

Posing Instead of Perfecting

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Thursday, October 8, 2015

Today's Scripture:

"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matthew 22:11-14).

Introduction:

We are continuing our survey of the judgment of God's people to which we should be inviting those who don't know Him. Today we are briefly discussing point two of four from a few days ago where we said, "At any point in time, being the free moral agents we are, we could choose to turn our backs on God. He never forces people to love Him. That would be contrary to the love principle."

We will continue to unpack this using Matthew 22:1-14 as a backdrop.

Today's Observation:

Don't be a poser! Oh, were you reading too? I was reading to myself, but you can continue to eavesdrop.

One thing that a lot of people do not actually realize about God is that He is a gentleman. We have said this a few times, including with our thought on Revelation chapter three. In this case I mean that if you love the Lord at a certain point in your life, and at another point in life you choose to turn your back on Him, He will not force you to stay with Him. He's a gentleman. As we mentioned in our last couple of devotional thoughts, we continue to be able to decide how we will live until the end of all human probation, or the sealing of God's people. At that time, all final decisions for or against God will have been made. The improperly attired man in the parable is an illustration of the fact. As you may recall, the only people who were at the event this king held for his son, were those who accepted the invitation. The Bible says that others gave all sorts of excuses as to why they would not attend. Since this parable illustrates both the gospel call and a phase of judgment we will continue to unpack from Revelation 14, the only safe place for anyone to be, in our days, is inside. For those, according to John chapter three, who are on the outside of accepting this grand invitation are condemned already (more on this later). However, this man creates a conundrum for us. Why in the world would he accept the invitation, and then show disrespect in the end? Could he not have simply chosen to stay on the outside? This is a great question!

Every day we live, we are presented with decisions to live for God, or not. Nobody is exempt. We cannot say we follow God one day, and then lounge on easy street thinking that we are good-to-go until He comes. Here's a verse to further the point: "And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:61-62). In another context, Paul said, "I die daily." (1 Corinthians 15:32). Every moment of every day presents a new opportunity for us to remain in the faith, or not. The man in our parable ultimately chose not, and God had to abide by his persistent decision.

One of the saddest stories I have ever read in Scripture is that of king Saul. During the time of the prophet Samuel, God's people clamored to be ruled by a human being just like their heathen enemies. Although the Lord sent repeated warnings against this through the prophet, they continued to reject God's direct rule over them. Being the merciful God He is, God not only gave the people what they wanted, but He anointed the king with His Spirit. The king was so filled with the Spirit that the moment he received the anointing, he became a new man, literally. Let's say he was facing to the left at the moment he received the anointing. When he turned to the right, he was immediately changed so remarkably that the people thought he mysteriously became a holy prophet right before their eyes (1 Samuel 10). Unfortunately, the especially privileged and anointed king went the way of Lucifer in his rebellion in heaven. The king ultimately spurned and lost the Spirit, thereby sealing his own condemnation (1 Samuel 15-16). It was his choice.

Conclusion:

There is good news! While the parable directs our attention to the people who refused the invitation, and the man who accepted, but refused to continue in Jesus' righteous covering, we need to see what God taught from the periphery: There were, in fact, many who not only accepted the invitation, but they also continued to love the precious garments, and enjoyed the wedding. You and I can be just like them. We can continue to be perfected in God's love wherein is no fear of torment while Jesus greets His guests in this phase of judgment. But, we did learn a valuable lesson today. We must never lose focus, or become lax. We have the privilege of continuing in good relationship with God through the righteousness of Christ, as we also invite others to the same.

A Prayer for Your Hearts:

Lord, thank you for giving us your righteousness. Please help us to continue to accept it. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen.