

Invited:

October 11, 2026

How many of you... **[Video - HH] [1 HH]**

Watch the tv show...

House Hunters...

It's ok... don't be shy.

Janet and I... often...

Have the show on...

In the background...

Half listening.

But I have learned some things...

About the process...

Of buying a house...

From that show.

First I have learned... that...

Americans are really snotty...

When they go to other countries...

And try to buy a house.

The always complain...

About the size of the houses...

The size of the bedrooms...

The size of the refrigerators...

It's like none of these people...

Have access... to the internet...

My momma told me...

You'd better shop around...

Can't they look at houses...

In the new country...

Before they go...

Before they're on tv...

Before they say...

Rude things...

To the realtor...

AND... I am genuinely surprised...

At how often people are surprised...

About how much more...

The houses cost...

Than what they have allocated.

They want a four bedroom...

Four bathroom house...

Right in the heart of downtown...

Close to all the bars and restaurants...

With a big back yard... for their dogs.

And they want to spend...
\$180,000.

And the realtor always says...
Well... That is going to be a challenge...
You might have to look...
Further away from downtown...
Out in the suburbs...

Because... the market here in...
INSERT CITY NAME HERE...
Phoenix, Atlanta, Minneapolis, Denver...
The market here... is really hot...
And things just cost more.

They say that... Every. Single. Time.

In spite of all that... there is one truism...
Of the practice of real estate...
That has relevance...
To us today...
As we read...
This gospel lesson.

Have you ever heard a realtor say... **[2 Location]**
Location.
Location.
Location.

What does that mean?

It means... you need to know the setting...
In which the house is located...
In order to make a good decision.

You need to know...
If there are good schools...
If it is walkable to the things you want to be near...

If the local town...
Has things to offer...
That are interesting not just to you...
And to potential buyers...
In the future.

Because if you don't know...
The facts about the location...
You can't fully understand...
And you can't make a good decision.

Now. That exact same thing happens...
When we read the Bible. **[3 Context]**

We can pick and choose...
Little parts of the Bible...
To fit our own ideas...
Our own arguments...
Our own agendas.

You can read God's Word...
Without fully understanding...
The context...

But you're not going to be able...
To make a good decision...
About what the story really means...

Because the context informs...
How to interpret what's going on...
How to apply it to your daily walk with Christ.
What it really means for your life.

If you don't know the context.
You can't make a good decision.

Context.
Context.
Context.

Well... the gospel lesson we have today... is...
The parable of the Wedding Banquet...
This is one of several parables...
Set in the context of...
Jesus' ongoing confrontation...
With the leaders of the church in Jerusalem...

I'm gonna show you this video. But first...
I want you to know... this is my mom.
She's 93... going on 12. **[Video - Mom] [4 Confrontation]**
Last time I checked it had over 40,000 views.

In the video... my mom... is itching for a fight.
Jesus was not itching for a fight.
He was coming into Jerusalem...
To do what God had called him to do.

To preach. To teach. To heal.
And then... you know...
To die... at the hands of these religious leaders...
To die... and to be raised from the dead...

But before all that happens...
There was this series of confrontations...

Now... the word confrontation is kind of interesting.
It doesn't necessarily mean conflict.

It literally means...
To come face to face with another person.
And the goal isn't to have a big old fight.

The goal is typically to resolve things.
To deal with an aspect of your relationship...
That needs to be addressed...
In order to make things better.

When Jesus came to Jerusalem...
He intended to make things better...
He was confronting corruption... in the church.
That's why he flipped over the tables...
In the Temple.

He was confronting a lack of understanding...
Of the love and mercy of God...
That's why he touched people... and healed people...
He wasn't supposed to touch and heal.
God is merciful to all people.

He was confronting the power and control...
The church was exerting...
Over the people...
Who were afraid...
That God would be mad at them...

If they said or did anything...
Contrary to what the religious leaders taught.
Jesus didn't respect that.

So... he confronted them... which means...
He came face to face with the leaders... of his church.
In order to fix... what had gone wrong.

And in today's parable...
He is confronting the boneheaded idea...
That the Jewish people...were the ONLY ones....
Loved by God.

Jesus is making it abundantly clear...
That yes... they were invited to be a part...
Of the Kingdom of God....
To attend the Wedding Feast...
As a matter of fact...
They were at the very top of guest list...

They were invited.
And everything was ready for them.
But instead of showing up...
And celebrating with the Son...
And enjoying... the generosity of the King...

They made excuses.

[VIDEO - "Cancelled Plans"] [5 Party]

And of course... we have all felt that way.
One time or another...
Like we would rather...
Stay at home...
Sitting on the couch...
In our pajamas...
Eating Doritos...
And watching a movie...

Instead of going to the thing...
That was planned.

But in the parable... it's more than that... isn't it?
They don't want to come... to the feast...
So they make excuses.
I have to farm. I have to work.
I have obligations. I cannot come.

And then... some of them... take it one step further...
And they kill... the servants...
Who were sent to them... to invite them... to the party.
Makes no sense.

So you know... who those servants are?
The prophets... who have held the people of God... accountable.

The prophets who have been persecuted...
For speaking the truth.

The Prophets... who have stood up...
For those who are hurting and broken...
And called for Love and Justice.

And more relevant to Jesus' story.
It's about John the Baptist.
He was the messenger...
He was the servant of God...
Sent out to invite people...
To the celebration of Jesus...
And they killed him.

So... they rejected the invitation.
AND they killed the messengers.
So... what did you think...
Was going to happen?

The King reacted.

Jesus says... the King...
Sent his troops...

Destroyed the murderers...
And burned their city.

Sounds so extreme.
And if we take it in context...
About the people who rejected the invitation...

And the people who killed...
The servants who were sent to them...

I hate to be the one... to point out...
It seems like Jesus is saying... it's you.
The Jewish religious leaders.
They were the ones who had been invited.
They were the ones who made excuses.
They were the ones who killed the prophets.

So we have to ask...
What is Jesus saying...
About the people who were... the People of God...
Before he came along... and changed everything.

What is he saying... about his people?
What is he saying... about the Jewish people?
Aren't they invited... anymore?

Good question. So. This is what I know. **[6 Romans]**
The promises of God... are eternal.

The apostle Paul wrote... In Romans 11:29...
God's gifts and God's call are **IRREVOCABLE**.

They cannot be undone.
God's Word is Truth.
God's will is done.
As soon as God speaks the promise...
The promise is fulfilled. Yes?

So if they are the People of God...
They are the people of God forever.

Paul goes on... to say... in Romans...
Just as you who were at one time
Disobedient to God
Have now received mercy

So they too have now become disobedient
In order that they too may receive mercy
As a result of God's mercy to you.

In other words...

Even though the story...
Seems like an extreme reaction...
And eye for an eye...
And a tooth for a tooth.

You do violence to my servants...
There will be consequences...

We know... the promises of God... are eternal.
And according to Paul... it's our job...
To not give up on people.
To receive them with mercy.
To let them know...
Without a doubt... that they are invited...
To the feast.

Ok. New topic.

The other night at confirmation...
Some of the kids...
Asked me what Jesus was like.
They said... I should know...
Because we had to be....
Approximately the same age... **[7 Dinosaur]**

I said... yeah... Jesus and I hung out...
We rode dinosaurs together.

Hey. Do something about your kids.

Anyway... a long time ago... when I was a teenager...
No. Jesus was not there.
And neither were the dinosaurs. **[8 Calvary]**

But I did go to church. And our church had a balcony...
In the back of the sanctuary.

And of course...
I thought it was cool...
To sit up there...
With my friends...
During worship.
We were fairly good kids.
We listened... most the time.

But there was a woman named... Marge Papke.
Who confronted me... face to face...
If you are going to sit up here...
You are not going to just hang out...
With your friends...
You are going to sing in the choir.

I said... Yes ma'am... and sang in the choir.

Another time...
I had the audacity... to wear blue jeans... to worship.

And again... Marge Papke made it abundantly clear...
That she believed with her whole heart...
It is not appropriate to wear jeans... to worship.

She let me know. Exactly what she thought.
Now... I say this gently... she was wrong.
Because she didn't know.
The whole story.

That I didn't own a bunch of dress clothes.
We didn't have money to designate...
Toward fancy things...

I had clean clothes. Blue jeans.
That I wore to church...
To worship my God.

Did you hear... the end of that parable...
Where the King got so mad...
About the guest not being dressed right??? **[9 Robes]**

Again... it seems extreme.
But... did you know... it was the obligation of the King...
To provide robes... for the guests to wear?

I think the reason the King was mad...
Is because the man didn't wear...
What the King had given him.

He chose not to put on the nice fancy robe...
Even though it was part of the celebration.

If someone didn't take... a gift that had been given...
That would be an indication...
Of a lack of appreciation.

I think the reason the King was mad...
Is because once you have accepted the invitation...
To come to the banquet...
Which has been freely given to you...

There is an expectation...
That you might want to bring your very best...
To the situation.

Out of a sense of gratitude.
This is about thankfulness.

So. That brings me to the end... of this sermon.

Here's the deal. In the context of this story...
We weren't the first guests...
Invited to God's party.

We aren't the first ones...
To be Called... Welcomed... Loved.
Wanted. Desired.

But... because of Jesus. **[10 Invited]**
We have been invited...
We have been welcomed by God.
We are guests by the graciousness of the King.
We live by God's mercy.

And we are included... into something...
That was not planned for us.
We are a part of the promise...
That doesn't really belong to us.

We have done nothing...
To deserve all this love and mercy.
And yet... here we are.

Doesn't that knowledge... of undeserved grace...
Cause a change... in your heart?

Doesn't it make you...
Want to do your very best...
To be your very best...
To live your very best...

Out of a sense...
Of profound and over-whelming gratitude?

Because you all...
Who were not invited...
Well... you are now.

And everything that God has prepared...
Since the beginning of time...
Now belongs to you.

And we... are now called...
To help others... all of them...
The whole world know...
They are invited too.

How great is God's love for us?

Thanks be to God.
Amen!