

## **One**

### **The Parable**

On Tuesday morning of Holy Week, Jesus went again to the Temple to teach openly. He begins to speak to them in parables saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a feast for his son's wedding. He sent his servants to call those who had been invited, but they would not come.”

As the parable goes, His friends, who are naturally the first people he invites to the wedding, blow Him off. They won't come. So the King tells his servants to go out and invite anybody they see. He doesn't want the wedding feast to go to waste. So a bunch of unexpected people end up coming to the feast. Great! But the story doesn't end there because one of the guests wasn't dressed right. He doesn't have the right clothes. He doesn't have a wedding garment, so the King throws him out. This King, who invites everybody and anybody to his party, kicks someone out just because of what he is wearing.

What's going on in this story?

## **Two**

### **Everybody gets the invitation – how the Church is Catholic**

God, of course, is the King and His Son Jesus will establish His Father's Kingdom on earth by founding the Catholic Church. And the Father will celebrate His Son with all those who choose to come to Heaven by entering the Kingdom of the Church.

So, who gets an invitation to the Catholic Church?

Well, the Church is called Catholic, which means universal, for a reason. And Jesus is clear that *everybody* gets an invitation.

In the Gospel of Luke (chapter 14), the King says, “Go out everywhere, and get me the poor, the maimed, the blind, the lame.” In the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 22), the King says, “bring in the good and the bad.” That’s a pretty good description of us, isn’t it?

So, *everybody* gets an invitation. It doesn’t matter how broken you are. It doesn’t matter how good or bad you are.

That is why we should invite everyone to become Catholic. And remember, God has given you an invitation to celebrate with him forever. But what are you going to do with that invitation?

## **Three**

### **Some couldn’t be bothered**

In the parable, the first group of people to get an invitation just blow it off. They just don’t want to go to God’s party. They’re polite about it but they’ve got other stuff going on. They would rather focus on passing, unsatisfying things like a farm, a field, a cow, or a merely human relationship, rather than focus on the eternal satisfaction of celebrating love with God.

That’s really sad. Because one day, the earthly thing is going to end. You lose the farm, the cow dies, merely human relationships go south or get cut off by death. And you’ve RSVP’d a “No!” to eternal happiness. You’ve missed out on the eternal celebration. All you’re left with is an eternal emptiness.

## **Four**

## **Those who hate the wedding feast**

Jesus adds a strange detail about some of the people who get a wedding invitation. *Some* of them, he says, some of the ones to get an invitation *actually kill the people who bring the invitation!*

It's bizarre. Some people want to shoot the messengers who are bringing the good news about heaven and happiness! It seems impossible to believe. But of course, it's true.

People love their sin. People love their vice. People love their unhappiness. And they hate someone who encourages them to leave it. They hate the people who say that they don't have to live in sexual deviance, in anger, in greed, in the abandonment of their family. They hate the people who offer them the salvation of heaven.

If you tell them, "Christ has come. He can save you. He can heal you. He can make you happy." They'll call you a hater, and they'll do everything they can to silence, sue, and eliminate you. The prophets were killed. The apostles and martyrs were killed. Christ was killed. They were killed for saying that goodness, happiness, and radical love are possible.

We shouldn't be surprised if people hate the Gospel, if they hate the Church's teaching. And we shouldn't be angry at them because it generally means that they're not yet willing to let go of their own unhappiness. But we should pray that they repent and accept the wedding invitation before it's too late and we should keep up our relationships and friendships with them the best we can because that friendship may just be their bridge back to God.

## **Five**

## **Those who accept the invitation – but shame the wedding feast**

Some of us accept the invitation to join the Church but then we don't behave as a wedding guest should. The man gets kicked out of the wedding feast for not having a wedding garment and the traditional interpretation of the saints is that the wedding garment you need to stay in the Church, to make it into Heaven, is *love*.

After all, this is a *wedding* feast. It's a celebration of love! So if we call ourselves Catholics but don't really live the love of God by thanking Him at Mass, receiving him in the Eucharist, and seeking a deep friendship with Him in prayer. Then can we really say we love God – that we have a friendship with Him?

And if we don't live the Love of Neighbor, if we aren't trying with all our might to love the people we live with, work with, if we don't love one another, if we don't give generously to them, or don't forgive unreservedly, without holding on to resentment. Well, we may call ourselves Catholics but if we don't dress ourselves in charity then we won't be able to stay when the wedding feast really gets going.

Please God, give us the right wedding garment. Give us charity. Give us love for You and for the people around us. Let the wedding feast begin for us now, so we can celebrate with You forever.