

### 3. God's Love Transforms us

Why did the king throw the underdressed guest into outer darkness? Because he refused to be changed. We cannot enter the Kingdom of God in sin. So, God bids us to die to ourselves and live in Christ- a totally new creation.

*17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! - 2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV*

*6 For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-- - Romans 6:6 NIV*

*Why can't we just tell people they are good enough as they are, they can stay unchanged and still enter God's kingdom?*

God's love transforms, heals, and changes us. He loves us too much to leave us as we are. God will not turn away anyone who repents of their sin and trusts in Jesus for their salvation. They will be clothed in Christ's righteousness and enter the celebration of the Great Wedding Feast.

#### **WRAP-UP**

*God has invited everyone to join in the celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb, his Son, Jesus. Some may instead choose to focus on work or homes or things in this world and refuse to accept the invitation. Others may try to get into the kingdom based on their own works and righteousness. Those will be left out. But for any who repent and accept the garments of righteousness and salvation offered by Christ, there is a Great Feast awaiting.*

#### **PRAYER (20 MIN)**

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life.

#### **MEMORY VERSE**

*And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding feast of the Lamb." And he added, "These are true words that come from God." - Revelation 19:9 NLT*

#### **Challenge –**

Read Matthew chapter 21 and see how the stage was set for the telling of this parable. Be aware of references to the religious leaders throughout.

### The Great Feast

Storyteller #9

#### **INTRODUCTION**

It's wedding season. Summer seems to be the most popular time to get married. Maybe you have attended a wedding recently or will soon. How did you feel when you received the invitation? Hopefully you were excited in anticipation of the great event. This week's parable is about the wedding of the king's son. But the wedding guests had a problem- they decided not to come. Of course, a parable is a story that reveals a spiritual truth. So, as we read the story of the great feast, let's consider who the audience was, and who the characters in the parable represent. Maybe we are the ones holding an invitation and it is time to RSVP.

#### **Ice Breaker**

**What were the highlights of the most memorable wedding you attended as a guest?**

#### **Key Passage**

*8 And he [the king] 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.' 10 So the servants brought in everyone they could find, good and bad alike, and the banquet hall was filled with guests. - Matthew 22:8-10 NLT*

#### **STUDY QUESTIONS**

##### **1. Dinner's Ready!**

The parable of the Great Feast appears in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. In Matthew chapter 21 Jesus makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem fulfilling Isaiah's messianic prophecy. But his authority is challenged by the priests and elders. Jesus then began a series of parables which included the two sons, the wicked farmers and finally this parable of the Great Feast. In all three he was speaking to and about the Jewish leadership.

In this parable the king prepared his son's wedding banquet for his invited guests. Then when everything was ready, he called for them to

join the celebration. However, those guests who had been invited refused to come to the celebration.

*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. - Matthew 22:4-6 NLT*

*If God is the king and Jesus is His son, then the Jews were the guests who had been given the invitation to the banquet many generations ago. They are God's chosen people, Abraham's seed. Who were the servants announcing that the feast was ready? What did verse 5 indicate was more important to the invited guests than the feast?*

It appears that those who should have been anticipating the arrival of the king's son (the Messiah) paid no attention to God's announcements. In addition to the Jews rejecting the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem, this might be applied in our own lives. When God makes his presence known and calls to us we too may be so focused on our lives and our careers that we ignore God's voice.

*21 "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.' 22 After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.' 23 So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. - Luke 14:21-23 NLT*

*47 "I tell you, her sins--and they are many--have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love." - Luke 7:47 NLT*

The king's response to the rejection of his son was in some ways predictable and in others surprising. He was angry. If you had paid for a big wedding with a sit-down dinner for hundreds of guests and everyone cancelled, just think how you would feel. Not only was it an insult to your family, but it was also a waste of your generosity. But the twist was in who got to attend the son's wedding feast. No one was excluded. The kingdom was opened to the last, the least and the lost. To the Gentiles, to the unclean.

*God's invitation into His kingdom goes to anyone and everyone. The worst of the worst who society has rejected can enter. The least likely sinner is offered what they could only have dreamed- an audience with the king, in fact, adoption into His family. What kind of people would you deem least likely to be accepted by God? What does Luke 7:47 reveal about the response of those who recognize the magnitude of their sins?*

## **2. What will I wear?**

*11 "But when the king came in to meet the guests, he noticed a man who wasn't wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. 12 'Friend,' he asked, 'how is it that you are here without wedding clothes?' But the man had no reply. 13 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.' - Matthew 22:11-13 NLT*

It's not uncommon for an invitation to a wedding to result in a shopping trip to pick out new clothes. Nobody wants to show up in dirty jeans and a ripped t-shirt. In the ancient Jewish wedding, tradition tells us the groom provided wedding garments for the guests to wear.

*10 I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom in his wedding suit or a bride with her jewels. - Isaiah 61:10 NLT*

*7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ 9 and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. - Philippians 3:7-9 NLT*

*At the king's banquet someone didn't put on the wedding garment. And what does this garment represent according to Isaiah 61:10? Perhaps this guest was relying on his own righteousness to save him. What does Phil 3:9 have to say about our own righteousness? If we expect to enter the Son's wedding banquet, we can't rely on our own righteousness, but must be clothed in Christ's righteousness.*