



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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Matthew 22:12 "and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless."

Our verse today is the third in a series of parables that Jesus told in the temple illustrating how the Jews rejected Him and the Gospel would be taken to others. The setting in this parable is a wedding feast for the king's son. Can you imagine what that would be like? It be unlike any wedding we've been to before. A royal wedding. A wedding at the palace. The king's son. Think about all the pageantry, the special foods, the wonderful music, the banners, and all the whose who in the kingdom would be gathered there. Military officials. Princes and Princesses. Governors. Statesmen. The wealthy. The important. They would have all gathered at the palace for the wedding of the king's son.

In our times we have seen on TV royal weddings out of England. But imagine being there. Imagine being invited. Most of us would have saved the invitation as a keepsake. This was a special event.

In this parable, there is a sad twist that takes place. The people invited won't come. They make light of it. They have other things that are more important to them than going to the palace for a royal wedding. The patient king, sends more messengers, telling the invited it's time to come. The messengers tell of the feast that awaits the guests. Not only do the invited refuse to come, but some abuse and even kill the messengers.

The king in his anger destroys the villages. The wedding will go on. Now the call is go into the streets and invite anyone and everyone. Fill the banquet hall with guests is the plans. Good and evil come. And, it is here where our verse is found. Someone has shown up not dressed properly. He is tossed out.

The parable ends with this cold statement, 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'

This is not a hard parable to figure out. The first group invited were the Jews. The rejected the Gospel call. The messengers are the prophets, calling people to the salvation of Jesus Christ, the King's Son.

(OVER)

The prophets were beaten and killed. Not defeated, God sends His messengers out to the streets. Invite all to the wedding feast. And, they come. Good people. Bad people. Problem people. Nice people.

And, one came to the palace unprepared. Whether garments were available and he simply didn't want to put one on, or, he did not come in clean clothing, he wasn't dressed properly. He, better than the Jews, accepted the invitation, but he came without honoring the king.

I just preached on this parable recently. Love the layers of lessons found here.

First, those that turned down the invitation, have no idea what they just did. What if you went to the mailbox and there was an invitation like you'd never seen before. Rich in detail and beauty, you recognize that this is something special. You're invited to the palace for a wedding feast of the king's son. Instead of being so excited, you toss the invitation in the trash and tell your family, "I need to mow the yard that day." Really?

But this was more than a feast of foods and watching a royal wedding. This is the salvation of your soul. Nothing is more important than that. This changes your past. This changes your today. And, this changes your eternity. You are invited by God to be saved. Yet, the Jews scoffed and refused to come. And, today, the same takes place.

Second, the man who came but wasn't dressed properly, didn't belong there. He wasn't invited at first. He is only there because others turned down the invitation. He would have never made the invitation list. This was probably the first time he had ever been inside the palace. I've been in castles and palaces before. I sat in a ball room as long as a football field in Vienna. It was the very place that four-year-old Mozart first gave a concert. The floor, the ceiling, the mirrors on the wall, the chandeliers, the artwork, was unlike anything I have ever seen. My eyes were bouncing around, looking up at the ceiling, down at the floor, around at the artwork, the mirrors. What a beautiful room it was. How excited this man must have been to be in such a place.

And, do we get that appreciation to be included in the kingdom of God? Do we truly grasp the idea that God has adopted us into His family? We belong to God. Amazing. We are included in God's work. We labor in the kingdom. How wonderful that is.

Third, this man from our verse, did not show his gratitude nor his appreciation for being invited where he did not belong because he chose to come in common clothes. The king was insulted. He should have been embarrassed. You are I are to be clothed in righteousness. We are to put on Christ. How dare us come into the presence of the king in his palace with filthy hearts, dirty attitudes, and worldly minds. Have we no appreciation for where we are?

Many are called, but few are chosen. The called often do not accept the invitation. The called often do not change their ways. The chosen are those who truly appreciate being in the palace where they do not belong and to feast on foods they could never afford. It's not their goodness that got them there. It's not because they are important, famous or made an impact to the kingdom. There is but one reason they are there. The servants of the king invited them.

We find ourselves in many places in that parable. We have been invited. Do we accept? Those who come, are we dressed appropriately? And, in turn we become servants of the King who are now inviting others to come to the banquet.

What a rich story. It's life changing if you accept the invitation.

Roger Shouse (Used by Permission)
