

An Invitation To Not Ignore

Matthew 22:1-14

MPS Jesus is the King who calls all to life in His Kingdom by faith, but you must respond with “Yes” to Him.

OBJ Every person should believe in Jesus because of four truths of the doctrine of election.

READ Matthew 22:1-14

And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, “See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.”’ ⁵But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ ¹⁰And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.

*¹¹“But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment. ¹²And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, ‘Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen.” **Matthew 22:1-14***

In this encounter with the Pharisees and religious leaders, Jesus continues with the third parable of his teaching. This will prove to be the most difficult teaching for them to accept. A difficulty that will be proven throughout Christian history as well.

He compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a king who gives a wedding feast for his son. The king sends his servants out to call all those who were invited to the feast, but they would not come. A second time he sent his servants to tell those who were invited that the feast was ready, and a great feast it was that had been prepared, and it was time to come to the wedding feast. (.4) But those who were invited paid no attention and went away to other personal affairs. Some even lashed out against the king’s servants to seize them, treat them shamefully, and kill them. (.5-6) Understandably so, this made the king angry. He sent his troops to destroy the murderers and burned their city. He then turned back to his servants and told them those invited were not worthy. Therefore, he told them to go into the main roads and invite as many as you find to the feast. So they went out and gathered all whom they could find, regardless of their worthiness, and filled the hall with guests. When the king finally came in, he was appalled to find a man who had no wedding garment. The king had this man bound and thrown out into utter darkness, where there was weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then, to end His parable, Jesus provides a simple statement as explanation, “*For many are called, but few are chosen.*”

Of interest in this parable is that there is no discussion between Jesus and the religious leaders. He doesn’t ask them what they think He means. He simply provides the parable’s lesson to cut to the point for the religious leaders. In this way, the lesson is undebatable in its finality and application. “*For many are called, but few are chosen.*” is a statement to which we should give great pause to understand what Jesus is teaching here.

Today’s message is what I call a “seatbelt” sermon. I mean to say that you really need to “buckle up” because this topic is one that has caused many to react in unsafe ways regarding their understanding of God and the Christian faith. What is important for us today is the same as any day when we open the Word of God, to read, study, and meditate on God’s revelation in Jesus Christ and to allow His Word to change us from within as it renews our thinking about Who He is, who we are, what He has done for us, and about all things in accordance with His Will. **Jesus’ parable teaches what is known as the doctrine of election.** He doesn’t bother to argue for it nor to refute arguments against it. Rather, He simply states the truth that “*many are called but few are chosen.*” There is far too much for us to consider regarding this doctrine in a single message. *Therefore, my aim for today will be to address the major aspects of the doctrine that we can understand from Jesus’ parable and statement in this passage of Matthew.*



Jesus is the King who calls all to life in His Kingdom by faith, but you must respond with “Yes” to Him.

“For many are called, but few are chosen.” Those that Jesus refers to as “chosen” in this passage are the ones who responded to the invitation and attended the wedding feast. While the parable began with people twice, and then thrice invited who refused and rejected the invite, Jesus provides insight as to why they rejected the invite when he says “few are chosen”.

What does Jesus mean that some were “chosen”? The Greek word for chosen is used twenty-two times in the New Testament, fourteen of which are interpreted as “chosen” and eight interpreted as “elect”. When we look at the word in all its uses, a general definition that reflects the whole counsel of God’s Word can be determined as follows: “Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them but only because of His sovereign good pleasure.”¹ Jesus uses the word “chosen” to recognize that there is something distinct about those who responded to God’s call.

The parable highlights two aspects of the doctrine of election. First, it highlights the exclusion and replacement of those who fail to honour the invite, and second, the impossibility of coming to the feast on one’s own terms.² Some people simply are not interested in the things of God – even though many of this group claim to know God. And though uninterested, they received the same invitation as any other, and multiple times over, yet rejected it. Jesus was speaking to and about the religious leaders and Pharisees when he taught this parable. Still others want the blessings of God, but do not care to be bothered by honoring God or obeying His commands. The crowd listening to Jesus would have recognized the man wrongly dressed has chosen to remain so by his own choice, because it was customary to provide proper attire for guests who came but did not have it. And because of this, the king threw him out. So, both those who rejected the invitation and those who tried to gain entry on their own terms were not allowed to attend the feast. Instead, the feast was filled by those who at first did not know about it, were invited and responded to the invitation. **And of those who had no personal merit nor worthiness of their own to be invited, but were, it is this group of whom Jesus says they came because they were chosen.**

Many state that they do not believe in the doctrine of election. But to say this is to not only stand in direct contrast to Jesus’ teaching, and later the Apostle Paul’s, Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:4-5, but to oppose the whole of God’s will in Scripture and His love toward people. So, one’s aim should not to determine whether we believe in the doctrine of election, for Jesus teaches it as truth. Rather, our responsibility is to study and seek to understand it so that our awe of God billows to increasing faith.

TRANS There are some truths that we can say for sure about what Jesus is teaching here, and what He is not teaching.

First, let’s begin with some simple truths from Jesus’ parable of what election does NOT mean.

1. Election never means that God denies people the opportunity to hear the gospel.
2. Election never means a person did not have a genuine opportunity to respond in faith to Jesus through the gospel.

Every person in Jesus’ parable had the same opportunity to respond to the invitation. And those who rejected were given more opportunity than those invited later, but who continued to reject Him.

3. Election never removes nor dismisses an individual’s personal responsibility for refusing or rejecting God’s invitation.

While one’s individual responsibility is not explicitly stated, we do know Jesus was speaking to the religious leaders, who would be held responsible for the way they responded to him on earth.

4. Election never means that a person can be right with God, yet live in a manner counter to God.

¹ Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine, Second Edition. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2020) 818.

² John Nolland, [The Gospel of Matthew: A Commentary on the Greek Text](#), New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Carlisle: W.B. Eerdmans; Paternoster Press, 2005), 884. Nolland records, “The first part of the parable deals with the exclusion and replacement of those who fail to honour the summons when the wedding feast is ready; the second part has to do with the impossibility of coming to the wedding feast on one’s own terms.”



Finally, election never justifies one to be right with God while living in any manner they choose. God is the one who determines what is truth and what it means to be faithful, because He is truth and the Faithful One. **God does not negotiate terms of acceptance into His Kingdom' He invites one to hear and believe, so to receive.**

TRANS Next, let's turn our attention to consider what we can learn about election here.

First, we should recognize that God is Sovereign in His timing as the One who sends out the invite for salvation. He sent it to those who expected to receive it AND to those who were not expecting it. He sent it to those who were close, and to others whom those who were close would not have wanted Him to send it. It is His banquet to determine which people are invited, and He chose to invite all. And only He sends it forth. People do not come to Jesus on their own initiative nor on their own timing nor terms, but only by the inviting call of God. For Jesus says, *"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day."* (John 6:44). **Salvation is not based on a choice you make at your convenience or choosing but is always in response to His initiating work by Holy Spirit through the gospel.**

Beware lest you say, "Tomorrow I will make a decision about Christ," or "I will do (this) or (that)." **James (4:14) says, "you do not know what tomorrow will bring What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes."** We do not determine when the invite goes out nor when it is the right time to respond. Only God determines this. And when God invites, that is the right time to hear and respond. *"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts,"* the Psalmist (95:7b-8a) states. **The time to respond in faith and accept God's invitation is when He sends it out and you hear it!**

Second, we must acknowledge that God is Sovereign in His determination of what salvation is. We are not free to approach God in any manner we choose. We do not determine what God must accept from us. We are called to trust Him fully with our whole life. The writer of Hebrews reminds us,

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. ¹³But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. ¹⁵As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." **Hebrews 3:13-15**

Third, we must recognize that all are invited, but not all come. Of those who do not come, it is often shocking to learn. And as equally shocking is to learn of the "all" that God invited, both bad and good. (.10) The good do not come in because of their "goodness", but because of God's invitation. And the bad are not refused because of their "badness". For God is the only one who can change that about them anyway. **God is the only One who makes all who come worthy to be present!**

Fourth, was also can say, "BUT the only ones who remain are those who come in on God's terms. The man who was recognized with *"no wedding garment"* was not sent out because he was not good enough, or did not have the right clothes, etc. Rather, he was sent out because in his own rebellious heart he demanded he be accepted on His terms. And according to Jesus, that is not how God works. **God invites all to come just as they are to be saved. But He loves you so much that He makes you no less than the likeness of His Son, adorning all with His robe of righteousness.**

The doctrine of election teaches us how we should respond to God's inviting call, immediately with "Yes" and come! And it also teaches us the serious result when we ignore His call or try to twist it into our own liking. Those who ignore and reject God's invitational call cannot enter Heaven. Those who demand their own way will not be allowed to stay. And of all who are invited, none are worthy in their own right, but invited by His grace alone.

OBJ Three Truths of the doctrine of election that compel one to place their faith in Jesus.

1. Election fills our hearts with awe in worship at the work of God as it reminds us that we are unworthy, but by His grace He made a way to save us.

We should never be bloated with pride to think we are more deserving or worthy in any manner. Rather, election should humble us by God's goodness for us, and teach and motivate us to trust more deeply and completely in all the work of God in our life.



2. Election comforts our worries, fears, and anxieties from this world, that nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

*³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Romans 8:31-39***

The doctrine of election brings great comfort and assurance to those who are walking with Jesus, especially in hard times, to know that there is nothing that can snatch us from His tender, perfect care!

3. Election should embolden our hearts to serve the living God so all can hear and believe.

Election helps us understand salvation, that not all will respond, and some who do respond will not truly be saved because they harbor other loyalties before Christ. But it is not ours to determine who can or cannot be saved, only to ensure that all are invited. Election should electrify our zeal for the Lord and energize our service to Him. By the security of our salvation in Jesus Christ, a Christ-follower should live more completely self-forgetful and self-sacrificial so others can hear, and know, and grow in Jesus Christ. Look at the King's order: "*Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.*" **Christian, our mandate is not to determine, nor to try and figure out who is chosen, but to go and invite so that all are called!**

Jesus is the King who calls all to life in His Kingdom by faith, but you must respond with "Yes" to Him.

CLOSE "**So HOW, then, do I know if I am elect?**" The answer to this question is very simple, but not always easy. Election is not a doctrine to concern yourself with to determine whether you can or want to be saved, but to understand in terms of what you do with and how you respond to God's call to salvation through the gospel. When God's call goes forth, through the preaching of the gospel, people must respond in faith. The only question to ask of yourself is this, "**What have I done with God's invitation; have I believed in Jesus Christ to repent of my sin and follow Him?**"

