

Are You Dressed for the Occasion?

Matt 22:2, 9-14

2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

...

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few are chosen.

I. Introduction

1. This week my mind was drawn to the idea of being prepared—prepared for what is coming.
2. Suppose you wanted to take a weekend camping trip. It is fun sometimes to just be spontaneous and on the spur of the moment, get in the car and do something unplanned.
3. And that will work sometimes for some things.
4. “Alright kids, get in the car,” dad says. “We’re going somewhere special.”
5. That sounds like a fun adventure. And if you take them to their favorite restaurant, or to play putt-putt, or to play at the park, that will ordinarily work fine as a spontaneous event with little or no planning.
6. Although during a pandemic, it may require some planning. Do you have the masks? Do you have the hand sanitizer? Will there be toilet paper?
7. But if you want to take that camping trip, just jumping into the car without making some preparations will likely make that trip more stressful, more painful, maybe even more harmful and dangerous than it would be fun.
8. You need to prepare for such things as what you will eat, what you will do, where you will sleep, how you will protect yourself from the weather, bugs, scavenging animals, or even prowlers.
9. Well maybe being spontaneous is not the approach for that trip. I need to plan ahead and reserve a nice and safe camp site, pack some necessities like the tent, air mattresses, pillows, food, fishing gear, bug spray, flash lights, extra clothes, and particularly, the proper clothes.
10. So whether it is a camping trip, a home improvement project, a feast, or a wedding, important things deserve more than just a spontaneous, “Let’s do this!”
11. In fact, they require making plans, taking extra precautions, purchasing supplies, and getting in the right frame of mind.
12. Or say, if you were going to war, you wouldn’t just grab a squirt gun and say, “Let’s do this!”
13. No, you would need to plan, prepare, study your plan, rehearse your preparation, get supplies, and make sure you are ready and dressed for the occasion.
14. I wouldn’t wear my fishing clothes for a business meeting or wear my suit and tie to go fishing.

15. It is important to be Dressed for the Occasion. **Are you dressed for the occasion?**
 - II. Dressed for a wedding
 - A. The wedding is the kingdom
 1. In this parable of the marriage for the king's son, Jesus presented several ideas about the kingdom of heaven.
Matt 22:2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,
 2. By studying Jesus' parables, you can discover a lot of hidden meanings, but it is important to read how Jesus interpreted its meaning or look to other scripture to interpret it.
 3. This is not the only parable Jesus told that used a marriage to describe the kingdom of heaven.
 4. And various elements come out in these parables, like: what the wedding represents; the need for an invitation; the need to know where to sit; the need to have a lamp and extra oil for the lamp; the need to be ready at all times, and the need to have on a wedding garment.
 5. All of these points deserve to be looked into individually, but I'll just briefly mention one and then look carefully into one other.
 - B. Marriage to Christ
 1. What does the wedding represent? I believe that Jesus, as well as Paul in his writings, used marriage as a way to describe the closest form of human relationship, and one that has several parallels to God's relationship with us.
 2. There is no love that is deeper or more intimate or sacrificial than the love God intended for marriage.
 3. So think of the wedding parables as telling us more about our personal relationship with God—like what it means to be saved, what it means to live for God, and how some things operate in the kingdom of God.
 - C. Appropriate apparel
 1. Specifically in this parable, I want to introduce today's thought from verse 11.
Matt 22:11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:
 2. First I will say by looking at this on the surface level, that for those who are in a relationship with Jesus, He does care about the garments we wear.
 3. Some are inappropriate, and as we see in this passage, some are required.
 4. Other passages reveal that there are some appropriate kinds of garments that are the norm—the standard He asks us to follow—like modest apparel that appropriately covers us. Somebody say amen.
 5. Or like gender appropriate garments that enforce those distinctions that God created between men and women. Somebody say amen.
 6. To say that God doesn't care about our apparel misses the point of several passages that place a focus on our apparel. We will come back to that on another day.
 - D. Missing the wedding garment

1. But for today, I feel strongly pressed to discuss the danger of not dressing for the occasion. As we see in this passage when the king saw a man who was not appropriately dressed for the wedding. It was important enough that the king questioned him:
Matt 22:12-13
12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.
2. And it was important enough that the king removed him from the wedding:
13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
3. I won't say that I understand, or that it is even possible to fully understand the meaning of being removed from the wedding feast and then cast into outer darkness.
4. But Jesus made a very strong point that it is important to be dressed for the occasion when it comes to being called to His kingdom.
5. In fact, it was the difference between being simply called and actually being chosen, as the next verse describes:
Matt 22:14 For many are called, but few are chosen.
6. So let us move this to the next level of understanding. Something far greater than what shirt or skirt you put on today.
7. If you are chosen by God, you need to be dressed for the occasion. What do I mean by being dressed for the occasion?
8. To introduce that thought, look at this admonition from the apostle Paul:
Ephesians 6:10-11
10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

III. Stand against the wiles

A. Our stance

1. You see, the wedding feast that represents the kingdom of heaven, is more than wedding cake, nuts, and punch.
2. We are not talking about a cake walk, a walk in the park, or a recreational camping trip.
3. We are talking about being dressed, or suited up for battle.
4. Beginning with prayer, and specifically, praying in the Spirit, we put on the mind of Christ by entering God's "situation room," where He gives us plans and equipment for the battle before us.
5. There is a real warfare going on in which we are assaulted from time to time. And that does not mean that God has abandoned you. That is the reality of the world we live in.
6. And that is why Paul warned us:
Ephesians 6:10-11
10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
7. Why else would God want us to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might? That is not just a Holy Ghost high to make us feel good about our salvation.
8. While that is a side benefit of being saved—that great Holy Ghost feeling we can enjoy when we worship, pray, and participate in preaching—it is also equipping us for what we must face outside of the church experience.

9. You are called to be strong in God's power, and to put on His armor, so that you can stand against the wiles of the devil.
 10. "**Stand**" means more than just the physical position of standing but to "make a stand," to persist, to sustain, to make fast.
 11. "**Against**" means leaning forward.
 12. "**Wiles**" means craft, cunning, deceit, schemes.
 13. So we must dress for the occasion, because, as Jesus said,
Matt 11:12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.
 14. So it is necessary to put on the whole armor of God because we must be dressed for the occasion of the wiles of the devil who is seeking whom he may devour.
- B. Put on the armor of God
1. But what is the armor of God? **Equipment Jesus purchased for us.**
 2. We will read from Ephesians 6 that they are figurative descriptions of what the salvation of Jesus Christ looks like when it is placed on us.
 3. 1 John 3:8 says that Jesus was manifested to **destroy the works of the devil.**
 4. Col 2:14-15 tells us that our sin was nailed to the cross with Him to blot out our sins in an **open triumph over the devil.**
 5. That is the truth of the good news! Jesus triumphed over the devil. But He wants us to put on that truth and live it like we put on a garment—the armor.
 6. Remember these things before we look at the armor in just a moment:
 7. Jesus said the Spirit of truth will dwell in you. That is the Holy Ghost:
*John 14:17 Even the **Spirit of truth**; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*
 8. And with the Spirit in us, we have Jesus' righteousness on us:
*Phil 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the **righteousness which is of God** by faith:*
 9. And one of the benefits of Jesus' saving work, was peace:
*Eph 2:14 For he is our **peace**, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;*
 10. And the faith that saves us, is actually a faith that God gave us by His saving grace:
*Rom 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the **measure of faith.***
 11. And the salvation we have, well that is the powerful message of the gospel of Jesus Christ:
*Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is **the power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*
 12. And lastly, the Word of God which we have received is the ultimate weapon given by God to us:
*Eph 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is **the word of God:***
 13. I gave those special words to you to show you what salvation looks like when placed on us.
 14. When Jesus saved us, He provided us some special garments to wear to be able to live in victory.

15. And those special garments, when we have them on, ensure that we are dressed for the occasion.
- C. The armor
1. Jesus intends us for us not only to be ready for what we must face, as in a defensive stance, but also to violently take by force the kingdom.
 2. Not by our own power and strength, but those things that His salvation equipped us with:
Ephesians 6:10-12
10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.
11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.
12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.
 3. There is a real adversary we must face; and we are not speaking of a flesh and blood adversary, but those very spiritual attacks that Jesus has defeated through the salvation He purchased for us on the cross.
 4. But, when we advance, wearing that salvation, what that salvation looks like on us is—like armor. Are you dressed for the occasion?
 5. *Ephesians 6:13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*
 6. The first weapon is truth:
*Ephesians 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with **truth**, and having on the breastplate of **righteousness**;*
 7. This is a belt of truth we wear by the Spirit of truth that is in us—the Holy Ghost.
 8. We win over the adversary not by hiding our embarrassing sins, but by the truth that set us free by forgiving our sins through repentance and baptism in His name. We are have it together by the belt of truth that holds us.
 9. And the devil cannot go under the blood of Jesus and dig up your sinful past.
 10. Verse 14 also speaks of the **breastplate of righteousness**. That touches the belt of truth. You are not standing on your own righteousness, you have the righteousness of Christ on you like a lighted billboard.
 11. When the devil tries to hit at your heart, he can't touch you because you now wear Christ's righteousness!
 12. Plus your feet are even covered:
*Ephesians 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of **peace**;*
 13. How are you advancing forward? I am standing on the preparation I made by obeying the gospel. I'm at peace with God and standing on the gospel as my authority and way forward.
 14. And if you will learn to use your faith and not hide it, you will find how useful it is in facing down every attack that is thrown at you by the adversary:
*Ephesians 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of **faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*
 15. How many fiery darts can your faith quench/extinguish? ALL
 16. Your head and mind is covered by your helmet:
*Ephesians 6:17 And take the helmet of **salvation**, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the **word of God**:*

- D. Covered head to foot
1. From head to foot, you know you are leaning on the authority given you by the salvation Jesus provided to you through the gospel message.
 2. And finally, you have the sword of the Spirit—the Word of God.
 3. With every attack and temptation the devil brought against Jesus, Jesus would take a lunge with the sword of the Spirit.
 4. “Make this stone bread,” the devil tempted the hungry Jesus. Jesus came back with, “It is written...”
The Word of God is our response to attacks of the devil.
 5. It is important to dress for the occasion. What occasion? War. Whether we believe we are in war or not does not negate the fact that we are in war.
 6. The adversary wants to keep you in the place you were before you were saved by what Jesus did for you.
 7. But we wage war against him by wearing our salvation.
 8. That is how we dress for the occasion.

IV. Conclusion

1. In the parable we looked at in Matthew 22, the man without the wedding garment was cast out where there was bound and cast into outer darkness where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth.
2. Do you see the need to have the salvation that Jesus died to give to us?
3. Do you have on the righteousness that came by Jesus forgiving you of your sins?
4. Do you have truth in you through the Spirit of truth, the Holy Ghost?
5. Do you have the salvation and peace on you that the sacrifice on the cross purchased for you?
6. And are you carrying and living by and enforcing God’s plan by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God?
7. Being dressed for the occasion—having on the wedding garment—means not just being able to successfully wage war against the adversary when he attacks, but it also means being able to attend the greatest wedding feast of eternity—the Marriage supper of the Lamb. That is when we arrive in heaven and are joined to Jesus in an eternal relationship.
8. Notice, the wife hath made herself ready:
Rev 19:7-9
*7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his **wife hath made herself ready.***
8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.
9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
9. Are you dressed for the occasion? Have you put on salvation? Are you wearing Jesus’ righteousness?
10. Have your sins been forgiven or will you be cast out because you don’t have on the wedding garment?