

The Dinner Invitation

“Righteous Deeds, Not Mere Words Matter”

Today’s message title is “The Dinner Invitation”.

I. WEDDING PREPARATION

A. HAIR COLOR

Many of you have probably noticed that I have made a made a change in my appearance since the last time I saw you. You see, next weekend in Spokane, WA ... my 21-year-old daughter Lilli, whom I love dearly, will be getting married. Yesterday, she suggested a couple songs for our father-daughter dance. The one I liked best and chose was “Forever Now”. It was written and sung by Michael Bublé. As I listened to it, I interpreted the song that he sung as one in which my own daughter Lilli grows up, leaves her bedroom and our family house behind... to find a life and place of her own. As this song depicts the passing of time, and as I have the pleasure of walking Lilli down the aisle next weekend, forgive me, but I don’t want anyone there who doesn’t know better, to think that I’m dancing a grandpa-grand-daughter dance, rather than that special wedding father-daughter celebration dance with her... rather than her dad. And so yesterday, when it was time for me to pick up my special garment, I decided to get my hair colored, too.

B. WEDDING SUIT

Well, yeah, the main purpose of our trip planned for yesterday was to pick up a special wedding suit, not to get my hair colored. You see, I didn’t want just anybody to make my wedding garment. So, I did some research. Of about thirty different places to buy either an off-the-rack suit or a tailor-made one, I found the name of one particular tailor who stood out head and shoulders above everyone else: a Pakistani-born, Muslim American tailor named Raja. His ratings were through the roof! And so, I selected him to put this special garment together for me, so I’d have in in time for the wedding celebration. And so, over three (3) visits, the final one being yesterday, I picked up a beautiful Italian fabric, Pakistani tailored suit to bring with me to my daughter’s wedding next week.

[Mention the beautiful heart, words and deeds of our new Pakistani friend Raja, including his dinner invitation complete with roast lamb.]

C. THE OPEN HOUSE

And now, by the end of next week, Hydie and I will be making our way up to Spokane, Washington, to give our daughter Lilli away in marriage to our new son-in-law Luke. Because we are blessed that my brother and sister-in-law David and Miriam lives in there, we have an invitation to stay at their house over the weekend. But not just that, on Tuesday Miriam sends me a message to invite us all, including our friends, to an open house at their place. She writes, “your friends are welcome to open house [at our place] if you want to invite them”. Of course I want to invite each and every one of them! Friends and family alike! And we’ll bask in some warm hospitality, and good food for the pre-wedding occasion next Saturday evening, following the wedding rehearsal that afternoon.

And so now, all of you might be wondering why I am going through all of these personal and family details. And you’re thinking, “pray tell!” Right? Well, thank you for asking. All of these events actually lead us to today’s scripture, from Matthew chapter 22. Like what I was trying to do by telling my little wedding preparation story, YAHUSHA [Jesus] told a parable to get your attention. We call this one “The Parable of the Wedding Feast”:

II. SCRIPTURE

“And again, Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. Again, he sent other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’” But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.’”¹ (Matt. 22:1-7; [ESV]).

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So, the wedding hall was filled with guests.” (Matt. 22:8-10).

1. Matt. 22:1-7; Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the *English Standard Version*.

“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22:11-14).

III. REJECTING THE WEDDING DINNER INVITATION

According to the ancient Near East custom, two invitations went forth for parties such as this wedding dinner:

The first one did not list the time and place of the event but demanded a response of, “Yes, I am coming” or “No, I can’t make it”.

A second invitation for the event finalized the day and hour of the event. As we have just celebrated the Pentecost, or the feast of Shavuot and the giving of the 10 commandments at Sinai 50 days after their exodus from Egypt, we remember that the Almighty invited the Israelites to His banquet. This was His first invite. Back then, they accepted His invitation, without even knowing when the banquet would be (Exodus 24:1-11).² “All the people answered together and said, ‘All that the LORD [YAHUAH] has spoken we will do.’” (Exod. 19:8). Today, we too are either accepting or rejecting our Invitation to The Marriage Supper of The Lamb in the same way, not knowing exactly when it will happen. Back then, when YAHUAH [God] sent the Prophets to announce the Day of the Lord and the Messianic feast, which was the second invitation, many Israelites turned down the party invitation (per Luke 19:41-44). Similar to the Parable of the Tenants, the parable of the Wedding Feast describes an authority figure who sends his own representatives to certain people (Matthew 21:33-34; 36; 22:13). These are rejected, mistreated, and even killed (Matthew 21:35-39; Matthew 22:5-6). And so, judgment is the result of rejecting the representatives on both the tenant and the one who rejects the invitation.³

Judgment today is on all those who are unprepared for the Kingdom depicted in their lack of fruit and improper dress (Matthew 21:43-44; 22:11-14).⁴

2. Dave Jenkins, “What is the Marriage Supper of the Lamb,” Christianity.com, October 8, 2019, Accessed May 22, 2021, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/bible/what-is-the-marriage-supper-of-the-lamb.html>.

3. Jenkins.

4. Jenkins.

IV. YAHUAH [God] REJECTS THE WEDDING GARMENT

In the Book of Revelation, we also have a picture of the Marriage Dinner of the Lamb:

The Apostle John, states, that when he “was in the Spirit [RUACH] on the Lord [YAHUAH]’s day, [that he] heard behind [him] a loud voice like a trumpet” (Rev. 1:10). These words, he states back in the very first verse of Revelation 1, are a revelation from YAHUAH [God] Himself that He gave to His Son YAHUSHA HA’MASHIACH [Jesus Christ] to give to an angel for John to write down, to reveal to us His servants the “things that must soon take place” (Rev. 1:1). And so he writes “then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, ‘Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty [YAHUAH ELOHIYM TESVA’OTH] reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure’ — for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.” (Rev. 19:6-8).

[Short comment: on the “loudness” of words of YAHUAH [God] and of His multitude.]

And so by now, I have made it into the great banquet room of the King. The King arrives and looks over at me. He says to me, “**friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment? And [I] was speechless**”. I try to defend myself. I proudly show him the finely tailored Italian suit that I had made for the occasion. I say, “I have even colored my hair so I would look ‘fine’ at your Son’s wedding. I am rich...,” I continue, “I have prospered, and I need nothing!” (Rev. 3:17). But I did not realize that I was wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked (Rev. 3:17). But now, after it is all too late for me, I remember that He had previously counseled me to buy His white garments, and not my own, so that the shame of my spiritual nakedness may not be seen. But I had decided to do it my way instead of His, following my own aspirations instead of His for me. And so “**then [He says] to the attendants, ‘Bind [Rich up] hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ For many are called, but few are chosen.**”

You see, you and I are not to forget that His “fine linen, bright and pure” are “righteous deeds of [His] saints”. “But I have faith, and it is faith alone that should save me” we might say, but then we remember His parable of the tenants, that He had previously sent His servants to check on His fruit, in His vineyard, but we had perceived that it was not His, but our own – our vineyard, our fruit – and so we felt that we were entitled to it all, and not Him. And so now, we realize that His Kingdom will be taken away from [us] and given to a people producing His fruits (Matt. 21:43).

V. BEING PREPARED

Yes, John saw and heard the great multitude like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, at the marriage Dinner in heaven. He wrote that they were crying out, 'Hallelujah! praising [YAHUAH ELOHIYM TESVA'OTH] [the Lord our God] at the wedding feast of the Lamb. And so, we need to realize that the wedding feast of the Lamb is the marriage dinner which was about to begin. And so as we wrap up today, we must understand what the soon approaching marriage supper of the Lamb is all about, and that there are actually three (3) parts to it:

1. A MARRIAGE CONTRACT

Wedding customs in the time of MASHIACH [Christ] were signed by the parents of the bride and the bridegroom. Additionally, this contract was signed by the parents of the bridegroom, and the bridegroom himself would pay a dowry (down payment) to the bride or her parents. Such a process began the betrothal period, which today would be called the engagement. By now, you and I as His bride, His body, should have already entered into our own marriage contract with Him.⁵

2. A TORCHLIGHT PARADE THROUGH THE STREETS

The bridegroom accompanied by his male friends went to the house of the bride at midnight, creating a torchlight parade through the streets. Such a parade would not be a surprise to the bride as she knew well in advance such an event was taking place so she would be ready with her maidens. They would then all join the parade and end up at the bridegroom's home. Such a custom is the basis of the Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).⁶ Are you and I among the five (5) wise church members who are wise, who although they were caught off guard at His arrival, had already "purchased" and "possessed" enough of His RUACH [Spirit] so that we are able to go quickly into the dining room before the door was shut? Or are we among the five (5) foolish church members who were too absorbed with ourselves, or with other things, to have purchased His garments, His oil, His good deeds by our rebirth in His RUACH [Spirit], to have covered up our wretchedness? Our poor, blind, naked and spiritually pathetic condition? (Rev. 3:17)

5. Jenkins.

6. Jenkins.

3. THE MARRIAGE SUPPER ITSELF

During the time of YAHUSHA [Jesus], the marriage supper itself would go on for days as illustrated by the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-2). So, the Marriage Dinner described by Him in Revelation (Rev. 19:7-10) describe the third phase of the wedding feast the marriage supper of the Lamb. John isn't meaning to skip the first two phases of the wedding feast customs, but he is communicating that in his account, that they already have happened.⁷

The first phase was completed on earth when each individual Christian placed his or her faith in YAHUSHA [Jesus]. The dowry, in this case, was paid by the bridegroom's parent (God the Father) because of the blood of YAHUSHA [Jesus] has already been shed on the Bride's behalf. We, as His Body, His Church are betrothed to our MESSIAH [Christ] in much the same way as the wise virgins are in His parable. So, today, all Christians should be watching and waiting for the appearance of the Bridegroom. As Paul says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord [YAHUAH], the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:8).⁸

The second phase picture is when Christ comes to claim His bride and take the Church to the Father's house. Then, the Marriage Supper follows as the third and final step, and is a glorious celebration of all us who are in HA'MASHIACH YAHUSHA [Christ Jesus].⁹

VI. YOUR OWN SPECIAL DINNER INVITATION

Today, YAHUAH [God] is calling on those who are outside of MESSIAH [Christ] to receive His invitation to be a part of His covenant family. We, Jews and foreigners alike, are called to be part of the family of YAHUAH [God], by joining the ranks of that great multitude of people who believe upon YAHUSHA [Christ] and who follow Him and will be at the Lord's marriage feast (Rev. 19:6-10). YAHUSHA [Jesus] says, "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more" (Luke 12:48b).¹⁰

7. Jenkins.

8. Jenkins.

9. Jenkins.

10. Jenkins.

It may seem counterintuitive at first, but the more spiritual riches that we have been blessed with, the worse off it will be for us in rejecting our Father [God]’s gracious invitation to come to His Son YAHUSHA [Jesus]’s Dinner Party. Even for us longer-term Christians, we need to be sure that we are not squandering the good gifts that He has given to us. We need to be sure that our time *and* talents are put to work for the Kingdom of our ADONAI YAHUSHA [Lord Jesus], and not be put to work for ourselves instead.¹¹

VII. MUSICAL MEDITATION

As we close now, imagine that your Father YAHUAH [God] and Husband YAHUSHA [Jesus] in Heaven are singing this song to you, hoping that you never chose to leave your own special room that they have prepared for you in the coming Kingdom.

(I have no rights to or permissions for the following song, which I found on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRvYu5oOXF0>)

INVOCATIONAL MEDIATION:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2JpvW9FU_Rg

11. Jenkins.