



ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS
-
PARABLES 10

A thick black L-shaped frame surrounds the text. The top-left corner is a horizontal bar extending to the right, then a vertical bar extending downwards. The bottom-right corner is a horizontal bar extending to the left, then a vertical bar extending upwards.

WELCOME TO “PARABLES”

Each week we will delve into the background, imagery
and challenge of the parables of Jesus..



Reflection



- What have I learnt about God's kingdom tonight?
- What do I feel challenged about?
- What do I feel encouraged about?



So, how to listen to a parable?



- **Ask** questions of course!
- **Ask:** What are the corresponding features talking about? (Sower, seed, pearl, banquet etc)
- **Ask:** What would have surprised or shocked the original hearers?
- **Ask:** What is Jesus wanting to teach about his kingdom that is *different* to the accepted wisdom?
- **Ask:** How might this parable be challenging me or my understanding of God's kingdom?



Parable of the Wedding Banquet



- (Mt 22:1-14) Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.
- “Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’“



Parable of the Wedding Banquet

- But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.
- “Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.



Parable of the Wedding Banquet



- But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless. “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”



Characters and features



- King
- King's son
- Wedding banquet.
- Original invitees.
- Servants of the king
- Second round invitees.
- Man without wedding clothes.
- Anything else?



Surprising or shocking?



- No one wanted to come to the banquet for the king's son?
- How lame the excuses were?
- Coming without wedding clothes?
- Treatment of the one without wedding clothes?



**KEEP
CALM
AND
SET
CONTEXT**

Matthew 22 Context



- Jesus is in Jerusalem.
- Final week before the cross.
- Think about who he has been talking to....
- What do you think Jesus might have been wanting to achieve in his last week?
- Last ditch effort at reaching who?



Parable of the Wedding Banquet



- So, thinking about the **context** and the **characters** and **features** of the parable, can you hazard a guess at the **identity** of the characters?
- King?
- Son?
- Original invitees?
- What is the banquet?
- Who are the servants?
- The second round invitees?
- The man without wedding clothes?



Parable of the Wedding Banquet



- King? => **God.**
- Son? => **Jesus.**
- Original invitees? => **God's covenant people, Jews.**
- What is the banquet? => **the great party. Heaven on earth.**
- Who are the servants? => **Prophets?**
- The second round invitees? => **non-covenant people – the Gentiles.**
- The man without wedding clothes? => **those who thought they should be there, but did not prepare.**



**KEEP
CALM
AND
SET
CONTEXT**

Parallel passage Lk 14:15-24



- (Lk 14:13-14) But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”
- (Lk 14:15) When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “**Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.**” Jesus replied: “*A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests....*”
- Why did Jesus want to tell this parable in that setting? What was it about the man’s question? Was he leaning into the man’s question or was he challenging it?



**KEEP
CALM
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CONTEXT**

Parallel passage

Lk 14:15-24



- When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.” Jesus replied: “*A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests....*
- (V23f) Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and **compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.** *I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.*’
- Different ending. Different point?
- What does God want with his banquet?
- Make sense out of v23. Does God want people at this banquet or not?



No wedding clothes?



- (Mt 22:11-13) But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless. “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”
- How do you understand this now?
- What is this weeping and gnashing of teeth indicate?
- Sorrow, regret, despairing remorse (TNDT).
- Mt 8:12, 13:42 (parable of the weeds), 13:50 (parable of the net), Mt 24:51 (faithful servant), Mt 25:30 (parable of the talents), Lk 13:28 (enter through the narrow gate),



No wedding clothes?



- The point of the story is that Jesus is telling the truth, the truth that political and religious leaders often like to hide: the truth that God's kingdom is a kingdom in which love and justice and truth and mercy and holiness reign unhindered. **They are the clothes you need to wear for the wedding. And if you refuse to put them on, you are saying you don't want to stay at the party.** That is the reality. If we don't have the courage to say so, we are deceiving ourselves, and everyone who listens to us. (NT Wright).

Come one, come all?



- But there was a difference between this wide-open invitation and the message so many want to hear today. We want to hear that everyone is all right exactly as they are; that God loves us as we are and doesn't want us to change.
- People often say this when they want to justify particular types of behaviour, but the argument doesn't work. When the blind and lame came to Jesus, he didn't say, 'You're all right as you are'. He healed them. They wouldn't have been satisfied with anything less.
- When the prostitutes and extortioners came to Jesus (or, for that matter, to John the Baptist), he didn't say, 'You're all right as you are'. **His love reached them where they were, but his love refused to let them stay as they were.**
- Love wants the best for the beloved. Their lives were transformed, healed, changed. (NT Wright).
- What do you think about this?

Invitation and rejection

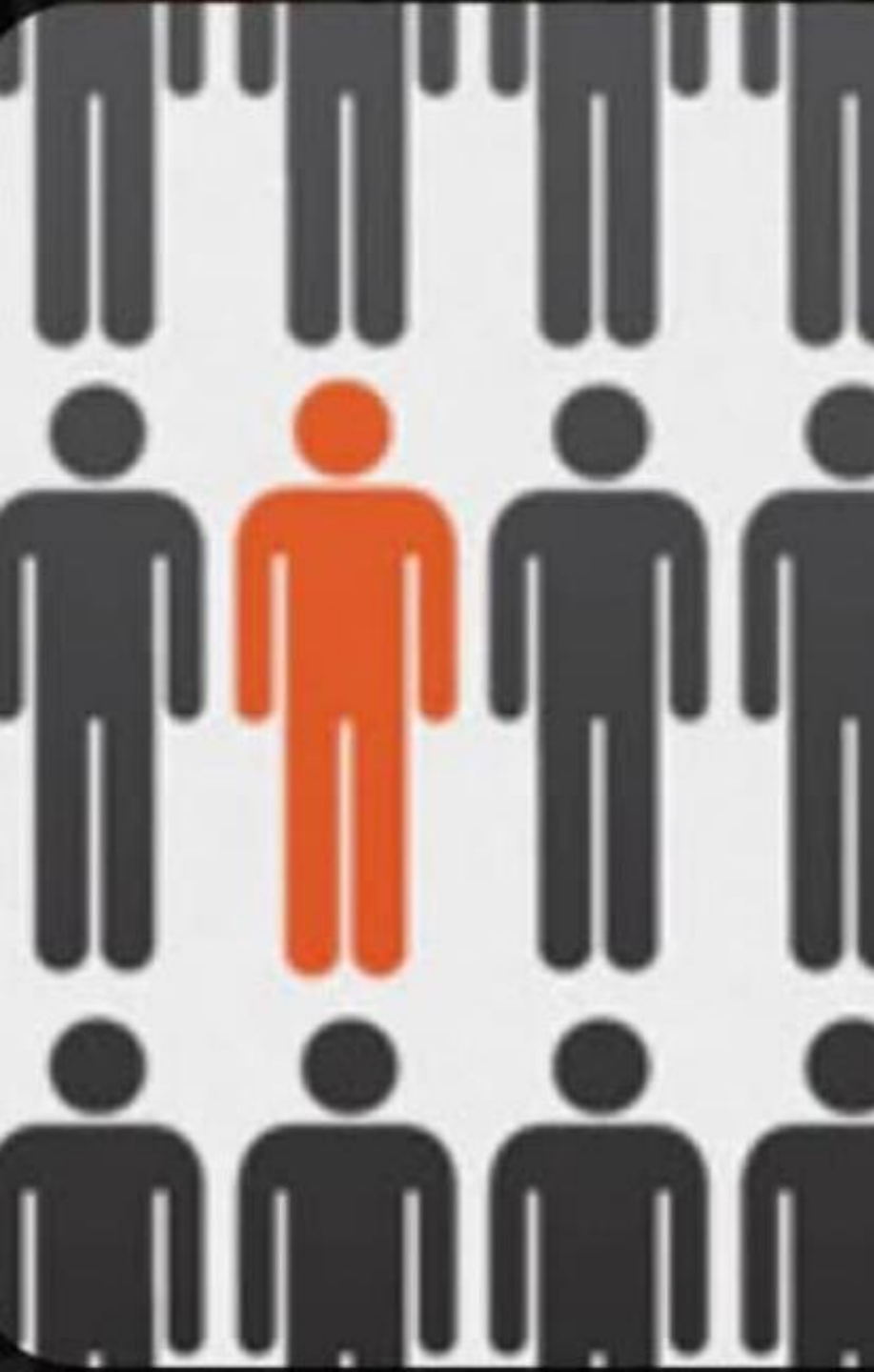


- (Rev 22:12-17) “Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.
- “**Blessed are those who wash their robes**, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. **Outside** are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.
- “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star.”The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.
- What is the difference between the “blessed” and those left outside?
- They have washed their robes. Hearts to change. Intentional.

King, son and wedding...



- Who could they be?
- (Rev 19:7-9) Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear.”(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God’s holy people.)Then the angel said to me, “Write this: **Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!**” And he added, “These are the true words of God.”
- And the bride is?
- (Rev 21:9-10) Come, I will show you the **bride**, the wife of the Lamb.” And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.
- The new Jerusalem, the redeemed city.



Many invited, but few are chosen



- *Many are invited, but few are chosen...* what is the basis for the choice?
- So, you are invited to a wedding. How do **you** prepare?
- What would it be saying about you if it was a black tie event and you came in shorts and thongs?
- What is the basis of the choice (by God)? Is it not the response in your heart? Do you really want to live your life at that party **now**? Or just hope to sneak in later?



The Kingdom is a party!

- (Luke 14:1) One Sabbath, when He went to eat at the house of one of the leading *Pharisees, they were watching Him closely.
- (Luke 14:7) He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noticed how they would choose the best places for themselves: ⁸ **“When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, don’t recline at the best place, because a more distinguished person than you may have been invited by your host.**
- (Luke 14:12-14) ¹² He also said to the one who had invited Him, “When you give a lunch or a dinner, don’t invite your friends, your *brothers, your relatives, or your rich neighbors, because they might invite you back, and you would be repaid. ¹³ **On the contrary, when you host a banquet, invite those who are poor, maimed, lame, or blind.** ¹⁴ And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”
- What kind of banquet is God interested in?



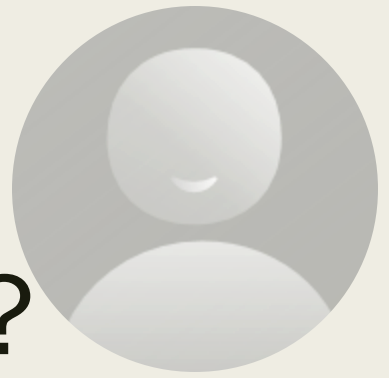
Teaching about the Kingdom



- What do we learn about the kingdom from this parable?
- It should be a party!
- Open to all.
- Don't say no to the invitation.
- Turn up!
- Respect for the King



How it challenges me or my experience?



- Role of the servants – make them come in.
- Does eternal life look like a party to me?
- When people hear me talk about the kingdom, does it sound like a party?
- Am I humbly preparing?
- Do I feel the party has started already?
- Do I expect to do my own thing for a while then turn up later?



Reflection



- What have I learnt about God's kingdom tonight?
- What do I feel challenged about?
- What do I feel encouraged about?



NEXT TIME

Foolish and wise