

Matthew 21-11-21a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. This is the 21st day of November, 2021. 112121, quite the binary date.

We continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew. We're looking at the parables that Jesus gave on the second day after the parade, the entry down the slopes of the Mount of Olives into Jerusalem. We have already seen the parable of the two sons, the parable of the wicked vinedressers, and we are now looking at the parable of the wedding feast.

And this is really aimed directly at the issue of choice, the issue of decision when faced with the truth of the Word of God. Let's take a moment to ask God's blessing on our fellowship and on our study, and we'll begin. Father, we're grateful for another opportunity to spend this time together, to be encouraged and built up through our fellowship and the gifts that you've distributed in our midst.

We thank you for the encouragement that we receive, even as the turbulence and the uncertainty around us seems to grow day by day, and the downward spiral in our culture and in our society would tend to discourage. But we know that these are harbingers and are a part of your plan and purpose, and that we are held safely in your hands. We are secure.

We are fortified. We are armed with the full armor that you have provided us. We pray that as we look together at this portion of your Word, that God, the Holy Spirit, will minister it to us in a meaningful and effective way that results in greater conformity to the image of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior, and greater preparation for service both now and in the ages to come.

We pray it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, this parable, the longer I look at it, the more fascinating it gets, and I am not sure I'm going to be able to finish it this morning because we have so many fresh things to look at.

Let's begin by quickly reviewing the parable. This is Matthew 22, verses 1-14. There is not a wasted word in here.

In fact, there are a couple of words that are not in your text that we are going to need to supply to get the full tray of food and dessert here. Matthew 22, verse 1, Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said, I wasn't real happy with the coverage of the plural parables last time when I suggested that it must sort of be harking back to the parable of the two sons who were asked to go to the field. One went and one didn't.

And then the parable of the wicked vinedressers, and then this is the third. And if you remember when we did our parable study, we numbered them as about three dozen, I think there were 36 in total. But upon further examination, and as I've looked and read

over and translated through this parable in great detail, this is three parables.

It actually breaks into three distinct parts. The third part, whether you want to call it a parable is a bit iffy, but it is a three part. It is certainly two parables rolled into one, one directly linked to the other.

So when it says that Jesus spoke in parables, we are encouraged to see that when a parable generally focuses on one single point, a point of illustration, a point of application. If you have more than one parable, you are going to have more than one such point. And I was warned at great length and ferocity when I was in seminary, not to read too many things into a single parable and to start going into flights of fancy on the symbolic elements and trying to draw a point of application out of each element.

And I think that's useful guidance. I think that in general, Jesus had one point that he was emphasizing when he would give these illustrations, these parables. But to lash ourselves to a rule is to miss the point and to fail to see that these are parables might cause us to overlook something important.

And as we'll see, as we continue. So he spoke again by parables, and this is a multifaceted story that is actually fraught with a couple of very important points that are fruitful to us in terms of application. The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding and they were not willing to come.

Again, he sent out other servants saying, tell those who are invited, see, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and fatted cattle are killed and all things are ready, come to the wedding. But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm and other to his business. The rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully and killed them.

But when the king heard about it, he was furious and he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, the wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore, go into the highways and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.

So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment.

So he said to him, friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? He was speechless. Then the king said to his servants, bind him hand and foot, take him away, cast him into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth for many are called, but few are chosen.

Oh my goodness, there is a lot to cover in here. Let me begin at the beginning. The

kingdom of heaven is like anytime Jesus says this, and he says it frequently, you can flip back a page to the beginning of chapter 20, where he was going to give the parable of the workers in the vineyard.

The kingdom of heaven is like, obviously what Jesus is saying is there is a feature, a facet, an attribute, a characteristic of the kingdom that can be illustrated in this way. This is not a summary of the entire kingdom. This is some feature of the kingdom.

Maybe it is the quality of those who are admitted. Maybe it is the inception. Maybe it is the culmination.

So when Jesus says it is like, we want to look for what facet of the kingdom is he referring to? In this case, it is the qualification to enter. We find that out by looking at the end of verse 8. The king says to his servants, the wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. *Axios*.

They do not come. They are not worthy. You know what an axiom is, or something that is axiomatic.

What this denotes is that there are those who do not meet a standard. This literally, *Axios* had to do with the balance beam of a scale coming into balance. Worthy in the sense of quality or achievements or some other feature.

This means there is a standard that has been set. It is an axiomatic standard, and these people do not meet that requirement, whatever it is. When we say worthy, we tend to think, well, he is a worthy soul.

He is a worthy individual. It is worthy of further investigation. It has some quality of merit.

But in Greek, *Axios* means it either meets the standard or it does not. So then we have to look for what the standard is. So it goes on, and there is actually a missing word in verse 2. And this is not the only place where it is not translated, but the word is *anthropos*.

And this is a usage that is called *playanastic*. The *playanastic* use, and that sounds really fancy, but *playanism* is redundancy or what is considered to be useless repetition, that something is so obvious that you do not need to translate it. For example, if you say, I saw this happen with my own eyes.

I saw it with my own eyes. Well, if you saw it, of course you saw it with your own eyes. That is redundant, or *playanism* is often used for emphasis.

Well, there is a *playanastic* use of *anthropos* here. Jesus says, the kingdom of heaven is like a man, a certain king. It is like *anthropos*, *hosios*, and then the word for king here.

And you would say, well, it must not be important, or they would have translated it, but it

is important. And this hostus basile, this certain king is a man. Now, why would Jesus not just say there was a certain king? Why does he say there was a man, a certain king? It gets skipped over and never talked about, but this is not the only case where we have a playanastic use.

And I think by looking at some of the other uses, we can come to understand why it is there. If you look at, and you really have to dig to track this down, turn back to Matthew chapter 11, verse 19. Anthropos is used so much, it is hard to find these examples just with a Greek concordance or something.

But go back to Matthew chapter 11, verse 19. This is Jesus talking about John the Baptist. John came neither eating nor drinking, and they said, he has a demon.

The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, look, a man, a glutton, a winebibber. Anthropos is right there ahead of glutton and winebibber, and it's not translated. Now, why would they include this word? People say, well, it was just a form.

It's just the way they talked in those days. No, it isn't, because I can show you dozens of examples where it's not used. Every word counts.

Every word means something. Why is Anthropos important here? John made a decision to not feast and to not drink. He had sort of the Nazarite exemplar, and they accused him of evil motivation.

He has a demon. He's motivated by evil. This is why he makes the decisions that he makes.

Jesus came and attended banquets and drank wine, and they say, look, here is a man who is a glutton and a winebibber, a man. When you put Anthropos there, it has to do, it emphasizes this redundancy, this plianism, emphasizes the man's nature, the man's priorities, the man's thoughts and decisions as a man. It goes to character.

It goes to the heart. So he's not just category glutton, category winebibber. He is someone who chooses to overeat, who chooses to overindulge.

It's his choices. John had a demon, and that's why he was squirrely. Jesus was one of the common people, and so he is a man who has made bad decisions, who is faulty in some way.

There is another example. Turn the page in Matthew to chapter 13, verse 45, where Jesus is telling the story of the pearl of great price. The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls.

Well, once again, you have the plianistic use of Anthropos. The kingdom of heaven is like, notice this is one facet of the kingdom, not the same facet Jesus is talking about in

our chapter, but this is like a man, a merchant seeking beautiful pearls. And this fixes this desire, this motivation in his heart.

It emphasizes that he's got a passion. He's not just sort of dry and dull and looks at the profit and loss columns in his balance sheet and says, well, I need to find a few more pearls. This is a man seeking.

He's got a passion and a motivation involved. 10 verses later in verse 52, Jesus says, every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder, a man, a householder, someone who is motivated to bring out someone who has a heart to bring out things new and old out of his treasury. We have it, of course, in our immediately preceding context in chapter 21, when it talks about the certain landowner who planted a vineyard.

This is a man, a landowner who planted a vineyard. It's another play in Aztec use. And this landowner, it implies that he is invested in this vineyard.

He has purposes. He has goals and objectives in his human heart for this vineyard to do well. And this is something that he's eventually going to pass on to his son.

I have met, and I'm sure you have met many people who started a business, who cultivated it, who grew it, who built it up into something. And then they look to pass it on to their son or to their daughter or to their, their heirs and assigns at some point that it will carry on. There are the dealerships, there are a jewelry shops, there are a piano tuning businesses.

There's any number of things that once you've invested in it and put hard work and sweat and capital and weathered hard times, you, you hope that it's going to last and pass on to the next generation. And so there is this human investment in it that makes it all the more poignant. If it suffers loss, you look at these people who had their businesses burned down by rioters last year, and it's possibly going to be happening again.

And you think they say, you know, we've been here 45 years. My parents came over on the boat and started this with a buck 50 and built this up and, and sweated blood over it. And now it's burned up and destroyed.

It's boarded up and we can't reopen. It's gone. Anthropos.

Well, that's what we have here in verse two, the kingdom of heaven is like a certain King, but he's a man and his heart is in this celebration for his son and the bride, this wedding. It humanizes him. It, it signif, signifies, uh, a passion, an investment in it.

It's near to his heart. So you can put a little carrot there. It is like a man right before the word, certain a certain King who arranged a marriage for his son, sent out his servants to

call those who were invited to the wedding.

Now I want to clarify that there are a total of three invitations in this sequence. Notice that it says he sent out his servants to call those who were invited. This is literally had been invited the verb at the root of this is Kaleo to call.

And this is Kay clay. Let me make sure I read it right. I want to say clear on a mosque, but that's a different word.

It is, uh, K Klayman news, K E K L E M E N O U S K Klayman news. And you can see the doubling of the K in the beginning that makes it a past perfect. So those who had already been called their identity, this turns a verb into a noun.

Kaleo has been turned into a noun. The, the Klayman news, this, this turns it into a quality that they have. And the doubling of the K at the beginning K Klayman news means it happened in the past.

They had been invited in the past. They already knew the wedding was coming and that they were invitees. So they got the, they got the invitation in the mail.

Let's say there was a broadcast made. The King announced that the King sent previous couriers to deliver an invitation. These servants are delivering the second call.

They've already been notified. You can find this by the way, in the book of Esther, remember, uh, her banquet where Haman is invited. If you go back and read that story, she tells the King, I would like to put on a banquet and, and invite you and Haman to come.

And the King says, fine. So then you read that on the next night, uh, the King's eunuchs are sent to call Haman to the banquet. He doesn't just show up with a bottle of wine under his arm and come in.

He's in his chambers and the King's eunuchs are sent to call Haman to the banquet. This call in verse three is that second call call those who had already been invited K Klayman news. So there was already the opportunity and the invitation given.

So now, if you know that you've been invited and you intend to come, what do you do ladies? What do you do? If you're going to be a bridesmaid, if you're going to be at a wedding, you tell your husband, I need money for a new dress. I can't wear the same one I wore to the last do that we attended. You prepare, there is preparation made because the King, this is a Royal wedding.

This is, you know, uh, the Prince of Wales and, uh, the princess to be, um, I was having a heck of a time remembering, uh, Queen Elizabeth's son's name, the Prince of Wales. Uh, and I still can't call it the mind. What is his name? Uh, I can see his face, plain as day.

I don't know why I've just, that's a neuron that died somewhere along the way. But you remember the, the Diana wedding, if you got an invitation to that particular wedding, there's only a limited number of seats. And what do you think the people that went to that prepared? Uh, do you think they clothed themselves? Do you think that they got ready days in advance, arranged transportation, figured out what jewelry they were going to wear? What, what, uh, accouterments of course they did.

These individuals have been invited. They have had plenty of time to prepare. Now the time has come to do what to enter, to enter.

And so servants have come saying the kingdom is at hand. The banquet is at hand. The time is at hand.

Now is the appointed time, right? This is the second call and they were not willing to come. This is the Greek verb fellow, and it means to will. It's used of God's will.

It is not the will of God that any should perish this. They decided their plan did not include this function. They decided not to come.

They were not willing. So this takes time. The servants have gone out, they invite them, and they're not interested.

They make the decision, I'm not going. I make this decision frequently. Somebody says, well, this is going on.

I say, no, I'm not going. I'm very familiar with this decision. As you may be, it's too cold.

It's too wet. It's too far. Uh, it's not my kind of thing for me, too many people, um, whatever it might be.

I'm, I'm not going. I've, I've got a more pressing, uh, requirement, which is often my, my difficulty, but they decide not to come. So again, he sent out other servants.

Maybe it was the presentation. Maybe a different servant can get the, the message across in a better way. Maybe it wasn't clear, uh, less there be fault assigned to the servant who delivered the message.

And when an accounting comes and you say, well, the servant didn't make it clear. I, I didn't understand other servants are sent. The message comes in a different form in a different way at a different time from a different person.

So sending out other servants in verse four, this is now invitation number three. This is the third time they've been invited, right? The second time they have been called. And by the way, the word call in verse three is Kaleo straight out to call those who had been called is what it literally says.

Those who were invited, invited is just a form of the word call to call those who had been called those who were the cold ones. If you want to get technical, because K Klayman News is a noun. So again, he sent out other service saying, tell those who are invited.

And this is the same thing. Those who were already invited K Klayman News. Look, I have prepared my dinner.

My oxen and fatted cattle are killed and all things are ready. Come to the wedding, more detail, more urgency. Look, the food is set out on the table.

It's all ready. The time is imminent. Come to the wedding.

But with this more urgent third invitation, there is a more strident reaction. They made light of it. This is a really interesting word.

They made light of it is to express a lack of interest. This word is a maleo. And you can see the alpha privative, which means not maleo means to be interested, to be motivated toward a thing.

A maleo, they were disinterested. They were apathetic. They, it didn't appeal to them.

If you, if you look at where this word is used, uh, it's, it's used, uh, five places for other places in the, uh, new Testament. It is used in first Timothy four 14, where Paul says to Timothy, do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of hands of the eldership. Timothy is a pastor and he is not to be apathetic or indifferent about that gift.

Of course, all of us have been given a gift and we shouldn't be disinterested or apathetic in being prepared and being emplaced for that gift to function. It's used in Hebrews chapter two, verse three, how shall we escape? If we neglect so great a salvation, how shall we escape? If we neglect so great a salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, the Lord extended the invitation and those who heard him have repeated that call. How shall we escape? If we neglect it, if we're indifferent to it, Hebrews chapter eight, verse nine, God says, not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant, I disregarded them, says the Lord.

I no longer paid attention to them. I neglected them. If you will, I am a let owed them.

Second, Peter one, 12. Peter says, for this reason, I will not be, I'm a let owing. I will not neglect to remind you always of these things, even though you know, and are established in the present truth.

Even though, you know, these truths, even though you are established in them, I will not

neglect to remind you of them. We need review. We need reinforcement.

We need to remember and be reminded. Well, that's what this word means. How shall we escape? If we, I'm a let oh, so great a salvation, these individuals, it says made light of it.

They neglected it. They just disregarded it, paid no attention to it and went their ways one to his own farm, another to his business. Idios is used there of the farm.

One guy has his own farm. He's the farm owner. So what's his interest? He doesn't work at a farm.

He doesn't just live at a farm. He's not the foreman of a farm. He owns the farm.

It's his own farm. What is his interest in the farm? His concern is I want to accomplish my goals and to achieve my profit. This is like the man with the houses and barns and silos, and he's going to build bigger barns and greater silos.

Fool. Do you not know that this night your soul will be required of you, but he's invested in what he's doing and what he can get out of it. The second one that says to his business, the Greek word there is Emporia, Emporium.

We, we get from it. And this is a business that is conducted for profit. This is a merchant who buys and sells and takes the profits.

So one is interested in his own farm. The other is interested as a merchant in growing his business and having success in his business. In both cases, what is the, uh, what is the contrast? What should they be interested in? There is this one time amazing wedding of the King's son to which they have the privilege of being invited, but their priorities are more important to them than the King's priorities.

The King is a man with an investment in his son, but these are men with an investment in their farm and in their business. And they don't give a flip about the King, his son, or the wedding. They are self-centered, self-invested, and this makes them insensible and disinterested in the King.

If they didn't have a good King, what kind of farm do you think this guy would have? Remember what happened to the Israelites when they tried to grow crops and the Philistines came in and raided them and they needed deliverance from the judges and the Ammonites and the Moabites and all the other ites around would come in and destroy their crops. Remember, uh, Og, uh, King of Bashan and Sihon, uh, and all of these guys that would come over and pillage and plunder the Israelites. Why does this guy even have a profitable farm? It's because he's under the administration of a wonderful King.

Why is this merchant got a profitable business? It's because of the goodness of the King and the stability of the Kingdom that this King presides over. But there is no thought of that. There's no gratitude.

There's no thought that this, this King and his, his Kingdom have done so much for me. The least I can do is go and, and honor the King and his son at this wedding feast. It's dastardly self-interest.

And this is the, this is the plague of our human nature. We are naturally self-interested. We are naturally out for number one.

We naturally shade the truth. We naturally rationalize. We explain, we leave out details.

When we're talking about things, we put the best face on something. We, uh, refuse to stand up for the truth. We refuse to, uh, be counted because go along to get along.

It is easier for me. My life is easier. My interests are advanced.

If I keep my interest at the first and, and, uh, remember, uh, Felix and, and, uh, Drusilla, when Paul is testifying before them in the latter chapters of Acts. And he says, he listens to Paul and Paul says, I would do anything to convince you by little or by much. And he says, well, and yeah, I'll listen to you at a more convenient time.

It's not convenient for me to make a decision right now. It's, it's inconvenient. Uh, so that's what's going on here.

And so this group notice the merchant goes to his business and the farmer, the farm owner goes to his farm. They leave and go to these things. The rest, other invitees who have gotten both the first and the second call, when they get the third invitation, the urgent invitation, the meat is on the table, come to the wedding.

They seize the servants, treat them spitefully and kill them. So what is their attitude to the King? They're not just apathetic or indifferent or self-interested like the businessman and the farm owner. They are hostile.

They are going to use violence as their reply. So you have two types of respondees. There are those who are disinterested and there are those who are hostile.

Some don't have a beef with the King. They just aren't for the King. They're not interested in helping him out or honoring his son or ensuring that there's a wonderful occasion on this wedding.

I got my own stuff going on. The second group is actively violently hostile, violently so, willing to kill. When the King heard about it, he was furious.

He sent out his armies, destroyed the murderers, the second group, the hostile, violent

group. He destroys them. He meets their violence with violence, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.

That which they enjoyed under the King's rulership, that which they had built, that which they owned is destroyed. And of course, this foreshadows what is going to happen to Jerusalem when Vespasian sends his son Titus in to destroy the city and there's not one stone left upon another of the city is sacked and burned. Josephus says that there were as many as a million Jews who died in that first great Holocaust.

So the consequences are in accordance with, they are axiomatic to, they are balanced with the level of response. The hateful, violent response is met with a violent judgment. So then he said to his servants, the wedding is ready, but those who were invited, the Keklemenues, they did not meet the standard.

What is the standard? Respond to the call. You don't have to bring anything. You don't have to work at anything.

You don't have to pay anything. Just respond to the call. This is the picture of salvation.

This is the picture of growth and service in the Christian life. We don't have anything that we do not receive from God. All we contribute is response.

It's non-meritorious. God extends his hand with a gift. We accept it.

By grace, you are saved through faith, that not of yourselves. It's a gift of God, not of works. Nobody can brag.

Nobody can boast. Responding and coming to this wedding isn't an occasion for boasting. You have avoided dismal outcomes.

You've avoided loss and in some cases, a severe and violent judgment, but to come, who wouldn't? What's the matter with you? There's something wrong with your view of the King, your relationship with the King, if you will not come and celebrate when he asks, when he invites, when he calls. Well, we'll pause here and take our break, but the application is clear. Whether you're Old Testament or new, whether you're Israel or church, God has extended a call.

Many are called, fewer chosen. What is the basis for that choice? That is what this set of parables makes abundantly clear. And for us to fall into the trap of being self-interested or being distracted is to miss the blessing of the banquet, the blessing of relationship with the King.

The King is going to come out and circulate in the crowd. You're going to be able to meet the King, to be in his presence. He is going to come out and there's a great word that is used for the way that he looks at the guests.

It's not the usual word. It's not bleppo. It's not any one of a number of words.

It's a very special word for looking at. The King is going to be there. Only somebody who hates the King or is completely apathetic to the King would not want to meet him.

It's just tragic. And we don't want to make that mistake. Let's pause here and take our break.

When we come back, we have a lot more to see in this fascinating set of parables.