

*Jacob's Well***Lesson Title:** Stories from the Savior—The Wedding Banquet

**Key Concept:** Jesus often spoke in parables, stories with both spiritual insights and practical applications. In the parable of the Wedding Banquet, Jesus teaches us that his invitation to join his kingdom comes with an expectation of transformation.

**Scriptures:**

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”  
(Matthew 22:14 *New Living Translation*)

**Context Scriptures:** Matthew 22:1–14

**Lesson Thoughts:**

In a parable Jesus used to illustrate the kingdom of heaven, a king prepared a grand wedding banquet for his son. When the banquet was ready, the king sent out his servants to summon the invited guests. Surprisingly, not a single guest was willing to come; some offered poor excuses, while others mistreated and killed the king’s servants. Outraged, the king sent his army to kill the murderers and burn their town. Then he instructed his servants to go into the streets and invite everyone they could find. Once the banquet hall was filled, the king came in to greet the guests. He noticed a man who wasn’t wearing the proper clothes for a wedding. The king asked him how he had shown up unprepared, but the man was unable to muster an answer. So the king ordered the man’s hands and feet to be bound, and he had him cast into outer darkness. Jesus concluded the story with the statement, “For many are called, but few are chosen.”

This statement may seem confusing at first, but understanding it is key to truly grasping the meaning of Jesus’ parable. In the story, after the original guests refuse, “many are called” when the invitation is broadened to anyone who will come. This represents God’s open invitation to all people, regardless of background, status, or other circumstances. God’s call to salvation and invitation to enter his kingdom extends to all.

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The second half of the statement, “few are chosen,” may sound as though people are chosen by chance, as if God is going around to all he calls, picking out the few he actually wants. In fact, God calls all, but not everyone responds to him. Only those who truly accept the call, submitting to God’s genuine transformation, will be counted as “chosen.”

When the invitation for the wedding banquet was sent, an expectation came with it. The guests who accepted had to meet the requirements to enter. Even though the man without wedding clothes had received and accepted an invitation, he could not take part in the banquet just by showing up. It is the same in the kingdom of God. If we attempt to participate in God’s kingdom without allowing him to transform us, it is as if we didn’t participate at all. So we must take God’s generous invitation seriously. Let us choose to allow God’s call to reshape our lives, so that we will not only be called, but also chosen.

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) How did the wedding guest not know about the proper custom? What are some ways we can fall into answering God’s call insincerely or carelessly?
- 2) What are some things God’s invitation calls us to change? What is the evidence of his transformation in our lives?
- 3) Why is it that “few are chosen”? What gets in the way of more people being chosen?
- 4) Recall a time when you became complacent or careless in serving God. What led you to that place? How did you overcome this stagnation?
- 5) How can we guard ourselves against halfheartedly preparing for God’s invitation?

**Next Lesson:** The Vineyard Workers

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**Notes and Reflections**

- 1) Pray and ask God to show you if there is anything you have been resisting changing for him. If there is something, follow his will and obey. Remember he wants to transform you and prepare you for his kingdom.
- 2) The parable states that the servants invited everyone they could find, whether they were good or bad. Consider that being good is not a prerequisite for being invited to the wedding banquet (that is, the kingdom of heaven). In theory, we want everyone to come to God, but in application, we may rule out those who seem unsuitable to receive an invitation. Remember that all have fallen short of the glory of God, yet all are invited to the wedding banquet.

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