

Date: 08 Dec 2019
Service/s: 730am and 930am Tewanin – with wedding
Series/day: Christ is coming
Title: A marriage feast like no other
Passage: Revelation 19:6-9, Luke 14:15-24
Outline:

Introduction

- I'm sure you've heard me tell the story of the couple who went into Harvey Norman overnight and swapped all the price tags around so that a USB stick usually worth \$48 was priced at \$3000 and a large Sony TV was priced at \$48...
- And so on... all through the store
- Dyson vacuum cleaners - \$35; Top of the line front loader washing machine - \$25
- And a USB cable for your phone - \$999 and an eclectic kettle \$5,450
- Who switched the price tags?
- And sometimes I wonder who switched the price tags for us in life...
- ... because how is it that everything that is really important, people now consider trivial
- ...while the most trivial things are considered what life to be all about.
- How is it that people are in total uproar about an umpire's decision at a **football or cricket match**, but will not care even a little bit about injustice and corruption in all levels of government and society...
- How is that people care so little for anything to do with God... but readily their lives to some far lesser cause, or a sport, or some save the planet cause etc?
- How often, do we need a **reality** check and a **wakeup call**... to help us see the **true value** of **things**...?

...to see things as they **really are**, and to help us to have the courage to make decisions *now* that may seem **foolish** to some, but actually mean prioritising the **important** over the **trivial**...
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- Jesus tells a **parable** to Israel's religious leaders to give them just such a **wakeup call**...
- At the heart of the story is the invitation of a **life-time**
- An invitation to a **wedding banquet** – it was a **massive occasion** and an amazing **privilege** to be invited... (In Matthew's version in Ch 22, it is actually presented as the wedding of the **King's son**!)
- And to be **invited** to such a feast in the ancient world would have been an **enormous privilege** – the invitation in fact of a life time!
- The wedding feast would be **beyond description**
- wedding celebrations in the ancient world went for **days** and **days**... and the feast with which the celebrations starts is only the **beginning** of the fun and games...
- to **refuse** such an invitation? – to **refuse** would be outright **stupidity**... not only would you miss out on a **magnificent time** – more **food** than you could **imagine** – it would be like

turning down a **dinner party** hosted by some prominent and wealthy **Australian** – the **PM** or the governor-general? Or **William** and **Katherine**!??

- but in **Jesus' story**? – in Jesus' story, the invitation was **refused**... //
- v17 - *he sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.*
- The way it worked was... you would get an invitation in the mail... and then on the day, once everything is ready, people would have been summoned... 'ok – come – everything is ready'...
- But those invited...? well we thought 'subject to a better offer' was a **modern** thing among **millennials**... turns out it is **2,000** years old... and what did you note about the excuses... they're **lame** – completely **lame**!
- "I've bought a **field**... I've bought 5 yoke of **oxen**.... I just got **married**..."
- So what does the host do? – in mercy and extreme patience he sends **more** servants to urge people not **initially** invited, / to **come**!
- v21 - *'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'*
- They **did** that – but did you **notice** – there is **still** room... and they are told to go out **again** and **compel** people to come so that his house might be **full**
- This is one **generous, patience, gracious** host!
- And the **sting** in the **tale**? – v24 – what happens to those invited originally? *I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.*
- Now most of you will not need **me** to tell you, that the great **function** at the end of time, when Jesus returns, when **judgement** has **occurred**, when **evil** is **ended**; is the great **wedding feast** of the **Lamb** – the **Lamb** of course being Jesus **himself** – the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world; ... and Jesus refers to himself in **more** than one parable as the **bridegroom**...
- And what we see happening here is that **Israel** had been invited to the great **wedding** feast of all **time**... had been invited to spend **eternity** with **God**... that invitation was **long standing**... and now the bridegroom had turned **up** in the person of **Jesus**, and all was **ready**... at least for the proceedings to get under **way**....
- ...but as they **refused** the invitation... turning it down at the last minute, then the invitation would go out to **others** – others who **weren't** Israel... yes to the **Gentiles**... even to people like **you** and **me**...
- Here is a picture of God's generous **loving** gesture... to include even people like **me** at his **wedding party**...
- **Undeserving, unclean**, racked with **impurity** and **rebellion**... **not** of the people of God, not **originally** invited, yet **NOW** **invited**...
- What is this invitation?... This is an invitation to a **party**, an invitation to **life**, to **forgiveness**, to **heaven**, to **peace** with **God**... all possible because of the **lamb** who was **slain** – Jesus **sacrificed** for my **rebellion**...
- The invitation of a lifetime, to a **party** that will last **forever**... **AND** begins even **now**.... As we enjoy through the Holy Spirit, some of the benefits and blessings of heaven now as a **foretaste** or **deposit** of what is to **come**... //

- See God's incredible **mercy** in the invitation, his supreme **generosity**... and pray that more and more people will accept and receive and take up the invitation... even at the **last minute**...
- An invitation of a **lifetime**... most of us **here** this morning have taken it **up**. We have RSVP'd "YES!" ...
- We don't **deserve** it. We are **unworthy**. Yet it's **ours**. And even now, we are enjoying **something** of what it means.
- Take time this morning to rejoice in the **wonder** of the **invitation**. To **revel** in **God's love**.
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- Don't you be like those Israelites who put up such **lame excuses**...! Don't fall for the delusion that something **else** is more **important**...
- ...but revel in the **blessing** of the **invitation**...
- Revel in the **blessing** of all the **foretastes** of that heavenly banquet available to us **now**... among the **family** of **God**... (Even the Lord's Supper we share this morning... points us forward in **anticipation** of that **great end time feast**). //
- You've heard me say before that Advent is **not** a countdown to Christmas....
- Rather, Advent is a time of reminding ourselves of what is of **ultimate importance**... it's a time of switching the price tags back! - of remembering that Jesus will one day **return** and usher in his **glorious Kingdom**... as Peter was sharing you last Sunday...
- What did we read in Revelation 19?
- *Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready... Fine linen, bright and clean was given her to wear...*
- *Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!*
- We - God's church **together** - are the **bride**
- **Jesus** is the **bridegroom**... //
- Do you feel **blessed** to be invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb?
- He **will** come... we don't know when... and we do well to be **ready**... //
- Does your heart rise in anticipation of that great feast and joining the throngs praising the God who **reigns**...?
- Let us **rejoice** and give him the **glory**!!
- ...for we the **unworthy** have been invited to a marriage feast unlike **any** other... and have even been given the right clothes to wear - by **Jesus**... who took our **sin**... and gave us his **righteousness**!!
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- But I want to finish by reminding you that every **small** 'm' marriage... is a sign or symbol or pointer to that **big** 'M' marriage between the Lord Jesus as bridegroom and his people (us) the church as his bride.
- So in the introduction in the Anglican wedding service we read: *Marriage is the symbol of God's unending love for his people, and of the union between Christ and his Church. So the Apostle Paul*

teaches that the husband must love his wife as Christ loved the church, and that the wife must love the husband as the church loves Christ.

- **Every marriage** – is meant to remind people of the **true** nature of **marriage**... and of the marriage between Jesus and his people – the church.
- So the Husband – is to love his wife as Christ loved the church...
- **Where** do we see most clearly Christ's love for the church? – in his willingness to **die** for the church! Jesus lay down his life to meet us at our greatest point of need which was to be forgiven and reconciled to God
- **Husbands**... we are to love our lives like **that** – laying down our **lives** in their **service** – doing whatever it takes to put **her** needs **before** our **own** – even if that involves **costly sacrifice**...
- I think **husbands** // we have a **lot** to **learn**...
- I get really sad when I hear some husbands treat their wives as their **possession**... 'the **wife** this', 'the **wife that**'...
- 'the wife' has a **name**... she's a **person**... and her **name** should be **used**...
- And I'm sure you're not as **useless** as you try to make out **sometimes**... and could turn the tables so you served **her** before expecting she must always serve **you**...
- Do what ever it takes to put **her** needs before your **own**... **that's** how Jesus has **loved us**... **flood** her life with your **kindness and compassion and generosity and care**... **with love**... **and gentleness**... **and surprising acts of delight**...
- For **that** is how Jesus our bridegroom **loves** us – with a **deep, costly, sacrificial love**...!
- And when husbands love **this** way – the way they **should** – the way we're **charged** to love in God's **word** – then the **world** will see and **know** something of the love of Jesus our **bridegroom** for we his **people**.... //
- And the love of a wife for her husband?
- Analogous to the love a **Christian** has for the **Lord Jesus**
- Ie – just as **Jesus** laid himself down in **our** service, and so do **we** respond by laying down our life in **his** service, /// and so too wives love their **husbands** in **precisely** the same **way**...
- As the husband lays down his life in the service of his **wife**, so does the **wife** respond by laying down her life in the service of her **husband**...
- Doing what it **ever** it takes to put his needs **first** and **flood** his life which a love which is **deep, costly and sacrificial**...
- And when husbands love their **wives** by laying down their life in the **service** of their **wives**... and wives love their husbands by laying down **their** life in the service of their **husbands**...
- ...so does the **world** see the beauty of the **Jesus'** love for his **bride** and his **bride's** love for **him**....
- Friends... **Christ** is **coming**... that's our Advent theme this year...
- ...and **today** – we are reminded that when he **comes**, there will be a **marriage feast** like no **other**...
- As **bridegroom and bride**... now **betrothed**... will finally be **together** for **eternity**...
- Don't lose sight of this **hope**... of this **reality**...

- And don't forget all the **opportunities** we have now to experience in Christian **fellowship** a joyful anticipation of that **end-time feast**...
- And if you're **married** and here today... work out - reflecting in your **marriage**... **deep, costly, sacrificial and overwhelmingly generous love** which constantly seeks to put the **needs** of the other **first**...
- ... and so experience **AND** demonstrate to **us**... that big M marriage... between **Christ** and the **church**... ///
- Who switched the **price tags**?
- Don't **fall** for the **switch**
- Make sure **Jesus – relationship** with Jesus **now** – and all that he has promised for the **future** – in a marriage feast to match no **other** – is our **passion, our priority, our delight!**
- *Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready... Fine linen, bright and clean was given her to wear...*
- *Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb*