A Wedding Banquet

11.15.26

Eternity's Table

Introduction:

A. Today I end our series on the Lord's Table.

1. It isn't that I've run out of material; I've run out of time.

2. Truthfully, there are many great Scriptures I cannot cover in this series.

a. John 6, 1 Corinthians 10-11, Matthew 22, and so many more.

b. One reason I want to encourage you to come on Wednesday nights is that we get to have conversations over passages like this that help deepen and strengthen our understanding.

B. Today, I am also going to mention more Scripture than normal.

1. Our primary text is Matthew 8:5-13.

2. I'll also read Revelation 19, and mention places like Exodus 24 and Isaiah 25.

3. I'm also going to read more Scripture than normal.

4. Because, first of all, the Scripture is the only part of my sermon that is truly inspired.

5. Second, I need to show you enough Scripture so you don't take my word for it.

6. Third, the details are so wonderful I have to show them to you so you can go deeper at home.

7. Good news: for me, the more Scripture I use, the shorter the sermon. So don't panic.

Matthew 8:5–13 (CSB)

A CENTURION'S FAITH

5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, pleading with him, **6** "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible agony."

7 He said to him, “Am I to come and heal him?”

8 “Lord,” the centurion replied, “I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I too am a man under authority, having soldiers under my command. I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

10 Hearing this, Jesus was amazed and said to those following him, “Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with so great a faith. 11 I tell you that many will come from east and west to share the banquet (recline at table) with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 Then Jesus told the centurion, “Go. As you have believed, let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that very moment.

Revelation 19:1–10 (CSB)

CELEBRATION IN HEAVEN

19 After this I heard something like the loud voice of a vast multitude in heaven, saying,

Hallelujah!

Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God,

2 because his judgments are true and righteous,

because he has judged the notorious prostitute

who corrupted the earth with her sexual immorality;

and he has avenged the blood of his servants

that was on her hands.

3 A second time they said,

Hallelujah!

Her smoke ascends forever and ever!

4 Then the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who is seated on the throne, saying,

Amen! Hallelujah!

5 A voice came from the throne, saying,

Praise our God,

all his servants, and the ones who fear him,

both small and great!

6 Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying,

Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty,

reigns!

7 Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory,

because the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his bride has prepared herself.

8 She was given fine linen to wear, bright and pure.

For the fine linen represents the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: Blessed are those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb!" He also said to me, "These words of God are true." **10** Then I fell at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers and sisters who hold firmly to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God, because the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Why is Jesus talking to the Enemy?

A. A centurion was an important soldier.

1. A centurion was in charge of 100 soldiers.

2. Most centurions worked their way up through the ranks, and it could take as many as 20 years to earn this role.

3. They weren't fully officers, but they were more than grunts.

a. A centurion had the responsibilities of an American captain with the rank of a sergeant.

b. They were career men without political connections and could be seen leading troops into battle at 60 or 70 years old.[i]

B. Centurions were the enemy.

1. Tax-collectors were traitors, Jewish people working for the enemy.

2. Centurions were the enemy, responsible for inflicting the will of Rome upon the people.

3. If it was scandalous that Jesus would invite a traitor like Levi to be a disciple, it was evil to have a conversation with the enemy.

4. And now, he is asking Jesus to do what only Jesus can do: heal his servant.

C. **Normal people don't heal the enemy.**

1. But Jesus does.

2. The same Jesus that invites tax-collectors to follow Him also responds to the faith of Roman soldiers.

a. I'm sure Simon the Zealot had strong opinions about this.

b. I'm sure Peter and John and Judas didn't like it.

c. But as disciples, their job was to observe and learn.

d. Jesus didn't need their unsanctified opinions.

e. Because what Jesus saw AMAZED Him.

3. If the Jesus you worship isn't willing to enter the enemy's house, call the traitor to follow, or, as the first part of Matthew 8 shows, touch the leper, then you are worshipping the wrong Jesus.

What does Jesus do?

Faith and Authority

A. Jesus' offer to heal the servant is met by a shocking statement.

1. The Centurion says I am not worthy for you to come to my house.

2. He's a door-kicker.

a. He's a man of action and violence.

b. He is also a man of honor and authority.

3. Honor and authority are companions of faith.

4. When we have faith in people, processes, or things, we honor them and submit to their authority.

5. Where there is no honor, there is no faith.

B. This Roman had something that AMAZED Jesus.

1. Scripture only mentions two times that Jesus was amazed by something.

2. One is found in Mark 6:6, where Jesus is amazed by the unbelief in Nazareth.

3. The other time is the faith of the Centurion.

C. I still can't grasp Jesus' response.

1. It wasn't likely that Jesus could have stopped a centurion from talking to him.

2. But he didn't have to offer to come to his house.

3. He didn't have to entertain the possibility of healing his servant.

4. He didn't need to present Him as a positive example..

5. But He does!

D. What is faith?

1. Faith is our response to Jesus' authority.

Matthew 7:28–29 (CSB) **28** When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **29** because he was teaching them like one who had authority, and not like their scribes.

2. The Centurion recognizes who Jesus is and acknowledges his power and ability, saying, "I'm not worthy for you to come to my house.

Notice what Jesus does in response!

Jesus invites the Enemy to a wedding

A. Jesus makes a declaration:

Matthew 8:11–12 (CSB)

11 I tell you that many will come from east and west to share the banquet with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. **12** But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

1. Before Jesus heals the servant, he says people like this Centurion will have a place at a banquet.

2. This is obviously some kind of special banquet because Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets are there. (Luke 13)

a. And at this special banquet, with the most important men of faith, are people like this Roman.

b. People from east and west, from all over the world, not just Israel.

c. People the Pharisees and the elite never saw coming.

3. Jesus declares that people like this man will be at the banquet.

B. What kind of banquet?

1. I have a theory:

a. You can tell how fancy a banquet is by whether the tea they serve is sweet or unsweet.

b. When the tea is so bitter/unsweet it might as well be warmed up and called coffee, that's a fancy banquet.

2. What kind of banquet is Jesus inviting this Roman to?

a. There are several passages that help us answer this question. (Matt 22, Isaiah 25:6-10a.

b. Here is where the passage from Revelation 19 comes in.

2. It's a banquet John called the "Marriage Supper or Feast of the Lamb."

It's not a wedding without a party.

A. I am not a wedding guy.

1. So, I love short wedding ceremonies.

2. I also like cheap weddings.

a. I am obviously in the minority here, because the average wedding in the US in 2026 was: $34,200.[1]

b. They say they interviewed 10,474 couples. I would like to meet them.

[1] https://www.theknot.com/content/average-wedding-cost

B. Around the world, weddings are large, long affairs.

1. Talk to Pastor Drew and Pastor Zach or Bro. Chukes about their experiences in other cultures.

2. Weddings are large, long, joyous occasions, celebrated by the community for days at a time.

3. They aren't inconveniences, like they are in our culture; they are celebrations.

C. This is the view Jesus has.

1. Marriage is God's idea.

2. All throughout Scripture, marriage is used by God to describe His relationship to His people.

a. And remember the passage in Exodus 24 where God came down upon the mountain?

b. The one where Moses, the priests, and elders went up the mountain and they ate and drank with God, and saw Him.

3. I left out a detail in that sermon:

a. Not only does that foreshadow our relationship with God at the Lord's Supper, but…

b. That banquet is considered a marriage ceremony.

c. It was when God and Israel entered into this Covenant together.

d. Later on, when Israel is so unfaithful, God points Israel back to their wedding at Sinai.

D. When we think of our relationship with God through marriage imagery:

1. Jesus' first sign and miracle in John 2 at a wedding makes more sense.

2. Paul's teaching in Ephesians 5, and the divine mystery, makes more sense.

3. God's statements against divorce and the sinfulness of Israel make more sense.

4. Our relationship with God also takes on a different perspective.

E. A couple of weeks ago, Kaitylnn made the comment on Facebook:

1. While the world is preparing for war, Heaven is preparing for a wedding.

2. This is what the Church has always known, but has recently forgotten.

3. The world, as we know it, may end in conflict.

4. But while the world burns, the Church celebrates at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

Good News/Bad News: All are invited; not all get in.

A. Jesus' response to the centurion is telling.

1. Jesus tells us that some who we wouldn't expect will be there.

a. They didn't have the right upbringing.

b. Their skin is a different color.

c. Their language strange.

d. They were more educated, less educated, richer, or poorer than you thought.

e. But ALL of those who are at Eternity's Table have one thing in common: Faith in Jesus.

2. Some we expect to be there won't.

a. I'm not sure how aware of this fact we will be.

b. But looking at it through the lens of Matthew 8, Jesus makes it clear that some who should have been, won't.

1. Some who appeared to have it all together.

2. Some who were raised right, went to the right school, said the right thing.

3. There will be grandparents and siblings missing.

4. There will be pastors, preachers, worship leaders, and deacons who won't have a seat.

c. They all have this thing in common: They did not believe in Jesus.

B. Not all family is family.

1. Jesus said that some sons of the kingdom won't be there.. Matt 8:12

2. Just because you are blood doesn't mean you're family.

The biblical assumption: The Jewish people automatically go to heaven, and this isn't true.

The reality: God invites many more into the Kingdom, and all who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.

C. The American assumption is that good people go to heaven, but this isn't true.

1. No matter your assumption on what is good, I promise you it is never good enough.

2. Only Jesus was truly good.

3. And He is the only reason any of us can go to the wedding banquet.

4. The Kingdom banquet is invite-only, and Jesus is inviting.

While the Church, the Bride, is at the wedding table, another table is set.

A. Right after the promise of a marriage supper in verse 10, listen to verse 11-21:

Revelation 19:11–21 (CSB)

11 Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and
True, and with justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes were like a fiery flame, and
many crowns were on his head. He had a name written that no one knows except himself.
13 He wore a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called the Word of God. 14 The armies
that were in heaven followed him on white horses, wearing pure white linen. 15 A sharp
sword came from his mouth, so that he might strike the nations with it. He will rule them
with an iron rod. He will also trample the winepress of the fierce anger of God, the
Almighty. 16 And he has a name written on his robe and on his thigh: KING OF KINGS AND
LORD OF LORDS.

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he called out in a loud voice, saying to all
the birds flying high overhead, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18 so
that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of military commanders, the flesh of the
mighty, the flesh of horses and of their riders, and the flesh of everyone, both free and
slave, small and great."

19 Then I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to
wage war against the rider on the horse and against his army. 20 But the beast was taken
prisoner, and along with it the false prophet, who had performed the signs in its presence.
He deceived those who accepted the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its

image with these signs. Both of them were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. 21 The rest were killed with the sword that came from the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds ate their fill of their flesh.

1. I had never noticed these opposing images.

2. A supper of celebration, and a supper of judgment.

3. The first is joyous, where all of Heaven and God's people join.

4. The second is on the voice of an angel, inviting the carrion birds to eat their fill because judgment has come.

B. Did Jesus really believe in this type of judgment?

1. Notice the words he said to the Centurion and those surrounding them in Matt 8:12:

Matthew 8:12 (CSB)

12 But the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

2. This phrase points to not only eternal death and separation but also eternal death.

a. Weeping and gnashing of teeth speak to overwhelming pain AND overwhelming anger.

b. Why anger?

c. Because they THOUGHT they deserved to be at the banquet, and weren't.

C. Jesus, at the end of his earthly life, ties all of this in one powerful parable.

Matthew 22:1–14 (CSB)

THE PARABLE OF THE WEDDING BANQUET

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. 3 He sent his servants to summon those invited to the banquet, but they didn't want to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants and said, 'Tell those who are invited: See, I've prepared my dinner; my oxen and fattened cattle have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

5 "But they paid no attention and went away, one to his own farm, another to his business, 6 while the rest seized his servants, mistreated them, and killed them. 7 The king was enraged, and he sent out his troops, killed those murderers, and burned down their city.

8 “Then he told his servants, ‘The banquet is ready, but those who were invited were not
worthy. 9 Go then to where the roads exit the city and invite everyone you find to the banquet.’
10 So those servants went out on the roads and gathered everyone they found, both evil and good.
The wedding banquet was filled with guests. 11 When the king came in to see the guests, he saw a
man there who was not dressed for a wedding. 12 So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in
here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless.
13 “Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him up hand and foot, and throw him into the outer
darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’
14 “For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

How do I get in?

A. There are no accidents.

1. No one accidentally goes to heaven.

2. You go there on purpose, by faith, through Jesus.

3. What I mean is that no one arrives at the banquet by accident through living a good life, giving money, or any type of work.

4. We only go to the banquet by accepting the invitation.

B. Everyone is invited.

1. We see this in the calling of Levi, the story of the Centurion, and in Jesus’ parable in verse 14.

2. For many are invited (called), but few are chosen.

3. There is a space for all of us at the Table, but you have to want to attend.

4. All who call upon the Name of Jesus will be saved, but you have to call.

5. Jesus is gracious and just to forgive us of our sins, but we have to confess our sin.

C. No matter who you are, where you come from, or where you have been told you are going, I have good news.

1. Faith in Jesus reserves you a spot at His table.

2. Faith in Jesus causes us to recognize His authority and profess it.

3. Faith in Jesus causes us to live our lives with the proverbial wedding clothes on, ready for a wedding.

4. Faith in Jesus changes everything.

Every time we receive the Lord's Supper, we proclaim our faith in a future wedding.

A. Many years ago, women would put together a hope chest.

1. Dishes, towels, and other essentials for a day that was yet to come.

2. Years ago, Julie's dad made a box when he was a junior in high school.

a. When Julie was nine, that box became her toy box.

b. But when she turned 12, the chest shifted from a toy box to a hope chest.

c. It started with some dishes from DG, home sweet home (they became our first dishes).

d. A great-grandmother's vinegar jar. Another great-grandmother's dishes. From there, some towels, family quilts, and other items.

e. All in hope and preparation for a future day with a future husband and a future home.

B. When we gather together and receive the Lord's Supper, we proclaim Jesus' death AND His return.

1. And someday, all who believe will gather at a grand banquet, and recline at Table, surrounded by brothers and sisters.

2. And that party isn't solemn. It's raucous.

3. Rev 19: 6-7.

> **6** Then I heard something like the voice of a vast multitude, like the sound of cascading waters, and like the rumbling of loud thunder, saying,
>
> Hallelujah, because our Lord God, the Almighty,
>
> reigns!
>
> **7** Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory,
>
> because the marriage of the Lamb has come,

and his bride has prepared herself.

C. At the close today, I want us to do what this text says we will be doing:

Let us be glad, rejoice, and give him glory.

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[i] Unlike officers of higher rank, such as the legates and tribunes, who served for only three or more years, centurions often worked for more than thirty years in the military. Their importance precluded p 266 their being selected from young recruits; candidates were usually in their thirties. Thus some centurions were still leading men into battle when they were sixty or seventy years old. William A. Simmons, *Peoples of the New Testament World: An Illustrated Guide* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2008), 264–66.