

AGAPE HOUSE OF WORSHIP
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study Series: Speaking in Parables Wednesday, April 12th, 2023 Lesson 10: The Parable of the Great Banquet
Facilitator: Gladys Osofisan
Text: Matthew 22:2-14

Introduction: In these verses, Jesus uses the imagery of a wedding feast to illustrate the kingdom of heaven and the importance of accepting God's invitation to salvation. As we analyze this passage together, we will explore the themes of God's call, repentance, righteousness, and awareness of His presence.. I hope that this study will give us a better understanding of God's love and grace and inspire us to live godly lives.

Key takeaways

1. Verses 2-7: The first invitation went out to those who were 'invited'. And despite being the invited ones, they still rejected the invitation.
2. Verses 8-10: The second invitation was to anyone and everyone. This demonstrates that the gospel is a universal message open to all people, not just Jews.
3. Verses 11-14: It emphasizes the importance and significance of how we approach the Father God's presence. The man who was not dressed in a wedding gown represents those who come to God's presence rashly or 'irreverently'.

How This Relates to the Christian Today

1. God's invitation to salvation is extended to everyone, regardless of their background or social standing, just as the king's servants were dispatched to invite anyone they could find. It is our responsibility as Christians to spread the gospel of salvation to everyone they come in contact with, not just those who seem to be receptive.
2. True repentance is necessary for salvation. Christians today must remember that true repentance is necessary for salvation. We must turn away from our old ways and embrace a new life in Christ.
3. We must be clothed in Christ's righteousness: The wedding garment represents the righteousness of Christ that we must be clothed in to enter God's kingdom. We must remember that our own efforts to be good or do good works are not enough to earn us a place in God's kingdom.

Ultimately, none of these 3 things we've mentioned above make sense without a relationship with the Lord. And, in order for relationships to thrive, they must be maintained. This is where I want to have a conversation about the presence of God.

Discussion

What is the presence of God?

“The most holy and necessary practice in our spiritual life is the presence of God. That means finding constant pleasure in His divine company, speaking humbly and lovingly with Him in all seasons, at every moment, without limiting the conversation in any way. This is especially important in times of temptation, sorrow, separation from God, and even in times of unfaithfulness and sin.” - AW Towzer (The Practice of the Presence of God)

His presence in our lives is certain and constant. The Bible says that God dwells in us, meaning He is present everywhere. Even in the seasons of life when it feels like God is silent. This calls for a constant awareness of His presence.

Psalm 16:8 GNT: I am always aware of the LORD's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.

Psalm 16:11: You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

His Omnipresence vs His Manifest Presence

1. God's omnipresence is His simultaneous presence in all places. He is always there, even when we cannot feel or see Him.
2. God's presence made manifest is His presence in a clear and convincing way.
3. God's manifest presence cannot exist in the absence of our awareness, but His omnipresence can.

Examples of instances of His manifest presence

Exodus 3:1

John 1:14

Acts 2:2–4

What does the presence of God do for you?

Psalm 71

The one person who knew the importance of the presence of God was David. David expresses his distress to his loving, merciful, and just God here. He prays because he knows that God is with him and is in his corner. David had a lot of problems, and he couldn't feel God's presence, but he still believed that he would experience it again and again.

Final Thoughts

A realization I've had is that God persistently beckons us to enter into His presence. He extends continuous invitations, and if we accept them, we reap the rewards. God is the initiator of this relationship, and all its advantages can be found in His presence. Therefore, to fully experience these benefits, we must abide in His presence.

In the text, the initial invitation was extended to the "chosen ones." Tonight, I urge you to ponder deeply and introspectively and ask yourself: When have I acted similarly to those first invitees? How have I behaved like them? Once you have identified these behaviors, take steps to avoid repeating them. Our goal should be to live a life that listens attentively to God and responds promptly. As Psalm 62:11 states, "Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: that power belongs to God."

I pray for a renewed awareness of God's presence for you, this is what will sustain you in leading a truly thriving life.