



74th Year

September 6, 2026

Pamphlet #36 (3823)

THE SUNDAY GOSPEL (Matthew 22:2-14)

The parable of the royal wedding

The Lord said this parable, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, '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.' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

The basic theme that governs today's Gospel parable is man's acceptance of God's invitation. God continually calls every person, created "in His image and likeness" (Genesis 1:26), to

draw near to Him, without distinctions or partiality, so that they may participate in spiritual nuptials, in a banquet of unending joy and gladness; so that they may commune with and be united to the source of life, truth, light, and immortality – to their Creator, the King of Glory and God of all. And how does man evaluate this immeasurable honor and blessing, to be invited by God Himself into a communion of love? Some people reject His invitation, completely disregard it, and adopt a hostile stance and disposition toward the Benefactor God and toward the people whom He sends to call them near Him. Others accept the invitation with gratitude and sit as fellow guests at the royal table. Others do come, but unprepared and without awareness. Consequently, the person's stance toward the mystery of God's love, the sacrifice of Christ, and His Gospel commandments is of decisive importance for one's existence, for both the present and eternal life.

The power of God's love

The person's refusal to accept the invitation of divine love does not nullify God's work nor His plan of economy and providence for humankind. "My Father," says Christ, "is working until now, and I am working" (John 5:17). God's work consists precisely in His manifestation in the Holy Spirit to the world and in His free invitation to man to participate in divine life. And if God had remained hidden and unknown, then man would be justified in refusing the invitation to the royal wedding and the banquet of life, as the Lord says: "If I had not come and preached to them, they would not have sin. But now they have no excuse for the sin they commit" (John 15:22).

Through His incarnation, the Lord reveals to us the truth about God, the world, and man. For this reason, a person sins before God when he loves darkness more than light, because his deeds are evil (John 3:19). How can you remain unmoved and indifferent to God's invitation when your life is filled with the light of faith, repentance, prayer, and true love toward God and your fellow man? And how can you respond to God's call when you are

immersed in the works of darkness and remain with your will trapped in egoism, unbelief, forgetfulness, and ignorance?

The wedding garment

At this point, we must emphasize that accepting God's invitation does not automatically entail salvation, as the Lord tells us: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 20:16). Indeed, saying "yes" to God's invitation also brings certain obligations on the part of the believer, since the identity of the Christian is not a fixed and final state, but a continual struggle toward perfection, with an ongoing character. One becomes a Christian continually, when faith is confirmed by one's deeds.

For example, how can I claim that I believe in God and love Him when I hate my brother? (1 John 4:20). Consequently, when the king in the parable casts out into "the outer darkness" the man who dared to enter the wedding hall without the proper garment, he is essentially punishing shameless negligence, indifference, insult, and the absence of works of love, faith, righteousness, and mercy. Indeed, in the Gospel of Matthew the necessity of works as the fruit of the person's new life in Christ is especially emphasized. And Saint Gregory Palamas very aptly observes that "the garment of the spiritual wedding is virtue."

The rejection of the man from the royal wedding did not occur because he was not wearing the proper garment, but because he did not wish to put it on, since the Lord Himself is the One who clothes us with the garment of incorruption. What He seeks is our free consent to be clothed with this, which is expressed chiefly through repentance, confession, and participation in the Divine Eucharist.

Archimandrite N. K.

September 6, 2026: 14th Sunday of Matthew

Commemoration of the miracle of the Archangel Michael at Chonai.
Kalodotes the martyr.

Pl. 1st Tone – Eothinon: 3 – Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4
– Gospel: Matthew 22:2-14

NEXT SUNDAY: September 13, Sunday Before the Exaltation of the Cross
Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18 – Gospel: John 3:13-17

TRAINING SCHOOL FOR PROSPECTIVE CATECHISTS

The duration of the studies is two years. The lessons of the 1st year take place every Saturday 4:00-6:30 p.m. and the 2nd year on the same day from 7:00-9:30 p.m.

- Training School lessons begin Saturday, October 3.
- For more information, those interested can contact:
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