

Call to Obedience #316
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Man Are Called Few Are Chosen

The Man without the Wedding Garment

By Reimar Schultze

“When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there was a man which had not a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.”—Matthew 22:11-14

Who will be chosen to partake of the Great Marriage Feast of the Lamb? Surely all people, Christian or not, should want to know. No event in the past or future will eclipse this celebration. To be chosen to join it by our heavenly Father is the highest honor that can be conferred on any mortal. Not being chosen for this feast will bring us the greatest misery conceivable.

“A king made a marriage feast for his son and invited those who were bidden,” so begins our parable (Matt. 22:1). The king represents God the Father; the son represents the Lord Jesus. The Father prepared the wedding feast for the Son. Of course this begs the question: Who then is the bride? The Bride-elect, the Bible infers here, are the Jews, the Covenant people of God. They were the first to be invited through servants whom God sent. But the parable continues to say that some of the ‘elect’ made light of the invitation, others ignored it, and the rest of them killed the servants, so the king destroyed their city. This refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD under the Roman general Titus Flavius Vespasian, soon to be the new emperor. C. H. Spurgeon comments on this text. “The destruction of Jerusalem was more terrible than anything the world has ever witnessed either before or since” (Commentary on Matthew page 412).

The parable continues: then the king sent other servants to invite anyone who wanted to come to the wedding. These are the new called ones, the new elect, and *“the wedding was furnished with guests (Vs. 10)*. Many were called or invited, but one man arrived without his “wedding garment,” and was thrown out of the celebration. This man is a type of the many who are called, but are not chosen. The man’s destiny hinged on one single item: the wearing of a “wedding garment.”

What is the “wedding garment” and where does it come from? Where did the other guests get theirs? Ancient tradition held that the King provided garments for his guests so they would always appear before him properly attired. In Genesis 45:22, Pharaoh had Joseph provide clothing for his brothers so that they could later enter Pharaoh’s

presence. In the same way, the host of a wedding furnished the invited guests with “wedding garments.” To come to the celebration incorrectly dressed was a terrible insult to the host and invoked the wrath of the king.

The wedding garment represents the righteousness of Christ. It is a garment of faith, love, holiness and separation from the world. It is the garment of identification. The wedding garment cannot be purchased. We cannot purchase our salvation by good deeds or works. Only heaven can outfit us to become the Bride of Christ to stand before the Throne. You have to understand that all the invited ones are the “called ones” who had received a wedding garment from the king. God never called anyone to the marriage of His Son without supplying him or her with the garment. It must be worn from the moment of our espousal to Jesus until the great Marriage Feast. What is “espousal?” We need to think Jewish here. Under Mosaic law, Espousal was as binding as marriage and lasted about ten months or a year until the wedding ceremony took place. There was no more flirting, no other lovers. If an espoused woman was caught with another man, she was put to death by stoning (Deut. 27:23, 24).

When you are born-again, you are given a new garment that identifies you with Jesus and separates you from the rest of the world. You enter into a first-love, bridal relationship with Jesus. You are to cast off the garments of the old man with all of its sins, worldly habits, lusts and carnal tendencies. *“Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof”* (Rom. 13:14).

Adam and Eve wore garments of light. God created them in His image, and God is light (1 John 1:5). They had continual fellowship with God until they disobeyed, when they lost their garments of light and saw they were naked. But Jesus came to restore us to being children of light. Put on the Lord Jesus! Romans 13:12 says, *“Put on the armor of light.”* This is the same as putting on the wedding garment Jesus gave you. As long as you wear it, you are in a bridal (espousal) relationship. If you put it off, your relationship with Jesus is broken.

The parable of the ten virgins also stresses this point! In Matthew 25 we see that as soon as we are converted we receive light. Light is synonymous with the wedding garment. The light the virgins received here at the beginning of their journey was divine light. But they were expected to keep their lights burning just as the wedding guest was expected to keep his wedding garment on. They didn’t know when they would go in to the feast, but they needed to be ready all the time.

The parable of the sower says of the seed, *“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience”* (Luke 8:15). Only the seed that is kept brings forth fruit. It is one thing to receive something, it is quite another thing **TO KEEP IT**. Don’t be fooled into thinking that because you received Christ’s wedding garment at your new birth it will get you to heaven. Don’t ever think that you can fold it up and put it in a drawer and still be saved. If you don’t keep what the Lord Jesus has given you and allow it to grow, you will be in serious trouble someday. You will hear the same words that the man without the garment heard, *“Bind his hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”* (Vs. 13). Think about it.

Do you know why many Christians lose their wedding garments? It is because they don't fear God. Do you know why many have spots and wrinkles and blemishes on their garments? They don't fear God. Solomon said, "*By the fear of the lord, men depart from evil*" (Pro. 16:16). You have to have the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is a PUSHER; it pushes us away from dangerous hidden icebergs of life so we can make it safely to the harbor of rest. The fear of the Lord is a mighty motivating force. As a testimony, the fear of the Lord has kept me from yielding to thousands of temptations.

The man without the wedding garment was bound hand and foot, he was absolutely helpless. When a man is so bound, he never has a personal choice about anything again: not where he will sit, nor where he will go, nor what he wants to do, nor with whom he wants to be. His request for release from the fire of Judgment for just a second or for just one drop of water will go unanswered. He had his choices, his way, all his life. But the time of him having his own way is over forever. Why? Because he did not wear a wedding garment. "*Take him away and cast him into outer darkness.*" How far is 'away'? He will be cast into outer darkness. Not just into darkness but into outer darkness and that is darkness beyond darkness where he will be weeping and gnashing his teeth forever!

Oh my friend, I am not making this up. These are Jesus' words to all of us. How many garments are lost by time wasted in worldly pleasure, and money spent to satisfy the flesh while the fields are white for harvest? What did the man say when he was questioned? He was speechless, his excuses evaporated.

"*Many are called.*" Was this man who came without his garment called? Friend, had he not been called he would not have been there at all. All those present were called. His problem was not a lack of being called. He couldn't say he hadn't received a wedding garment. His problem was that he did not wear it: the garment of faith, love, holiness, separation for God and identity with Jesus. Friend, if you are born-again, then you are called and Jesus has given you a wedding garment. Wear that garment. Is it on your shoulders now or in a drawer some place?

Only those who wear it and keep it spotless by the blood of the Lamb and who have overcome by the word of their testimony are chosen to eat at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

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