

Without a Wedding Garment (Matt. 22:1-14)

A Small Group Outline



1. Praise (Purpose: To worship God)

- What are you thankful for this week? (let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray (Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)

- What challenges did you have this week? (write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review (Purpose: To learn accountability)

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? (e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)
- Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.

4. Give (Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover (Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)

• Notes for the facilitator

- Read *Christ's Object Lessons (COL)*, pp. 307-319
- "By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity; the **wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding**" (COL 307).
- "**In this parable, as in that of the great supper, are illustrated the gospel invitation, its rejection by the Jewish people, and the call of mercy to the Gentiles.** But on the part of those who reject the invitation, this parable brings to view a deeper insult and a more dreadful punishment. The call to the feast is a king's invitation. It proceeds from one who is vested with power to command. It confers high honor. Yet the honor is unappreciated. The king's authority is despised" (COL 307).
- "[**This parable**] shows that there is a preparation to be made by all who attend the feast. Those who neglect this preparation are cast out" (COL 308).
- Vs 3: **Sent his servants** - The original invitation to the Jews had been given by the prophets of Old Testament times (see on Matt. 21:34; Luke 14:16). This, the first call of the parable and the second invitation to the Jews, was given by John the Baptist, and by Jesus and His disciples (see on Luke 14:17) – *SDA Bible Commentary*.
- Vs 4: This, the **second call** of the parable, was given the Jews by the disciples, after Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to heaven – *Ibid*
- "**The call to the feast had been given by Christ's disciples.** Our Lord had sent out the twelve and afterward the seventy, proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand, and calling upon men to repent and believe the gospel. But the call was not heeded. Those who are bidden to the feast did not come. The servants were sent out later to say, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." This was the message borne to the Jewish

- nation after the crucifixion of Christ; but the nation that claimed to be God's peculiar people rejected the gospel brought to them in the power of the Holy Spirit" (COL 308).
- Vs 6: **Took his servants:** This mainly refers to Jewish persecution of the early Christians (see Acts 8:1–4). **Killed them:** Jewish persecution led to the deaths of people such as Stephen (Acts 6:9–15; 7:54–60); James (Acts 12:1–3), and others.
 - Vs 7: The judgment was fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the nation.
 - **"The third call to the feast represents the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles.** The king said, 'The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.' (COL 309).
 - "The king's servants who went out into the highways 'gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good.' It was a mixed company. Some of them had no more real regard for the giver of the feast than had the ones who rejected the call. The class first bidden could not afford, they thought, to sacrifice any worldly advantage for the sake of attending the king's banquet. **And of those who accepted the invitation, there were some who thought only of benefiting themselves. They came to share the provisions of the feast, but had no desire to honor the king"** (COL 309).
 - **"When the king came in to view the guests, the real character of all was revealed. For every guest at the feast there had been provided a wedding garment. This garment was a gift from the king. By wearing it the guests showed their respect for the giver of the feast.** But one man was clothed in his common citizen dress. He had refused to make the preparation required by the king. The garment provided for him at great cost he disdained to wear. Thus he insulted his lord" (COL 309).
 - Vs 12: **Friend... speechless** – "The king approached the offending guest tactfully and gave him ample opportunity to defend his course of action. Apparently the king was ready to forgive the man if his present condition was not his own fault, or if by some oversight on the part of the palace servants he had been missed. But since he was speechless, it was obviously his own fault, for had he been innocent, undoubtedly he would have hastened to speak in self-defense. His error had been intentional; he had declined the garment provided for him" – *SDA Bible Commentary*.
 - "By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment. **The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God,** those whose names are written in the book of life. **But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples.** Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. **This decision must be made prior to the second coming** of Christ in the clouds of heaven; for when He comes, His reward is with Him, 'to give every man according as his work shall be.'" Revelation 22:12 (COL 310).
 - **"By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess....** It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour" (COL 310).
 - "This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us.... By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. **When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees ... not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah" (COL 311).

- Accepting Christ's righteousness however, will be reflected in a life of obedience, in works of righteousness. See 1 John 3:24; 1 John 2:3.
- "He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. **This will be the test of character in the judgment**" (COL 314).
- "Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and **by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts**" (COL 314).
- "**The man who came to the feast without a wedding garment represents the condition of many in our world today.** They profess to be Christians, and lay claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel; yet **they feel no need of a transformation of character. They have never felt true repentance for sin.** They do not realize their need of Christ or exercise faith in Him. They have not overcome their hereditary or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. Yet they think that they are good enough in themselves, and they rest upon their own merits instead of trusting in Christ. Hearers of the word, they come to the banquet, but they have not put on the robe of Christ's righteousness" (COL 315)
- "**The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin.** A man may be a law-breaker in heart; yet if he commits no outward act of transgression, he may be regarded by the world as possessing great integrity. But God's law looks into the secrets of the heart. Every act is judged by the motives that prompt it. Only that which is in accord with the principles of God's law will stand in the judgment" (COL 316).
- "**There will be no future probation in which to prepare for eternity. It is in this life that we are to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.** This is our only opportunity to form characters for the home which Christ has made ready for those who obey His commandments" (COL 319).
- Vs 13: **Gnashing of teeth** – An expression to describe the remorse of the lost as they contemplate their sad fate in contrast with the joy that might have been theirs (cf. Matt. 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30) – *SDA Bible Commentary*.
- Vs 14: **Many are called...** : Many are invited to accept the gospel (John 7:37; Rev. 22:17), but comparatively few take up the offer.
- *Read Matt. 22:1-14. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (use only a few). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - What do the main elements in the parable refer to: The king, the king's son, the servants, the 3 invitations, the wedding, the guests?
 - What keeps people from accepting the invitation to the king's son's wedding?
 - What do you think are some of the costs the king would have incurred for the wedding feast? Which verses in the parable indicate that the king spent something? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - What preparation do you think is to be made by all who attend the gospel feast?
 - Why do you think there was an 'examination' of the guests in this parable (vss 11-12)? What could it possibly refer to? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - It is said that, "Many came to the feast only for the food, or out of curiosity, but not to honour the king" (see vs 10). Why do you agree, or disagree with this statement? How do you think a person could honour the king? (*ask one question at a time*)
 - The king not only provided the invitation, but also the wedding garment. Why do you think there was still someone who did not have a wedding garment on?

- Unpack your understanding of the meaning of the wedding garment in the Christian life? What does it mean to live a Christian life without a garment? (*ask one question at a time*)
- What do you understand by the statement, 'Many are called but few are chosen' (vs 14)?
- What does this parable tell us about God?
- What does it tell us about people?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - We have all received invitations. Kindly share an invitation you were excited about, OR one you were NOT excited about?
 - In there an area in your life that you have been putting off a response to what God has asked you to do? If so, kindly elaborate?
 - To whom can you extend Jesus' offer of forgiveness and eternal life this week?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "There is someone who is showing an openness to God at my workplace. I would like to invite him for a meal this week and unpack the beauty of God's gospel invitation."

6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer

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