**The Lord of the Banquet Series**

**“The Banquet”**

**John 2.1-12**

**Introduction**

Currently our sermon series is looking at “The Lord of the Banquet” as we investigate Jesus’ first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding at Cana of Galilee.

Let’s begin this morning by reading the text recorded in John 2.1-12.

*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there;**and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding.**When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, “They have no wine.”**And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does that have to do with us? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.”**Now there were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each.* *Jesus said to them, “Fill the water pots with water.” So they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it to him. When the headwaiter tasted the water which had become wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom,**and said to him, “Every man serves the good wine first, and when the people have drunk freely, then he serves the poorer wine; but you have kept the good wine until now.” This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. After this He went down to Capernaum, He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples; and they stayed there a few days.*

Last week I mentioned Jesus used weddings and wedding banquets in several of His parables to illustrate the truth about the Kingdom of God. Today we will look at some of the parables more closely as we consider the implications behind why Jesus chose the wedding at Cana to be His first miracle.

**Compassionate Call**

In the first sermon of this series we first looked at those invited to the wedding and concluded that Mary, Jesus, and Jesus’ brothers were invited to the wedding because they were close family friends or relatives. But Jesus’ disciples were not family. The disciples probably didn’t know the Bride or Groom and the Bride and Groom probably didn’t know the disciples. The fact is Jesus’ disciples had been invited only a couple of days before the wedding. Jesus’ disciples were strangers. So, why were strangers invited to a weeklong wedding celebration that included a full course of food and drinks? Because Jesus wanted to underscore the truth that in God’s Kingdom strangers are welcomed to the banquet.

To illustrate to His disciples that strangers are welcomed to the banquet Jesus told a parable about a certain man who was hosting a great feast and invited many to attend. But some of those who were invited started making excuses of why they could not attend.

*The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’ Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’* (Lk.14.18-20)

After hearing these excuses the host of the banquet told his servant to go out into the streets and lanes of the city and invite the poor and crippled and blind and lame. The host of the great feast told his servant, “*Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.”* (Lk.14.23)

Brothers and sisters, this is how God invites strangers to His Banquet. His Holy Spirit goes out into the highways and hedges and compels the spiritually impoverished, the spiritually disabled, and the spiritually blind and lame to come in so that His house may be filled. We are the spiritually impoverished, we are the spiritually disabled, we are the spiritually blind and lame. By God’s grace through Christ the Holy Spirit has called us out to be His disciples, members of His household, and we are welcomed to His Banquet! (Eph.2.19)

The longer we tell ourselves that we are spiritually rich, spiritually wealthy, and have need of nothing the longer we will be outside of the Lord’s Banquet. But if we admit that we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked the Lord will welcome us into the His banquet. (Rev.3.17) Just as Jesus taught us, *“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”* (Mt.5.3)

**Eager Expectation**

Last week we focused on the wedding and reflected on the redemptive parallel between the Jewish wedding ceremony and our relationship with Christ as His bride. We discovered that the Jewish marriage customs could be outlined in six phases: First the betrothal when the man and the woman are legally bound together as husband and wife, even though they do not come together. Then the bride’s father sets the price of the dowry for the groom to pay to secure the marriage. After the dowry is paid the groom returns to his father’s house for a period of about twelve months. During this time the bride makes herself ready for the groom’s return. When the day finally comes the groom dresses in his best attire and accompanied by his friends makes a procession back to the home of his bride singing and carried torches. The groom receives his bride and he escorts her to wedding banquet where the will begin the life together.

As we considered the redemptive significance of the wedding ceremony we concluded that Christ has chosen us to be His Bride. We are betrothed to Christ. God the Father set the price of the dowry to be the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and Christ paid the dowry for His bride with His blood. After paying the dowry Christ returned to His Father in heaven. Today, the Church is in the interval stage of the wedding ceremony, when the bride is making herself ready, waiting for the Bridegroom to return when He leads His bride in a heavenly procession to the wedding banquet – the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

To help us understand the importance to make proper preparation for His return Jesus told a parable about ten bridesmaids who were waiting for the groom’s return. In the parable Jesus tells us that five of the bridesmaid were prudent and took oil in their flasks along with their lamps and waited with eager expectation for the groom’s return. But the other five ladies did not prepare properly and did not acquire oil for their lamps to assist them in keeping watch for the groom. These foolish five ladies became complacent, drowsy, and began to sleep. But at midnight one night there was a shout, *“Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.”* But those foolish girls who had not prepared were not ready and those who were ready went with the groom to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. What was the point of Jesus telling this parable? Well He tells us, *“Be on the alert, for you do not know that day or the hour.”* (Mt.25.1-13)

The point of the parable is that preparedness is essential, for the time is coming when getting ready will no longer be possible; the door will be shut. (William Hendriksen) As the bride of Christ we are called to make ourselves ready for His return. Christ, our Bridegroom desires for us to make use of His Holy provisions and wash ourselves in His Word so that He might present us in all of our glory without spot of wrinkle or any such thing. (Eph.5.26-27)

I believe that as we eagerly await Christ’s return we should make ourselves ready by desiring Christ to scrub out all of our spots and iron out all of our wrinkles. The Lord desires to cleanse us from the impurities of this world by bathing her in His word of truth. So let us soak ourselves in His Word and rid ourselves from our sinful spots.

Brothers and sisters, the New Testament is full of warnings about becoming spiritually complacence as we wait for the Lord, our Bridegroom, to return. *Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming.* (Mt.24.42) *You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect.* (Lk.12.40)

The Lord will return for His Bride. *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.* *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, . . . But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.* (2Pt.3.9-13)

On the day our Bridegroom returns *the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.*(IThes.4.16-17) *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.* (ICor.15.52) When Christ returns He will escort His Bride, believers in Christ, in a holy procession to the marriage Supper of the Lamb.

**Bountiful Banquet**

This is how God’s Word describes that bountiful banquet. *And a voice came from the throne, saying, “Give praise to our God, all you His bond-servants, you who fear Him, the small and the great.”**Then heard something like the voice of a great multitude and like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, saying,**“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.**Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”**It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.**Then he said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’” And he said to me, “These are true words of God.”*(Rev.19.5-9)

One thing I always tell the wedding party during the rehearsal is, “It’s all about the bride.” But at the marriage supper it’s all about the groom, our Lord Jesus Christ. We were strangers and He invited us in. (Mt.25.35) *He brought me into His banquet hall, and His banner over me is love.* (Song of Songs 2.4) He has granted that we may eat and drink at His table in His Kingdom. (Lk.22.30) As Jesus received sinners and ate with them in His earthly ministry so now He does in His heavenly Kingdom. (Lk.15.2) The difference is that at the marriage supper He has clothed us in fine linen, made white in the blood of Christ. (Rev.7.9, 14) Jesus told us that He would never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when He drinks it new in the Kingdom of God. (Mk.14.25) Well, on that day at the marriage supper of the Lamb the Lord Jesus will drink of the cup because all things have been accomplished to redeem His bride! I believe Jesus chose to launch His earthly ministry at the wedding feast in Cana because it exemplified the bountiful banquet that He has prepared for His bride, you and I, in heaven at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Lastly, I want you notice that this bountiful banquet is called the marriage supper of the Lamb because it is as the Lamb of God that Christ has most fully displayed His love for His Church. Christ as the Lamb of God who suffered for our sin, was slain for our forgiveness, and with His blood has sealed our redemption. And what we see here in the marriage supper of the Lamb is that Christ delights to be eternally glorified as the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. (Jn.1.29) So, let us join the *myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.”* (Rev.5.11-12)

**Transition to the Table**

Apostles Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,

maker of heaven and earth;

and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, dead, and buried;

…the third day He rose again from the dead;

He ascended into heaven,

and sitteth on the right hand of God,

the Father Almighty;

from thence He shall come to judge

the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy Christian Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting.

**Elders Prayer**

**Benediction**

*“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”* (Rev.5.13b)