Many are Called but Few are Chosen - Fr. Herman Homily September 6, 2026

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. >> Amen.
Christ is among us. >> He is and ever shall be.

Today's message is “Many are Called but Few are Chosen.” Today's Gospel (Matthew 22:2-14) places us inside a wedding feast prepared by a king for his son. Everything is ready. The servants have been sent and the guests have been summoned. Yet those who were invited refuse to come. Some ignore the summons. Others seize the king's servants and kill them. The king responds with judgment. But the wedding is not cancled. He sends his servants into the roads to gather everyone they find, both bad and good, until the hall is filled. Yet even then the story is not finished. The king enters, examines his guests, and casts out a man without a wedding garment. Today we will follow these three movements. The king sends his invitation. The king fills his house. And the king inspects his guests.

The king sends forth the invitation. Jesus begins, "The Kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son." The feast belongs to the king and is prepared for his son. The guests do not determine the terms. Their place is to hear the king's summons and come. Matthew tells us that Jesus spoke again in parables at the beginning of this section connecting this Gospel with the preceding parable of the wicked tenants which we heard last week. There a landowner sends servants who are rejected and killed and finally sends his son whom they also kill. Here again servants are sent again they are rejected and killed and again the son stands at the center of the parable. The two parables belong together. The king sends his servants to call those who had been called. It's another chance. Yet Jesus says they were not willing to come. The king sends other servants with the message, everything is ready. Come to the marriage feast. The king has prepared everything. The command is simply come. Some ignore the summons and return to their field and businesses. Others seize the servants, mistreat them and kill them. The issue here is not farming or business. The issue is whose Word has authority. The servants carry the word of the king. And rejecting his messengers means rejecting the king who sent them.

The same danger remains wherever the Word of God is heard.

The king has spoken yet it is possible to carry on with ordinary life as though the king had not spoken. Jesus confronts us with a simple question here. when the king summons us whose word has authority over you. Their refusal, however, does not stop the king's

purpose. The feast has been prepared and the wedding will take place. The king is going to fill his house. The king judges those who rejected his authority and murdered his servants. Then he says, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find." The servants go out and gather all whom they found, both bad and good. That detail is crucial.

The newly gathered guests cannot claim that they were admitted because they were better than those who refused the invitation. The servants gather both bad and good. **They simply obey the king's command and the hall is filled**. Those who presumed that their place was secure have discovered that the kingdom belongs to the king, not to those who consider themselves entitled to it. But there is also a warning here for those who now find themselves inside. The first guests were not rejected so that the second group could congratulate themselves. No, the new guests are there because the king summoned them. That's it. No one inside the king's house has grounds for boasting. The church does not possess the Kingdom, brothers and sisters. The Kingdom possesses the church. We did not prepare the feast, issue the invitation, or determine the guest list. We were gathered because the king sent his servants with his summons. Therefore, our place inside must never become a reason for presumption. And this is exactly where Jesus turns the warning toward those who have entered. T

he hall is full, but the story is not over. **The king himself now enters to inspect his guests**. Matthew says, "When the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. The servants gather the guests, but the king examines them. He asks, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?" And Matthew says, "And he was speechless." The king then orders him bound and cast into the outer darkness. Here Jesus turns the warning directly toward those inside. If the story had ended when the hall was filled, those who entered could congratulate themselves because others were excluded. But the king enters his own hall and judgment occurs inside the wedding feast. The man heard the summons and entered the hall. Yet his presence does not place him beyond judgment. The original guests presumed upon their invitation. This man presumes upon his presence. In both cases, the king has the final word. **The wedding garment** here in the text represents the will of God and the righteous deeds required of those who have been called. Scripture interprets scripture. In fact, the fine linen of the marriage supper is the righteous deeds of the saints as in the book of Revelation.

The king provides what is necessary at the entrance just as a host provides a wedding garment for the guest who lacks one. The man is speechless because he has no excuse. He was handed the garment, but he did not put it on. He has refused to put on the righteousness that the king requires and provides. Remember, we have been baptized into Christ. Scripture says, "We have been clothed with Christ. We may not take that

garment off." Notice Jesus says, "Many are called but few are chosen." The call goes out broadly, but entering the hall is **not** the final judgment. That belongs to the king. Membership in the community of Christ must never become a reason for presumption. The king who summoned us is also the king who inspects us, examines us. We are not merely to be present. We are to be clothed in the righteous deeds that reflect the will of the king. Everything therefore returns to the authority of the king. His invitation, his house, his Son, and his Judgment.

In this Gospel, we have briefly looked at three things. We looked at the king sending his invitation, making everything ready, but we see the refusal of the guests. And this refusal reveals their rejection of his authority. And we saw the king filling his house. He gathered both the bad and the good until the hall was filled, leaving those inside no grounds of boasting. And then finally, the king inspects his guests. The king entered the hall to examine those who had come. For being inside does not place any one of us beyond judgment. The wedding garment is the visible sign of the will of God in the life of the believer. Jesus therefore leaves us with these words. For many are called but few are chosen. The feast, the invitation, the house, and the son all belong to the king. We have heard his summons. We have been gathered together even today in his household. Therefore, the warning of this parable is for us who are already inside. Remember the king is coming and he is coming to inspect us. Put on the garment of obedience to the lord Jesus Christ.

In the name of the father and of the son and of the holy spirit. >> Amen.

Help us save us. Have mercy upon us and keep us, oh God, by thy grace

Link to Sermon - https://youtu.be/_a_DRPB1tdA?t=5261