



October 15, 2017 Mt. 22: 1-14 & Is. 25: 6-10

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Link to [Beck](#) (paywall) other [Beck](#)

Stone, Naomi. [The Sacred Invitation](#)

Rolheiser, Fr. Ron. [May Your Kingdom Come.....](#)

[Monastery Sunday Homilies](#)

ENTERING THE SCENE: Pilch, John J. in his book [The Cultural World of Jesus](#) tells us on pages 148-50 that: "A common practice in antiquity was to check out who was invited or not invited, what kind of preparations were being made or not being made, and who was planning to attend as well as who was planning to stay away. This last point was particularly important. If key people decided to stay away, so would others. The refusal of the invited guests to attend the king's wedding party shames him. For some reason the guests disapproved of the arrangements the king was making. They offer flimsy and insulting excuses, implying that tending the farm or the business is much more important than the wedding of the king's son. This is the traditional and indirect or face-saving method of turning down an invitation. ... Since all of life and survival itself in the Mediterranean world depends on one's social network, for an elite to eat with non-elite would be the equivalent of suicide." Have you ever found yourself in this situation?

Mt. 22:1-14

1 Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: 2 The **kingdom of heaven** is like a **king** who prepared a **wedding banquet** for his **son**. 3 He sent his **servants** to those who had been **invited** to the **banquet** to tell them to **come**, but they **refused** to come. 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 cattle** have been **butchered**, and everything is **ready**. Come to the **wedding banquet**." 5 But they paid no **attention** and **went off**--one to his **field**, another to his **business**. 6 The rest seized his **servants**, **mistreated** them and **killed** them. 7 The **king** was **enraged**. He sent his army and **destroyed** those **murderers** and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his **servants**, "The **wedding banquet** is **ready**, but those I invited did not **deserve** to come. 9 Go to the **street corners** and **invite** to the **banquet** anyone you **find**." 10 So the **servants** went out into the **streets** and **gathered** all the people they could **find**, both **good** and **bad**, and the wedding hall was filled with **guests**. 11 But when the **king** came in to see the **guests**, he noticed a man there who was not wearing **wedding clothes**. 12 **Friend**, he asked, 'how did you get in here without **wedding clothes**?' The man was **speechless**. 13 Then the **king** told the **attendants**, "Tie him hand and foot, and **throw** him outside, into the **darkness**, where there will be **weeping** and **gnashing of teeth**." 14 For many are **invited**, but few are **chosen**."

DISCUSSION QUESTION: Have I turned down any of God's invitation recently?

PRAYER: Lord, so many things seem to be more important than my spiritual growth. How often I hear "Been so busy" when I ask someone how they are these days. The more options I have the more I have to be full of care when I choose among them. Help me to be very honest with myself as I invest my time, energy and love in ways that have me ever ready to respond with a strong YES to your invitations. Amen.

WORD STUDY AND QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: The kingdom is the reality where God's will is done completely, and people can enjoy the full experience of God. It is where God is united with all creation.

How does this parable help you imagine what kingdom? How does it help to imagine the fullness of God's presence?

KING: In the time of Jesus, the king was the one empowered by God to watch over the people entrusted to him. He was to be God's servant on behalf of the people.

What comparison with the current king Herod, must the people be making when listening to this parable? Do you think those in leadership positions liked the parable?



(A banquet fresco found on a third century tomb chamber in the Catacomb of Callistus in Rome. Bible Review 8/04)

WEDDING BANQUET: A wedding banquet usually lasted a whole week. Jesus now describes the kingdom of God as an eternal banquet where nothing ever never runs out.

What images of God's kingdom does a wedding banquet evoke in you?

SON: Since a child is the usually the most precious reality to a loving parent, there is no more powerful way to relate to the parent than through their children.

What are the invited that refuse saying by their absence? Is there any way that you are refusing God's invitation to the wedding banquet today?

SERVANTS: The first group of servants represents the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures. Over and over, the people ignored, maltreated and killed God's messengers.

What makes it easy to treat God's messengers that way? How is this being done today?

INVITE/INVITED/COME: To receive an invitation can be a mixed blessing. It puts a person in the position of having to choose to accept or not. This is especially difficult when there are competing values involved.

What values are in conflict in this parable? How have you felt when you were put in this situation? What factors went into your response to the invitation? How can the method of invitation affect your response? Can the messenger get in the way of your hearing/accepting the invitation?

REFUSED: To refuse is to reject something or to let an opportunity pass.

Given the response of the king, which of these two options did he think the people chose? In what ways do you let pass, or reject, God's invitations?

OXEN/FATTENED CATTLE: The oxen and fattened cattle represent the best one has to offer.

Do you find it difficult to know that God gives the best in order to satisfy you?

BUTCHERED / READY: The king's banquet is ready. All the preparations have been done. It is time to celebrate.

Are you ready to accept the invitation of this gospel? Do you have anything that keeps you from accepting?

WENT OFF /ATTENTION: Many other "more important" things distracted some who were invited and they "went off" to take care of them.

Is there anything distracting you from accepting your invitation?

FIELD / BUSINESS: The field and the business were the places that lay in waiting for the wellbeing of the owner.

What 'fields' / 'businesses' are 'calling' you away from the king's invitation?

MISTREATED/KILLED: The people who were invited not only ignored the invitation, but some of them mistreated and killed the servants that brought the invitation.

What could motivate them to do that? What caused such a strong and violent response? Why is it often seen necessary to kill the messenger?

ENRAGED: To be enraged is to be furious and aroused to a high degree.

Do you think of God as having such feelings?

DESTROYED: The king's response was equally as drastic as the actions that prompted it. Matthew's gospel often tells the story in ways that are much more black and white than Luke does.

What is there about the two communities of Matthew and Luke might help explain the different versions?

MURDERERS: To murder is to kill with motive.

What motive did the people who refused the invitation seem to have?

DESERVE: The gospel said that the people who refused, and then killed, did not deserve to come to the banquet. Yet the second invitation of those on the streets went to the good and bad alike.

What sense do you make of this? Why were one group deserving and the other not?

STREETS/STREET CORNERS: Those on the street corners were the non-Jews, or the Gentiles. They were thought to be outside the call of God.

Have you ever thought of yourself as one of the outsiders?

FIND/GATHERED: The king's instructions were to go out and gather up anyone they could find.

How do you feel about this? Have you ever been second best on an invitation list? Did you go?

GOOD/BAD: In Jesus' day, the prevailing thought was God rewards the good and punishes the bad.

What does this parable say to this theology?

GUESTS/ FRIEND: The people on the streets were now the guests and friends.

How do you think they felt as they were ushered into the home of the king?

WEDDING CLOTHES: A wealthy person or king would provide the appropriate clothes for a special event for those without such garments.

Do you see your baptism as your wedding garment?

SPEECHLESS: The one who refused to wear the provided garment wanted to come on his own terms. When confronted by the king, he was speechless.

Have you ever been in such a predicament? Did you have a response?

ATTENDANTS: Those attending the king were instructed to deal with the obstinate person.

What 'attending' consequence can you remember about the last time you chose to do your own thing?

TIE/ THROW: To tie something is to bind it up, and to be thrown is to have someone or something forcibly moved

What binds you up or throws you, thus keeping you from accepting God's invitations?

DARKNESS: Darkness is the absence of light.

What darkness keeps you from being able to see God; in the way that Jesus invites you to see God?

WEEPING/ GNASHING TEETH: Weeping and gnashing of teeth often ensues when a person realizes that they have done something to themselves.

Can you remember a time when you wept and gnashed your teeth? What did you learn from this experience?

CHOSEN: The gospels have the saying about many being called but few chosen frequently.

What do you think it means in the parable? Do you feel chosen?

PARALLEL TEXTS: Mt. 22:2 // Prov. 9:1-6; Rev. 19:9; Mt. 22: 2-9 // Lk. 14:16-24; Mt. 22:6 // Mt. 21:35; Mt. 22:13 // Mt. 8:12; 25:30;

OTHER TEXTS OF THE WEEK: Is. 25: 6-10; [Ps. 23: 1-6](#); Phil. 4:12-14, 19-20; Mt. 22:1-14;

Revised Common Lectionary: Ex. 32: 1=14; [Ps. 106: 1-6, 19-23](#); Phil. 4:1-9; Mt. 22: 1-14;

SUPPORTIVE INFORMATION:

Jesus radiated hope through his declaration of the promises of God. The God of Jesus is characterized by extravagance, surprise, and superabundance. Our boats are suddenly overflowing with fish after a night of fruitless labor; like the tardy vineyard worker, we are heaped with more reward than we have earned; we discover that nobody is excluded from the feast despite our apparent unworthiness.⁶ The only appropriate response to this promising God is hope, which abandons the human heart to trust in the giver of such overwhelming, freely given bounty: "Hope is a radical, unquestioning openness to the breaking in of God's future." Pg. 148. Macintyre, Margaret. *The Cosmic Pilgrim*. Eugene, OR. WIPF & Stock Pub. 2010

When we look critically at the many thoughts and feelings that fill our minds and hearts, we may come to the horrifying discovery that we often choose death instead of life, curse instead of blessing. Jealousy, envy, anger, resentment, greed, lust, vindictiveness, revenge, hatred ... they all float in that large reservoir of our inner life. Often we take them for granted and allow them to be there and do their destructive work. But God asks us to choose life and to choose blessing. This choice requires an immense inner discipline. It requires a great attentiveness to the death-forces within us and a great commitment to let the forces of life come to dominate our thoughts and feelings. We cannot always do this alone; often we need a caring guide or a loving community to support us. But it is important that we both make the inner effort and seek the support we need from others to help us choose life. Henri Nouwen

We are all pilgrims on the wearisome roads of our life. There is always something ahead of us that we have not yet overtaken. When we do catch up with something it immediately becomes an injunction to leave it behind us and to onwards. Every end becomes a beginning. Karl Rahner - Meditations and Prayers

[Gospel of Thomas](#), Logion 23: Jesus said, "I will choose you, one out of a thousand, and two out of ten thousand, and they will stand as a single one." (Parallel to v. 14)

[The Gospel of Thomas](#) has somewhat the same parable of the wedding in sayings 63 and 64. Throckmorton, Burton, Jr. Ed. [Gospel Parallels](#). NY. Thomas Nelson Pub. 1949.

In the [Epistle to Barnabas](#), written around 130 C.E. probably in Alexandria, Egypt we find in chapter 4:14: Morevoer, consider this as well, my brothers: when you see that after such extraordinary signs and wonders were done in Israel, even then they were abandoned, let us be on guard lest we should be found to be, as it is written, "many called, but few chosen." Ehrman, Bart. [After the New Testament](#). NY. Oxford Univ. Press. 1999. Page 100..

Instead of picturing God as a medieval monarch on a marble throne, imagine God as the living awareness in the space between the atoms, "empty" space that makes up about 99.99% of the universe. Thinking of God that way gets us past some of the great theological divides of the past. Is God immanent or transcendent, internal or external, composed or compassionate? Like the question of whether the atom is a wave or particle, the answer is: yes. Tom Mahon

It's hard to see the whole picture when you are inside the frame. Fr. Ralph Powell

God has promised forgiveness to your repentance, but He has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination. - St. Augustine

Whatever we have to give up to follow a calling is, in a sense, giving its life for our benefit. Pg. 283 Levoy, Gregg. [Callings: Finding and Following an Authentic Life](#). NY. Random House. 1997.

The agency that transforms possibility into actuality is consciousness. It is a fact that whenever we observe an object, we see a unique actuality, not the entire spectrum of possibilities. Amit Goswami

Live in the world, as if God and your soul only were in it; so shall your heart be never made captive by any earthly thing. St. John of the Cross

Commitment brings with it a great deal of freedom because, by its nature, it closes down options. 205

Commitment settles us down and makes room inside for another to enter. 206 Homan, Daniel, OSB & Pratt, Lonni Collins. [Radical Hospitality](#). Brewster, MA. Paraclete Press. 2002.

22.1–14: Parable of the wedding banquet (Lk 14.15–24). Cf. 21.33–41; Gos. Thom. 64. 2: Wedding banquet, kingdom of heaven (25.1–13; Prov 9; b. Ber. 64a; b. Shabb. 153a). 3: Slaves, see 21.34n. 5: Made light of it, a gross insult to the host. 6: Killed them, the tenants move from insult to rebellion. 7: Burned their city, a reference to Jerusalem's destruction; Israel's prophets predicted the destruction of the First Temple, (Isa 5.24–25; Jer 4.5–8). 10: Whom they found, for Matthew, Jew and Gentile (see, e.g., 13.47). 11–12: Wedding robe, a garment representing righteous deeds or a righteous state. Clothing often symbolized righteousness (Rom 13.12; Gal 3.27; Rev 3.4–5,18; 6.11; 7.13–14; 19.8; 22.14). 13: Outer darkness, 8.12; 25.30. 14: Few are chosen, some reject Jesus' message; others apostatize. Pg. 40. [The Jewish Annotated New Testament](#)

SUGGESTED READINGS:

Links to all the books mentioned in this guide are on The Ark web site: www.theark1.com

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A 2008. Pgs. 157-160. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)

Beck, Robert. Sunday Homilies: Cycle A 2001. Pgs. 155-157. To order contact [Carol Oberfoell](#)