

## SUNDAY

March 25, 2012

**READ:** Matthew 21:28-46

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT:** At the center of the confrontation was the religious leaders' challenge to Jesus' authority. He had cleared the temple the prior day (Monday of Holy Week), which was a pronouncement of judgement on the temple establishment. Jesus did not cower before the challenge to his authority. Instead, He turned the tables back on them by challenging them to publicly recognize the source of John the Baptist's authority as being from God.

### OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:

Today's reading reviews the first two parables in the trilogy at hand. We covered the first one last week. What is taking place in the parable of the tenants (Matt. 22:33-46)? In the parable, who is represented by the landowner? The landowner's servants? The tenants? The landowner's son?

**KEY CONCEPT:** Jesus continues to use parables to illustrate his own authority while rebuking the religious hierarchy of his day. The method was effective...at a high personal cost to himself (see verses 45-46).

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** What is Jesus' point in referencing Psalm 118: 22-23? What role does a cornerstone play in the construction of a building? How do you relate to that metaphor within the context of your own faith perspective...what is the cornerstone of your faith?

**PRAY:** As we continue our journey through Lent toward the cross of Good Friday, spend time today thanking Jesus for his bravery in the face of great personal danger. Recall that it was what he did that has set us free from the penalty of our sin.

\*from: [The NIV Application Commentary \(Matthew\)](#). Page 715. Michael J. Wilkens

## MONDAY

March 26, 2012

**READ:** Matthew 22: 1-14

**HISTORICAL CONTEXT:** When the Bible talks about "The kingdom of heaven," it refers to the reign of God that he is bringing about through Jesus Christ...the establishment of God's rule in the hearts and lives of his people and the creation of a new order of righteousness and peace.\*

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** To understand the parable, we need to gain a sense of who the players are. Who is represented in the story by: 1) the King; 2) his son; 3) his servants; 4) those who mistreated & killed the servants; 5) the wedding guests; 6) the guest without wedding clothes?

**KEY CONCEPT:** By coming to earth, God (Jesus) threatened the established religious structure of the day by personally pointing out how they were missing the mark in how they were leading.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** To whom is the parable addressed? What is the main theme of the marriage feast? Why will those invited not come? Why do the others invited in verse 10 come? What are the wedding clothes that are necessary for attending the wedding celebration?

**PRAY:** We are accountable for what we know. Living authentically requires us to not hide from truth, but to adapt our lives in light of it. Today, ask God to help you see where your life might not reflect his plan or desires as revealed in Scripture. As you become aware of these discrepancies, decide if you will go your own way, or submit your life to God in this area.

\*Adapted from the Glo Bible.

## TUESDAY

March 27, 2012

**READ:** Matthew 22: 1-14 (Focus: verses 1-7)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** Consider how eagerly the king wants people to come to this wedding celebration - how many times does he put forth an invitation (note that verse 3 implies an invitation had already been sent)? Why would people be so rude (even hostile) to their king?

**KEY CONCEPT:** God's invitation is often met with disregard, resistance, and even antagonism.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Consider your life journey. When did you first sense that God was speaking to you...inviting you to join him? How did you first respond to his invitation? If you did not accept his invitation initially, did he send his servants to you again? Was there a time when you were a bit hostile or unfriendly toward those who were sharing the gospel with you?

Do you live similarly to God's servants in this parable, sharing his invitation with others? Has your invitation always been accepted? How do you feel when it is not received positively?

**PRAY:** While God wants to use our love for him to motivate us to invite others to know him, He does not lay the burden of success on our shoulders. That is the role of the Holy Spirit. Pray that God would help you identify an unchurched person/family this week that you can invite to join you for worship at McLane Church on Easter morning.

## WEDNESDAY

March 28, 2012

**READ:** Matthew 22: 1-14 (Focus: verses 8-10)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** How does the king now see those who were initially invited but have refused to attend the wedding (verse 8)? What radical instruction does the king give to his servants? What is the make-up of those who have accepted the invitation of the king?

**KEY CONCEPT:** God throws open the invitation to anyone, anywhere, to be a part of His celebration.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** Have you ever lost a privilege due to your attitude or behavior? Did you realize the penalty you would have to pay by your actions ahead of time? Did you have regrets afterward?

Jesus is passing judgement on the religious leaders of Israel in verse 8. How do you think the leaders felt about Jesus saying they were being passed up by the sinners and the sick who were now being invited to kingdom of heaven?

A hallmark of God is his graciousness to the undeserving, such as this parable illustrates. How do you feel about it? Are you upset that God lets the "rabble" into the club? Or are you thankful that he does not hold your sin against you, and allows you to enter in and celebrate with him?

**PRAY:** Don't let arrogance and pride be stumbling blocks that keep you outside of the wedding celebration that God invites you to. Take time today to ask God to help you see your heart as he sees it. Confess any darkness you discover in it to God, and receive his wonderful forgiveness.

## THURSDAY

March 29, 2012

**READ:** Matthew 22: 1-14 (Focus: verses 11-13)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** How does the king refer to the man without appropriate attire? Does he give the man a chance to reply? How does the man reply? What does the king then do? Where does the man end up?

**KEY CONCEPT:\*** Everyone will be held accountable for their response to Jesus' invitation to the kingdom of heaven. Not all will respond from the heart. Any who insult God's gracious offer by presuming on it without honoring the Son will receive due judgement.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** The fact that the man is addressed as "friend" and is speechless when confronted by the king implies that the man had proper clothing available to him but declined to wear them.

What would be the "wedding clothes" that are needed for us to be admitted to God's kingdom? Have you put them on? If not, what is keeping you from doing so?

The place where the man was thrown...outside, into the darkness...references eternal judgement. Do you think the man knew the risk he was taking by refusing to wear the wedding clothes?

**PRAY:** Today, think of your family and friends who have yet to put on the wedding clothes that will assure their admittance to eternal life with our Lord. Read John 6:44, and pray for God to draw these people to himself.

\*from: [The NIV Application Commentary \(Matthew\)](#). Page 715. Michael J. Wilkens

## FRIDAY

March 30, 2012

**READ:** Matthew 22: 1-14 (Focus: verse 14)

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** Who is invited? Who is chosen? What is the difference between the two?

**KEY CONCEPT:** The expression "many are invited" is actually a universal invitation by Jesus to the kingdom of heaven. Only those who respond to the invitation are admitted to the banquet.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** An invitation to a party normally comes without stipulations. Similarly, our invitation to the kingdom of heaven does not come with a list of things we have to do to earn our admission at the gate. It is God's grace that has provided a means for our sin to be atoned for and assures us that we are eligible for entry.

Have you experienced God's call? Are you one of the chosen? Are you sure? How can you know? Read 1 John 5:12-13.

**PRAY:** Not only has God provided for our entry into heaven, He has assured that the Bible is available to tell this wonderful news to those who will take the time to read it and trust what it says. Today, thank God for how he has shepherded the Bible's creation over the millennia, and for how easily it is available to us. You may want to give consideration to supporting a Bible distribution ministry that helps get God's word into the hands of those without it.

## SATURDAY

March 31, 2012

**READ:** Matthew 22: 1-14; 2 Peter 1:10-11; John 15: 1-5; Colossians 1:5-10; Galatians 5: 21-24

**OBSERVATIONS AND QUESTIONS:** What does Peter encourage in verse 10? What common theme ties the verses in John 15, Colossians 1, and Galatians 5 together?

**KEY CONCEPT:** The church does contain people who are not true members of the kingdom. They may be "insiders," but they have not responded to the invitation of the gospel. Those who have accepted the invitation are known by the fruitfulness of their lives.

**QUESTIONS TO PONDER:** How do we "make sure our calling" as advised by Peter?

From the readings in John 15, Colossians 1, and Galatians 5, what do you conclude about the kingdom "fruit" of true disciples? Are these in evidence in your own life?

As you read about the fruit in these passages, does your heart yearn to grow in faith, which will be borne out in more fruit? How can you help this to happen?

If you consider yourself a Christian but do not see any of the fruit as listed in these passages, why is that? Could there be more to being a Christian than you have understood? Do you want to bear this kind of fruit?

**PRAY:** While fruit-bearing is an important part of our lives as Christians...we need to guard our hearts from pridefulness that Satan wants to use to drive a wedge between us and Jesus. Take time today to thank God for his matchless love for us, and for considering us worthy to be used in his work. Pray also that he would help to reveal any pride that is growing in your heart, that it might be confessed to him.

TEACHINGS THAT GOT HIM

KILLED

Personal Devotional Guide :: March 25-31, 2012  
McLane Church :: Erie County, PA