

28th Sun OT – Matthew 22:1-14

The Greek term used here for being “worthy” is *axios*, the word used when scales prove that two things are of equal weight. Understood in this way, the king was saying that the first guests were not equal to the invitation, as if participation in such a banquet was too much for them. But why?

To understand, we might look at Jesus’ own practice of celebrating meals. Nowhere in the Gospels does it say that Jesus refused to eat or associate with anyone—in fact, people often criticized him for letting just anybody join in his company and table. (My favorite is the passage of Zacheus who climbed the tree.)

The Invitees’ responses could hardly have been blunter or more insulting. Some simply walked away, snubbing the invitation. Others were bold enough to say, “I’d prefer to work my fields,” or “I have far more important business to attend to—there’s simply not time on my agenda for your celebration.” (Or I have a sports event that is more important, etc.)

Greeting the guests, the king came upon one who refused to put on the festive white robe of the others. (The White Gown that we dress our babies in for Baptism is a symbol of this white gown.) Was this person a spy, a mocker, or just someone who wanted to demonstrate disgust for the king’s style of operation? This one who refused to wear the white gown was unacceptable precisely because he was unaccepting. He effectively banished himself from the environment the king had created.

A great irony here is that it was the ***king’s presence*** that gave the celebration its unsurpassable importance. Those who shunned the party effectively made themselves unfit for the company of the king.