

Sermon Mark S. Aites
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR WEDDING DRESS?
(Special Thanks To Tom Holland)

TEXT: MATTHEW 22:1-14

INTRODUCTION:

1. Weddings: beautiful/expensive -- much is put into them because it is one of the most treasured moments in a person's life.
2. Preparation for a wedding can leave people frustrated, confused, upset; and even disoriented.
4. **Illus.** Week of my marriage -- ran 2 red lights, made a wrong turn on a one way street. (Weddings can produce strange effects)
5. I have personally, as a preacher of the gospel of Christ, joined many couples in marriage:
 - 1) I've seen the groom arrive late.
 - 2) I've seen the bride upset.
 - 3) I've seen wedding rehearsals that left me wondering about the wedding day.
 - 4) I've witnessed weddings not go exactly as planned.
 - 5) But, I've never seen the bride forget her wedding dress, or the groom his attire.
6. Spiritually speaking, it is a serious matter before God when people are not properly attired for the wedding feast.
7. In the Bible, marriage is spoken of with 2 applications:
 - 1) Institution designed by God between a man and a woman, as ordained in **Gen. 2**.
 - 2) The other is applied to the relationship between God and His people (children), in both the Old Testament and New Testament
8. In the lesson it should be noted that some forget their garments because they have never worn one; others, who have worn wedding garments, have forgotten them -- such is the case with God's people in the Old Testament

DISCUSSION:

I. GOD'S PEOPLE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

- A. In the Old Testament, God did refer to the children of Israel as His bride.
 1. God had chosen Israel *"to be a special people unto Himself, above all the people that are upon the face of the earth"* (**Deut. 7:6**).
 2. They were chosen *"for God's own inheritance"* (**Psa. 33:12**).
 3. They were God's *"married wife"* (**Isa. 54:1**).
 4. Book-Hosea: Hosea was to take a wife of whoredom --a crime of which God's people were guilty because of their idolatrous practices (**Hos. 2**).
 5. The prophet Jeremiah: said that Israel had committed adultery (**Jer. 3:8**).
 6. Ezekiel: *"But as a wife that committeth adultery, which taketh strangers instead of her husband"* (**Ezek. 16:32**).
- B. Having established that the marriage relationship applied to God and His people, Jeremiah asked the question: *"Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet My people have forgotten Me days without number"* (**Jer. 2:32**).
 1. They had forgotten their attire in the sense that they had forsaken God.
 2. *"Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with Me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord"* (**Jer. 3:20**).
 3. As one reads the text, he learns that they would not accept Divine correction or discipline (**Jer. 2:30**).

4. Further, one learns that they rejected the prophets of God in favor of false prophets: *"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and My people love to have it so..." (Jer. 2:30).*
5. One also learns that they were dissatisfied with God's way, and even went so far as to deny the reality of their sins (**Jer. 2:35**).
6. They blatantly rejected God's Word: *"To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it" (Jer. 6:10).*
7. One author described these people as being "morally bankrupt." And little wonder: *"For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of My people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace. Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among them that fall: at the time that I visit them they shall be cast down, saith the Lord" (Jer. 6:13-15).*
8. In essence, the people "of God" had removed their wedding attire and had forgotten their wedding dress.

II. GOD'S PEOPLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. By understanding the relationship between God and His people in the Old Testament, it helps us better understand the relationship in the New Testament
- B. In the New Testament, Christ is spoken of as the bridegroom and the church as the bride.
 1. **Eph. 5:22-32** Paul speaks of the relationship between husbands/wives: concludes, *"This is a great mystery but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32).*
 2. To the church at Corinth--Paul: *"For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2).*
 4. In **Matt. 25**, the first 13 verses, Jesus gave the parable of the 10 virgins -- a parable that deals with being prepared for the second coming.
 - 1) If you recall, there were 5 wise and 5 foolish virgins; some did not have the extra oil --went to purchase it; bridegroom came while they were out.
 - 2) In this parable, Jesus likened Himself to the bridegroom, and those that were prepared went in with Him to the marriage feast.
 5. In **Rev. 21:2**, there is a figurative reference to the church: *"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."*
- C. In the New Testament, those then that were wearing wedding garments were those who were members of the Lord's church.
 1. They had repented of their sins and confessed the Savior before men (**Matt. 10:32-33**).
 2. They clothed themselves with Christ (**Gal. 3:26-27**).

3. They had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (**Rev. 7:14**).
4. They had had their sins washed away (**Acts 22:16**).
5. And because of their faithful obedience, they had been added to the church -- the body of the saved (**Acts 2:47**).
- D. Here I believe it should be noted that this is a strong evidence that one cannot be saved apart from the church. To be a part of the bride of Christ, one must be a member of the church (**Eph. 5:23**).
- E. But like the children of God from of old, one can live in such a way as to forget his wedding dress; to bring shame/reproach upon the bridegroom (Christ).
 1. For example: The apostle Paul wrote of Hymanaeus and Alexander who made shipwreck of the faith (**1 Tim. 1:19**)
 2. Paul also wrote of Demas: "*Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world*" (**2 Tim. 4:10**).
- F. Having noted these things, let's now look at our text --the parable of the marriage feast (**Matt. 22:1-14**).

III. THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING (MARRIAGE) FEAST.

- A. From the clear teachings of the New Testament, it seems very clear that Jesus had the church in mind in this text.
 1. The parable is likening something to the kingdom of heaven.
 2. Earlier, at the limited commission, Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (**Matt. 10:7**).
 3. In **Matt. 16:18-19**, when He spoke of building the church, He made it clear that the kingdom and the church were one and the same using terms interchangeably.
- B. In this instance then, He likens the kingdom/church to a wedding feast.
- C. Now His Jewish audience prided themselves in being children of Abraham; and they felt that they had the true birthright making them God's favorite people.
 1. But they rejected Jesus, and refused to come to the wedding feast.
 2. In **vs 4-5**, there were some things in their lives that were more important to them than Christ. (Same problem today)
 3. **vs 6**: Some even abused the Son's servants -- a reference to the prophets who foretold of Christ.
 4. **vs 7**: They will be punished because of it.
 - 1) According to history: suffered 70 A.D.
 - 2) Any who reject Christ will ultimately suffer.
 5. **vs 8**: Tragically, "*They which were bidden were not worthy.*"
 6. **vs 9**: They were to bid others to the marriage/wedding feast.
 - 1) Demonstrated in the Great Commission (**Mark 16:15**).
 - 2) Jews--Antioch, Pisidia: "*seeing ye put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles*" (**Acts 13:46**).
 7. **vs 10**: The wedding was furnished with guests --but of interest, both good and bad.
 - 1) I remind you of another parable -- the parable of the tares; we are told that the devil sows tares among the wheat (**Matt. 13:25,39**).
 - 2) Tares - weeds that grow among the wheat.

- 3) We learn that there are the good/bad even in the church.
- 4) When He returns, Jesus *“will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 13:41-42).*
- 5) Although we cannot fully separate the good from the bad, the Lord can/will **(Matt. 25:32 -- sheep --goats; Matt. 7:21-23).**
8. In the parable of the marriage feast, a man was observed without a wedding garment (**vs 11**).
9. **vs 12** What is significant, and worthy of our close attention, is that when questioned, this man was speechless. This seems to indicate that he was responsible for not being prepared or properly attired.
 - 1) Application: each of us is responsible for his/her own soul.
 - 2) Paul -- *“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2:12).*
 - 3) Concerning the judgment: *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).*
 - 4) *“Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him” (Rev. 1:7).*
 - 5) **Heb. 9:27.**
10. Further application: this man without the garment can be applied to those who never put on Christ in baptism.
 - 1) Those who are children of God, and have put their Lord on in baptism, wear the white robes.
 - 2) They have had their sins washed away: Jesus *“washed us from our own sins in His blood” (Rev. 1:5).*
 - 3) When John saw the redeemed: *“And white robes were given unto every one of them...” (Rev. 6:11).*
 - 4) In the 7th chapter of Revelation, he saw the redeemed *“clothed with white robes” (Rev. 7:9).*
 - 5) When John asked about them: *“These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb” (Rev. 7:14).*
 - 6) Long ago--Isaiah: *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isa. 1:18).*
 - 7) Without the blood of Jesus, one cannot be properly attired to attend the feast, and therefore will be cast out.
 - 8) The only way to be properly attired is to be baptized into Christ and receive the cleansing from our sins by faith **(Col. 2:12; John 19:34; Rom. 6:3).**
 - 9) Simple conclusion: if one has not been immersed then he is not saved, and is not properly attired -- and will be lost!
11. And the other application: Those who have been immersed, but have departed from Him, and returned to a life of sin are no longer wearing a white robe -- stained with sin.
 - 1) Peter: *“For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” (2 Pet. 2:21).*
 - 2) **Luke 9:62**

12. The end result for both those who have not been baptized, and those that have turned from God is the same: to be cast into outer darkness where there shall be wailing/gnashing of teeth.
 13. How sad it is: when we consider that Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels (**Matt. 25:41**); but unfortunately they will have a lot of company. (**Matt. 7:13-14**).
- D. Jesus then makes the point in the parable: *"For many are called, but few are chosen"* (**Matt. 22:14**).
1. We are chosen by God through the gospel (**2 Thess. 2:14**); -- it is God's means for selecting those who want to be part of the bride of Christ.
 2. Although this wonderful invitation is extended to all, many reject it.

CONCLUSION:

1. In view of these thoughts, we must remember that the wedding feast is fast approaching (**Matt. 24:42**).
2. Ask you, have you forgotten your wedding dress?
3. What condition is your wedding garment in? Is it stained with sin? Is it pure and white, having been continually washed in the blood of the Lamb? (**1 John 1:7**).