

WHERE HE IS

THE LESSON: MATTHEW 21-22

Picture this: Jesus, on the night of his arrest, was together with his disciples to eat the Passover. He knew what was about to happen and he knew how sad and confused they would be when it did. There was a lot that still needed to be said, and very little time in which to say it. The Gospel of John takes five chapters to tell us about Jesus' "farewell discourse", which includes these well known words:

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also" (John 14:1-3).

The deepest longing of the believing heart is to be with the Lord. We cling to the promise that one day, when all the troubles of this world have passed, we will get to be *with him*.

The invitation to be with the Lord goes out to all. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Revelation 3:20). Many of his parables (like the one we'll look at today) remind us of God's generous love, leading us to answer the question of how we will respond to his divine invitation.

AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Have you responded to the divine invitation? If you haven't, it's not too late to pray to God, repenting of your sins, and accepting the sacrifice of Jesus on your behalf. If you have, ask God to create in you a deeper longing to spend time with him now, and rejoice in remembering that one day you will go to be with him always. Close your time with the following prayer:

Give rest, O Christ, at the last to us thy servants with thy Saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting; where thou, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

(ADAPTED FROM THE PRAYER FROM THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD, P. 600)

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MATTHEW 21-22: **WILL YOU COME TO THE FEAST?**

21 ³¹Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterwards change your minds and believe him...

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they perceived that he was speaking about them.

⁴⁶And although they were seeking to arrest him, they feared the crowds, because they held him to be a prophet.

22 ¹And again Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying, ²“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, ³and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other servants, saying, ‘Tell those who are invited, See, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.’ ⁵But they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. ⁷The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. ⁸Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. ⁹Go therefore to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.’ ¹⁰And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good. So the wedding hall was filled with guests.