take an entirely selfish view of home. We can regard our homes as existing for nothing but our own comfort and our own convenience; we can make of them places where there is a world into which no one but ourselves can enter and from which all are shut out. We must remember two things. First, the great value of a home is that it is a place into which a man comes that he may go out again strengthened and refreshed for life. If it is a place which renders him soft and flabby and unfit for life then it is failing in its function and he is misusing it. We have a responsibility to the world as well as to our homes; and our homes should not shut us off from the claims of God and of others but should strengthen us better to discharge them. Second, the New Testament insists that the Christian must be given to hospitality. (Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9). They are given to us not for our own selfish happiness but that we may share that happiness with others, and specially with those who may not be so fortunate as we are" (Barclay).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Heaven is a wedding feast.
- 2. Many are called, but few are chosen.
- 3. All things are ready. Come to the feast!