

The Heavenly Wedding Garment

by Erlo Stegen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of accepting the invitation to the wedding feast, which represents salvation and eternal life, and the need to put on the wedding garment, which represents a heart that is right before God.

Duration: 50:18

Scripture: Matthew 5:27-28, Matthew 7:21, Matthew 22:2-14

Topics: "Heaven"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses a parable from the Bible about a king who arranged a marriage for his son. The king sent out invitations to the wedding, but those who were invited refused to come. Some even mistreated and killed the king's servants who delivered the invitations. As a result, the king became angry and sent his armies to destroy the murderers and burn their city. The king then invited others from the highways to attend the wedding, but one man who came without a wedding garment was cast into outer darkness. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having the right garment, symbolizing righteousness, to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Transcript

Let us pray once again. We pray Lord Jesus that you will be in our midst. Work in your grace through your word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen. Now let us read from Matthew chapter 22.

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said, The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding and they were not willing to come. Again he sent out other servants. He sent out other servants saying, tell those who are invited.

He prepared my dinner, my oxen and fatted cattle are killed and all things are ready. Come to the wedding. But they made light of it and went their ways.

One to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious and he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.

Then he said to his servants, the wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways and as many as you find, invite to the wedding. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both good and bad.

And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. And he said to him, friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

And the king said to the servants, bind him hand and foot, take him away and cast him into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

It's a long portion. I cannot go into depth on all the different points. I'll just touch on some.

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables and said, No one had asked him a question. He just spoke to them. Jesus never when he spoke, just spoke into the air.

He always hit the nail on the head. And he also didn't say, are there any questions? He didn't need them to ask the questions because he knew their thoughts already. The Lord Jesus doesn't need to wait for you to ask your question.

He already reads and knows your thoughts. So before they spoke and even asked their question, he spoke and directly answered the questions they had on their minds. To God, a thought is like a deed.

The Lord Jesus said that you should not commit adultery. Yet I say to you, if you look at another woman with lust in your eye, you've already committed adultery. Jesus knows your thoughts.

God sees them and to him, that thought is like a deed. Have you got hold of that point? Can I go on to the next point? Or must I repeat it again until you hear it and understand? But if you're blunt and you haven't heard yet, then even if I repeated, you probably wouldn't grasp it. And then he spoke to them.

The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son. That's the kingdom of heaven. God is king.

He's the king of kings. So the king arranged a marriage for the son. Now, with God, his son is Jesus.

So he sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding, and they were not willing to come. There are many weddings on earth. Remember when the prince in England got married, that wedding was shown all over the world.

It was something great. But imagine a wedding arranged by God himself. That will be the greatest event of all.

You cannot describe it. It's greater than anything you can imagine. And I imagine if you were approached by the postman with a letter from the king, inviting you to attend the wedding.

What would you say? Wouldn't you feel very privileged? Wouldn't you go around and tell your friends, you won't believe it. I've just received an invitation from the king to the wedding. Arno shared something with me these days.

I'm saying that if Bill Gates were to invite you and say, I want you to come and have a meal with me, what would that mean to you? And if he would say, look, I'll cover all the costs, your flying, your tickets, your accommodation, everything. Wouldn't you feel very privileged and special? But now you know. But now imagine receiving an invitation from the king of kings, from God, the creator of all things, and he sends you an invitation to come to his wedding feast, and you turn it down.

You're the greatest fool there is. Often I say people, some people don't have their brains on their head. They actually sit on them.

But in fact, they don't even sit on their brains. There aren't any. But just think about it.

How can you decline such an invitation from God himself to turn down such an invitation? You're a fool. You should jump for joy. You should rejoice.

You should be the happiest person sharing it with others about your great good fortune. But when the servants went out with the invitations, the people turned down those invitations. They didn't accept them.

They didn't want to go to this greatest wedding feast of all times. There was never anything like it before, neither will there be again. But they turned it down.

Now why didn't they want to come? It was because they were busy with their own things. Busy with their sins, things that they were busy with, which were wrong. So one says, I'm not prepared to give up my drugs, or my smoking, or my drinking.

I'm not prepared to give up the girls in my life. They just turned down the invitation. They said, we don't want to go.

We'd rather not go than leave this. So they were invited, but they refused to go. And again the Lord, the king sent out his servants and said, go out and invite again and tell them the cattle have been slaughtered, the feast is prepared.

And the king said, see, I have prepared my dinner. He himself had prepared it. All things are ready.

Come to the wedding. But they made light of it. And they went their ways.

One to his farm. You see, he had time for his farm, but that's all he had time for. One to his farm and another to his business.

So the one was a farmer, the other was a businessman. And it was said, everything is ready. Finished.

It's finished. It's ready. You can come.

And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. He sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.

The Lord Jesus was speaking to the Jews, sharing with them the secret, the mystery of the gospel. But they just treated it lightly. They didn't take notice.

They didn't realize the importance of what they were being told. And then they mistreated the servants, and some were even killed. And the Lord was furious.

He wasn't angry because they didn't come, only for turning down the invitation. But he was angry because they had mistreated his servants. And some were even killed.

And that's where the Lord was angry. Let this be a warning to you. So I say, don't mistreat a servant of the Lord, for the Lord will come down in His wrath.

One gets the impression that the mistreating of the servants was, to the Lord, worse than the fact that they didn't accept the invitation. So be careful. So watch out.

Don't go against a servant of the Lord, the messenger of the Lord, that God has sent to you. Many were killed. If you think of John the Baptist, and there were others, even Paul, the apostles.

Many were killed and martyred for their faith. And the Lord was filled with wrath, and He came down in His wrath. Just look at the Jews.

Just look at the Jews. God sent His messengers to the Jews. They rejected them.

And God brought foreign armies. The Romans, they came. They encircled Jerusalem.

And those people were slaughtered. The walls were broken down. The city was burned with fire.

And the same happened to Sodom and Gomorrah. They turned away those messengers of the Lord. They didn't accept them.

And fire came down from heaven and consumed them. And God said, And God used the Romans. He allowed them to become strong.

So they were used, and were the instrument God used to bring the punishment upon the Jews. Now, you can also be in that position, where God can even use your enemies, those that go against you, but He uses it because He wants to get through to you. And so the king sent out his servants, but they did not come.

And those that were invited were not worthy. And then he said, And as many as you find, invite to the wedding. He said, Go out into the highways, or into the streets.

Everyone that's there, just invite. He said, He said, Go and invite those on the streets. Those who are out there, who are regarded as the outsiders, you invite them in.

Let them come to the feast, for it's ready. Invite all that you find. So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good.

And the wedding hall was filled with guests. One day the Lord Jesus spoke to the people, including the Pharisees. He said, He said, They will come from the east and the west, even the north and the south.

They will come from everywhere, and they will sit at the tables in the kingdom of heaven, together with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But here's the tragedy. He went on to say that the children of the kingdom will be cast out.

God says, I will start working among the heathens. They will be saved, but the so-called Christians, they will be cast out. If you say you're a Christian, you're born again, be careful.

Let this be a warning to you, because the Lord has warned us that they will come, sit at the tables, and the children of the kingdom will be cast out. The Lord sent, cast out the Jews, but he invited the Gentiles, all the other nations, he invited them and he said, you come. Don't you sit in your comfortable chair, in your sofa, your spiritual sofa, saying, well, I'm a child of the kingdom.

I'm a child of the Lord. God can take you out of it. You can lose it.

Have you understood that? I would like to carry on if you haven't grasped that point. I'm going on to the next point, but I hope this point has woken you up. It should.

And be a warning to you always, lest you, as a Christian, become complacent and you lose that position that God had for you. So be watchful, you Christian. An American preacher once visited us.

He spoke to us, he said, look, I'm a Baptist. He said, I'm a Baptist, and I'm telling you, we Baptists believe, once saved, for always. We can't backslide.

He says, the Baptists don't believe that you can backslide. They just practice it. They don't believe it, but they just practice it.

Jesus Christ. Oh, my friend, you are wrong. So you be careful.

You watch, you Christian. Don't think, well, I'm a child of the Lord. I don't need to worry, and you become slack.

You've seen this young man. He got converted, and he's got this fire in his heart, reaching out to other people, that they get saved as well. And then, praise God, And that hall was filled with wedding guests.

They came from the highways, from the byways. That hall was filled. So that hall will be filled by everyone, coming from everywhere.

Make sure you are one of them. And when the hall was filled with uncountable guests, so many there were, And he came in, and though there were so many, he immediately spotted this one guest that had come in not wearing the wedding garment. And he said, friend, how did you get in here without the wedding garment? Yes, wedding garment.

No matter who you are and where you are, God's eye will spot you. He will see you. You cannot sit back and say, well, my father is a minister, or I'm among Christians.

I'm alright. The Lord's eye will spot you. You will be seen.

You cannot hide behind anyone. He saw him straight away. He said, you're not wearing the wedding garment.

And here we're not speaking of an outer garment. Like some people wear white or different colored garments, even with crosses on them. No, that's not what we're referring to here.

Here we're speaking of the garment of the heart. It's the heart, whether it's been cleansed in the precious blood of our Lord Jesus, the blood of the Lamb. The heart wasn't right.

That's the garment. It's your heart that you enter that wedding feast with. Is your heart right before God? That's the garment God looks at.

When the Lord asked him, how did you get in here? He had no answer. He didn't know what to say. And the Lord said to his servants, take him, bind him hands and feet, cast him into outer darkness.

There's a terrible darkness where there's neither the light of the sun, nor the stars or the moon. It's pitch black. I once prayed with somebody.

This person said, I found myself in terrible darkness. A darkness I cannot describe. It was terrible.

And after two or three days, this person died a terrible death and died in his darkness. This person died a terrible death, yet he had been a preacher. He had preached and people got converted through him.

Yet he died like Judas Iscariot. And he said, take him, cast him into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

We don't have enough time now to speak about this darkness and losing heaven. Losing out on heaven will cause you many, many tears. You'll cry for all eternity.

There will be weeping and you'll regret having come to the services and not accepting the Lord and for rejecting him. You will regret it for all eternity. I've often seen with a schoolteacher.

I've often seen with a schoolchildren. They misbehave, they speak things they shouldn't speak, do everything wrong. But the day you tell them, look, this isn't your place.

Rather go and find another place. Pack your things and go. Then they start weeping and crying bitterly and asking for forgiveness.

I said, you should have done this before now. Not only now because you've been sent. You should cry when you've done the wrong thing.

Not only now. So there's such a thing that a person starts weeping, but it's too late. He's weeping in that outer darkness where there's no light, there's no hope.

And there's also gnashing of teeth. Normally if people are angry, they gnash their teeth. Now here, I don't know why they gnash their teeth, who they angry at.

Maybe at their friends who misled them. Or maybe they're furious with themselves and saying, what a fool I've been. Why did I do what I did? We don't know how this person got it right to get into that wedding feast.

But it's like some people, they somehow just seem to be able to slip their way through. They're good hypocrites. They just always just like they're able to slip through.

But if God hasn't died, if He's alive, He will spot you. Even if you get past everyone else, He will see you. And then He said, for many are called, but few are chosen.

I once heard someone say, well, what does it help? Because I'm not one of the chosen, so it doesn't even help if I try. Why would the Lord then have called you if you were not chosen? And so, the Lord has called you all. He has chosen you.

That's why you are here. You are all chosen. You've all been called.

But yet few are chosen. You see, if someone gathers the corn, if you harvest maize, for example, everything is harvested. But when it's taken off the cob, then the good and the bad maize are separated.

The good and the bad maize are separated. Or like beans, when you reap the beans, harvest them, you'll put them all into one bag. They're all in that bag.

They've all been called. But the day will come where before they are cooked, someone will go and separate the good from the bad. All the rotten ones, the bad ones will be put one side, and only those that qualify, they will be chosen.

That's why the Lord has called you all. He has chosen you. He has chosen you.

Many are called. Few are chosen. But you can't blame God and say, well, God, you didn't choose me.

But He only separates what is good from the bad. And sometimes a thing may look good, but then when you look inside, like an apple, you can bite it, and inside it's bad. All were invited, but they took it lightly.

They didn't take notice of it. They despised it, and they didn't go. Could those people now say, well, God didn't choose me? No, it wasn't God.

He had invited them all. They decided not to go. You're not despised and rejected by God.

It's the deed you do that disqualifies you. So it's not God who casts you out. It's your sin, the deed you do that disqualifies you, that you are cast out.

We've all been invited. We're all invited. We're all invited to that great wedding feast.

Will you be there? Or could it be that you'll get in there, and then you will be found not to have the wedding garment on? May God work in His grace. May no one be found who takes this invitation of the Lord lightly and who despises it. Thank you.

Let us pray. Lord, we pray that your word will not be in vain to any one of us here. And Lord, if anyone should have rejected that invitation in the past, may the Son not say today before He has come to you to ask for forgiveness and to make sure that He's received that wedding garment, that heart that's been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/20/SID20296.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/erlo-stegen/the-heavenly-wedding-garment/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net