



Sermon Transcription • Abbotsford

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Two Ways to Anger the King- (Matthew 22:1-14)

[Please Note: This transcript has been lightly edited for ease of reading. Also, some headings have been added in square brackets to aid the reader in locating portions of the sermon.]

We are finishing our Story Time series, in which we have been looking at some of the parables of Jesus and what He told in the Gospels. The parable we are actually looking at here, this morning, has a little song that comes with it. It's the Parable of the Wedding Banquet. So, the song is the...<sings>"I cannot come to the banquet, don't trouble me now. I have married a wife. I have bought me a cow. I have fields and commitments that cost a pretty sum. So don't bother me now, I cannot come..." </sings> No one? You know, you just didn't want to sing it with me. Okay, I see how it is. That's fine. It's a little, cute, fluffy, little song, right, about the wedding banquet. But, what's interesting, is that the song is based on a parable that's not really that fluffy and cute. It's actually a really challenging parable. The context of this parable of the wedding banquet is Jesus is in the temple in Jerusalem on Wednesday and on Friday He is going to be crucified. So, He's telling these stories to the religious leaders in the temple about His disappointment with them in their response to His ministry and the judgement that is going to come to them because of their rejection of Him. So, the first parable He tells to them is the Parable of the Two Sons, where He is basically telling the religious leaders that their behavior towards Him doesn't match their claims of love for God. And then the second parable He tells is the Parable of the Tenants where the gist of the story is that because of the religious leaders' rejection of Jesus, they are going to be destroyed. So, Jesus tells these two parables directed right at the religious leaders. There is a crowd around Him, but He's really just talking to the religious leaders. In Matthew 21:45 it says,

"When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet."

And then comes our Parable of the Wedding Banquet. So, we are going to look at this Parable of the Wedding Banquet in two ways. We are going to see that in this parable, there are two ways to anger the king.

- 1) You can anger the King because you reject his invitation.
- 2) You can anger the King because you wear the wrong clothes.



[Reject His Invitation]

Let's look at the first way to anger the King which is to reject his invitation. Matthew 22, starting in verse one says this,

“Jesus spoke to them [the religious leaders] again in parables, saying: ‘The kingdom of Heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.’”

So, to understand this parable, we have to get in our minds what the wedding banquet for the son of the king would actually look like. See, in our context, a wedding banquet would be something like this where you get the invitation to go to a wedding -right, you probably have to go to one soon, because it's June and that's when everyone gets married- the ceremony probably starts at like 10:00am or 11:00am, something like that. The reception will start at 7:00pm. You've all that time to kill in the middle and it's out of town and you don't know what to do or the place you are going. You're also, like, the plus one of the cousin of the groom, so you don't really know the people and you're not even really sure if you should be the plus one. You are debating yourself, “what am I doing with this person?” But, you are at this party and, because the reception starts at 7:00pm, they don't give you a very nice meal, they basically just give you some dessert and they say, “It's classy like that,” so that's fine. So, you are at the reception and you've had your little tiny piece of cake and now it's time for the speeches to happen and the uncle stands up and he goes a little bit too long because he's a little bit too drunk. And, you are thinking to yourself, “Man, I could have been home doing basically anything other than being at this wedding. It would have been great.” See, in the ancient world, though, weddings were this once in a lifetime, amazing event that you would throw on for your family. It would last days on end. A wedding banquet for the son of the king would basically be like an all inclusive resort. Here is what I mean by that: You would have multiple meals fed to you each day, and you would be put up in some place to stay. In a context, in a culture, where you have to go out to the marketplace everyday at 5:00am just to try to get hired to make enough money to buy some bread for your family to eat that day, to be invited to the wedding banquet of the son of the king would be an amazing opportunity. You go from begging for food to sitting at an all inclusive resort. So, the king sends his servants out to remind them, right? So the servants come to some of these invited guests' door and they knock on the door, the door opens, and they say, “Hi, my name is Bill and I'm a servant of the King and it's the wedding time. You should come. I see you have the save the date right there on your fridge, you should come.” And, the guest hears that the time has come for this amazing wedding banquet for the son of the king and they respond back by saying, “Ah, yeah, nah, I'm not going to go.” See, it's amazing that someone would say no to the all inclusive resort. Who would do that? So, the parable continues, verse 4:

“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened calf have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’ But they paid no attention and went off-- one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them.”

So, the king hears that these people, who have been invited --they had the save the date on the fridge-- they don't want to come. They are saying, “Yeah, we'd rather not go.” So he sends more



servants, different servants, now to come and try and persuade them to come to the wedding banquet because of how amazing it's going to be. So, a new servant comes up to the door, knocks on the door, "Hi, my name is Phil. I'm another servant of the king. Uh, the wedding is about to start and, just so you know, here is the menu. So, we have steak made to order, we have some beef brisket, which is going to melt in your mouth, we have have BBQ ribs at an all you can eat rib station, and we also have these things called ox burgers, which sound weird but are really good, okay? So, you should come! Everything's ready!" And, these invited guests, with the save the date on their fridge, hear Phil, the servant, talking to them about the amazing spread at the all inclusive and they say, "You know what, I need to wash my hair. I have to shampoo and then I have to use conditioner and then it says to repeat, who knows how long that is going to take. And then I should probably go do some weeding in the fields and then after that I have a few emails I need to send out, so sorry, I can't come." Some are totally indifferent, but some of the people who reject the invitation, they reject it by treason. They take the servant, Phil, who announced the menu to them, they drag him into their house, they start mocking him saying, "No one's going to get the ribs now, Phil," they start beating him, and they kill him. See, it's an amazing scene. Some respond with indifference to the king, and some respond with hatred and treason towards to the king. They have rejected the invitation. Verse 7:

"The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city."

The king hears that these people rejected his invitation to come to the wedding banquet of the son of the king, and his response, to their persistent rejection to this, is judgment. He kills those who killed the servants and he burns the entire city to the ground. All those who decided they would rather wash their hair or pull weeds from the field are now trying to escape the flames engulfing their city. See, one way to make the king mad is you reject his invitation.

The point of this first part of the parable is don't reject the king's invitation. Isn't it amazing that the language that's used in verse four... so the servants come, they say, "Hey, come to the wedding. You've been invited, you have the save the date, and you should come." And, they reject the invitation. Then more servants come and the only purpose of these servants, in the second visit to the guests, is to overwhelm them with the glories that is to come at this amazing wedding banquet of the son of the king. The servants are trying to persuade, the king tries to persuade these guests to actually attend this banquet by telling them just how amazing it is. This is the point of why preachers will stand up and talk to you about the glories of Heaven. The fact that we have no business, no right, to be invited to this amazing, cosmic, eternal wedding banquet of the Son of God Himself. The only reason we can be there, is because the Son of God Himself became man, died for our sins on the cross, and was risen again to promise that this party that He is bringing us to is an eternal one with joy that we can't even fathom. See, preachers tell these kind of things because we are trying to motivate you, like the king was trying to motivate those who keep rejecting the invitation, to say, "Would you just accept this invitation of the Gospel? Stop putting it off. You have it on your fridge with the save the date, but would you actually just *accept* the invitation." See, the king tries to motivate acceptance through the glories of Heaven. But, this parable doesn't just motivate accepting the invitation of the Gospel through the glories of Heaven, it also is trying to motivate by making us aware of the realities of the judgment that comes if we reject the invitation. See, the idea that the king would come and burn the



city, for us doesn't strike that much fear into us because we have something called the fire department. You call them up and there is even volunteers who work for them and they will put the thing out really soon. It might be a little inconvenient for you, but it's not a big deal. See, in the ancient world, the worst thing that can ever happen to your hometown is for there to be a fire. In the heat of their town, in the climate they were in, in the lack of resources to fight the fire, the reality is that that fire would be consuming. It would continue to destroy everything in its path until there was nothing left to destroy. See, the parable is trying to motivate us to accept the invitation, not just by the glories of Heaven, but also by the horrors of Hell. A judgment is going to come for those who persist in their rejection of the Gospel. Shai Linne is the name of an artist, a Christian rapper, who has a song called "All Consuming Fire." In it he describes the judgment of God on sinners, in this way,

"We're teaching you theology so y'all can understand
According to His plans: the slaughter of the damned
Unspeakable reality to fall into His hands
No sequels, its finality and awful is the span
No weeping or apologies, no sneakiness or bribery will keep the Lord from honoring His law and its demands."

See, Heaven is amazing and its grandeur is unthinkable in its joy and bliss. Hell is horrific, it's unthinkable in its pain and suffering. See, the point is, why wouldn't you accept this invitation to the banquet? When you hear the stakes, your option is to have eternal joy in the presence of the God who has saved you through His Son, or to spend an eternity being judged for your rebellion and rejection. Why wouldn't you accept this invitation? Why wouldn't you repent of your former ways of living, and accept this Gospel message being presented to you? And say, "I want to go to that wedding banquet." See, my hope is that when you hear that invitation of the Gospel to receive Christ for the forgiveness of your sins for eternal life with Him, that you would not respond like the song does by saying, "<singing> I cannot come to the banquet...</singing>" But, rather, that you would repent and you would believe in Jesus, who has made a way for you to be at the amazing wedding banquet yet to come. See, the first way to make the king angry is you reject his invitation.

[To Wear the Wrong Clothes]

The second way to make the king angry is to wear the wrong clothes. Let's go back to the text. Matthew 22, starting in verse 8:

"Then he [the king] said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless. Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie his hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For many are invited, but few are chosen."



So, imagine the scene. The seating chart for the great, big banquet of the son of the king has been thrown out because all of those guests, with the save the date on the fridge, have decided not to come and they've been judged for it. But, I mean, the food is still laid out, the beef brisket is still going to melt in someone's mouth, and the all you can eat ribs are still going to be eaten by people who are going to enjoy them. So the king tells the servants, "Look, just go out into the streets and find people and invite them into the banquet." So, imagine you are on the street corner and you've been there since early in the morning hoping someone would hire you to work, maybe somewhere in a vineyard. Someone comes by to you and you are expecting them to offer you a day's work so you can buy bread for your family for that day and instead they come to you and say, "Hey, you want to go to a wedding banquet?" And you'd be like, "Uh, yeah! Food for a few days, that sounds great! Could I bring my family?" "Yeah, sure!" "So, who is the wedding banquet for?" you'd ask. And the servant says to you, "Oh, it's the wedding banquet for the son of the king." See, now you've just went from having a few days' food to being invited to the all inclusive resort and your response is "I'll see you there! Of course I'm going to come." So, guests start filling the wedding hall and people are streaming in. They are sitting down and little place holder says Bob and he's like, "I'm not Bob, but I get his spot." He sits down. He's looking at the beef brisket, the band starts practicing their rendition of *Sweet Caroline* and then the king starts coming through the tables like the parents do at the wedding of their children, right? He wants to see who came to the wedding. So, he's walking through the hall and he sees people and he's saying, "Hey, it's good to see you. Thanks for coming, I appreciate it. Have you tried the ribs? Get the ox burger." He sees this one guy sitting there and he's not wearing the right clothes.

See, there's an intern at our church who told me a story where he was brought to an all inclusive resort. Which my first question was: Like, how much are we paying you that you can afford to do that? But, I let him finish his story because it would have been rude to ask that question. So, he's telling this story about being at the all inclusive resort and he and his wife really wanted to go to the really nice restaurant at the all inclusive resort. It's paid for, it's all included! So, they are going to go to this nice restaurant. So, they show up to the restaurant and the intern is wearing flip flops and shorts and the sign says *Shoes and Pants required*. They don't know the intern, right? I mean, they don't know how great he is. So, he shows up in the flip flops and the shorts and he says, "I'm here. Where's the food?" And they say, "Ya, you can't be here. You gotta go." "But I made a reservation! I thought I had a table." "Ya, you're not dressed right, so someone else is going to take your spot because you can't come in here like that." See, the worst thing that happened to this intern was that he had to go eat at the other buffet. But, this guy comes into the wedding banquet wearing the tuxedo t-shirt and the flip flops and he is sent out into the darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. That is Hell language.

So, picture this scene: Here is a guy who has accepted this invitation to the wedding banquet. He's been told about this great wedding banquet yet to come, he's said, "I want to go there," he's accepted it, and he's come into the wedding wearing the wrong clothes and he's sent to Hell for it. What is the deal? Well, a little piece of historical context for us is going to help us here. See, one of the things that was required at wedding banquets, especially at the wedding banquet for the son of the king, was proper attire. It was a command, it was a condition upon entrance into the wedding banquets that you would be wearing the right clothing. Everybody who was going to wedding banquets, especially the wedding banquet of the son of the king, would have *known* this command. But, this guy walks in with



his tuxedo t-shirt and flip flops and thinks, “What’s the big deal that I don’t actually listen to what the king says? He should be happy that I am at his banquet anyways.” See, the problem here is that the man didn’t actually listen to the commands of the king and because he didn’t listen to the commands of the king, he was judged for it.

So, how are we supposed to make sense of all of this? That someone can accept the invitation to join the banquet, and, yet, still be judged and sent to Hell. What is that all about? Well, verse 14 says:

“For many are invited but few are chosen.”

So, what’s the evidence, in this text, that this man in the tuxedo t-shirt and flip flops was not chosen? The evidence is that he failed to obey the commands of the king. It was clear he wasn’t chosen, because he didn’t actually listen to what the king commanded. So, look, here’s the point: Those who are chosen for salvation will both profess faith and put their faith into practice. Those who are chosen for salvation will both profess faith and put their faith into practice. In other words, someone demonstrates their chosen-ness by their obedience to what the King commands. See, that word in verse 14 *chosen*, it’s the same word that’s used in other places in the New Testament to talk about *the elect*. This idea that God chooses some for salvation. I’ve had the opportunity to teach and preach about this idea of the elect and God choosing who will be saved. One of the common critiques that I hear from people when you talk about the fact that God has chosen some people to be saved--right, verse 14: “Not everyone’s invited, but few are chosen”. One of the chief critiques that God chooses some for salvation is the response by saying, “Look, if God just chooses who is going to be saved and He will save them, then what’s the point of obedience, man? Like, what’s the point of following Him, if He’s just going to save who He chooses to save. What’s the point of even following God if that’s true?” Well, this passage tells us that, actually, following Him and obeying Him is everything. You’ll demonstrate whether you’re chosen by your obedience to the commands of the King. It’s not enough to just accept the invitation. James 2:14-15 tells us that a professed faith, without a practiced faith, is a dead faith. A professed faith--I want to accept the invitation-- without a practiced faith-- I want to listen to the commands of the King-- is a dead faith. So, yes, God has chosen who will be saved, but the chosen will demonstrate their chosen-ness through their obedience to what the King commands. Here’s 2 Peter 1:5-11. It says this:

“For this very reason, [that the promises of God, for the fact that there are promises of God] make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self- control; and to self- control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. [“Look, there are promises out there for you to take, but make sure that you make every effort to add to your hope in the promises these behaviors,” Peter says] For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, [that big long list that he provided earlier] you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”



You hear that? *If* you do these things! You profess faith in Christ and that amazing, but *if* you do these things, you will receive the reward. Because a professed faith, without a practiced faith, is a dead faith. If you accept the invitation, but you don't want to listen what the King commands you, you will be thrown out of the wedding banquet. God chooses who is going to be saved and those who are chosen prove it through their obedience to Him. God chooses who is going to be saved and those who are chosen prove it through their obedience to Him. So, look, we are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith that stays alone. The Christian story of salvation is that, because of what Jesus Christ has done in His life, and His death, and His resurrection, He makes salvation available to us freely. And, because of our acceptance of the Gospel, we are saved *from* the horrors of Hell. We are saved *to* the beauties and the grandeurs of Heaven yet to come. And, in the meantime, we are saved for a life of listening to what the King commands. Because, a professed faith, without a practiced faith, is a dead faith. You can't just accept the invitation, but not listen to what the King commands and expect to still have a seat at the wedding banquet yet to come. It's why Paul, in Philippians 2, writes these words, he says:

“...continue [he's writing these words to Christians who believe the Gospel and are saved] to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.”

Here is what Paul is saying: “I need to see you *sweat* in your effort of obedience. You are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone, but your response to that free gift of salvation is sweating to strive towards obedience.” And then he tells us, “Look, it's not just that you're commanded to do this, it's that God promises that He is going to, through His Spirit, give you the *desire* to do that and He is going to give you the *ability* to do that.” But, you've still got to put in the effort. You've still got to go to work. So, you can't just say, “I work at BestBuy. Look at this shirt that they gave me” if you don't actually ever go to work. Those who are saved will profess their faith and they will practice their faith or else their faith is going to be dead.

So, what does this mean for us? Those of us here who are Christians, been a Christian a long time, maybe we've heard the invitation to Heaven that's yet to come, we've heard about that great feast, and we want to go there. Well, what this means for us is that we actually need to listen to what the King commands. It's not enough to just say, “Hey! God's going to forgive me and my sins, so what is the big deal if I keep sinning or if I am obedient? It doesn't matter! Shouldn't I sin so that grace can abound?” May it not be so. See, those who believe in the Gospel are going to want to respond to the Gospel with how they live their life, which means listening to what the King commands. So, how are you doing with what the King commands about your money? Are you hoarding it to protect yourself and protect your joys? Or, are you investing it to pay for other servants to knock on doors and say, “The King wants to invite you to His banquet”? And, are you using your money to help meet the needs of those around you that you see? How are you doing with your money?

Or, how are you doing with your sexuality? You say, “I have accepted the invitation to the wedding banquet of the King, but it doesn't matter that I'm having an affair because God will forgive me.” “It doesn't matter that I am sleeping with my girlfriend because God is going to forgive me.” See, God commands those who want to follow him that, when it comes to their sexuality, if they are single, they



should pursue chastity and if they are married, they should pursue fidelity. So, how are you doing with your sexuality?

How are you doing with your words? The things that you speak about others, are they the kinds of things that are gossip-y and tear people down? Or, are they the kinds of things that build people up and help them follow Jesus better? How are you doing with your relationships? Are you trying to draw as tight a circle around you as possible to limit who you need to spend time with, who you need to show care for, and who you need to love? Or, are you striving to live a life that looks a lot like a welcoming, hospitable kind of person that reflects Jesus' inclusive love of people who just don't seem to fit in? See, those of us who say, "I want to go to the banquet," are we actually listening to the King? Or, do we think the tuxedo shirt will be fine? Look, I'm not asking you about perfection, I'm not asking if you are being perfect in your obedience, because you won't be. What I'm asking is when the Holy Spirit convicts you of your sin, do you find in yourself a desire not just to repent of the sin, but a desire to sweat in an effort to no longer sin in those ways again. Are you willing to listen to what the commands of the King actually are? God is going to command that we work out our own salvation, but He promises He is going to work in us to work it out. So:

"Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For, if you do these things, you will never stumble and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom."

So, there are two questions left for you to consider. First of all, are you going to accept the invitation to the great wedding banquet yet to come? Secondly, are you going to listen to the commands of the King? Let me pray for us.

Father, I am thankful for Your Word. I am thankful for the way that it challenges us and encourages us. Father, I am thankful for Your Son, Jesus Christ, who through His life, death, and resurrection, has made a way for us to be saved. For those here who are in the room and have never put their faith in Christ, repented of their sin and selfishness, and put their faith in Jesus for their hope and salvation, Father, I pray, that by Your Spirit, you would change hearts so that lives would be transformed this morning. Father, help people accept that wedding invitation for that great wedding yet to come. And, for those of us that have already accepted the invitation, Father, would you find in us to be the kind of people who repent when we sin and match that repentance with sweat-filled effort to obey in a response to Your grace to us. Not because we earn our salvation, but because we want to live a life worthy of the commands of the King. We are praying all of this for Your fame and we pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.