



Study 3 - Matthew 22:1-14 - A lavish lord

Introduction

Perhaps Jesus' hearers would have already heard Jesus teach this parable in a number of different contexts. In Luke 14:15-24 we read a different version. Comparing Matthew's Gospel with the other Gospel accounts, our attention is immediately drawn to a conspicuously different element not present in Luke - the man who joins the wedding feast but who not dressed for the occasion.

Study

- Compare the first part of Matthew's version of the parable in 22:1-10 with the previous parable in 21:33-43.
 - How do they differ in their essential message?
 - How are they similar?
- When we add Matthew's second part (22:11-14) we're in for a shock.
- In the light of Luke's version of the parable why do we find ourselves bewildered by what happens in this second part of Matthew's version?
 - Is the king justified in his actions towards the man? Why? Why not?
 - Should the man have known better? Why? Why not?

The parable doesn't tell us the reasons why the man chose to join the feast and failed to dress appropriately?

What might be the possible reasons for him behaving in this way?

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In the end he receives a similar treatment as that those who were initially invited to the feast but refused to come.

- Are we supposed to think that he is in reality no different from them? If so, why? Why not?

- How do the events described in the parable confirm Jesus' conclusion in verse 14?
- How might Jesus teaching here apply to those hearing him at the time?
- How might it apply to the readers of Matthew's Gospel after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension?
- How does "...many are called but few are chosen." either align with or contrast with "....the last will be first and the first last." from Matthew 20:16?
- How does this parable sift us? And what should be our take home message about kingdom of heaven?

For further thought

The key issue here is the man who is not dressed appropriately. It is not that he is neglectful. He knowingly defies the wedding and the king who has invited him. His action is defiant, even devious. He gets into the wedding banquet knowingly not wishing to follow the rules. When questioned by the king his silence speaks volumes. He is guilty and is without excuse. In reality he is one with the first group who refused to come. His behaviour is different however in reality his attitude is the same as theirs. One could argue that he is even more culpable than they were.

They simply refused the invitation. He pretends to respond favourably but by his action shows that doesn't want to. In effect, he hates the king who has been so generous to him. His external behaviour betrays his inward disposition. It is a great example of sin - of a particular kind. We might want to be seen to be doing something but in reality we are not doing it. Taken with the parable of the 2 sons it adds to a sad picture of a heart turned against God. He deserves exactly the same treatment as those who honestly refused the king but were much more transparent about doing so.

As with the other 2 parables in the series, this parable focuses on the great generosity of the king. However this parable underscores the fact that presumption is never appropriate for Jesus' disciples.