



# Praying the Scripture - a few simple steps at home

## Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020

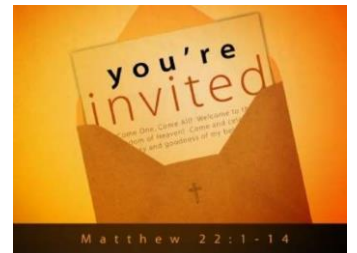
1. Start with stillness and quietening down; then gently read the passage, noticing any feelings and connections to your own experience.
2. Read the passage again and spend understand. *The notes in your Bible may be of help at this point.*
3. Read the passage a third time - wondering how you yourself might pray the text over the next few days.
4. Over the next week, set aside times to come back more than once to the passage. You could read it all or part of it again, slowly. Perhaps there is a special word for you in this passage of Scripture? Keep this word or phrase in your thoughts and gently repeat it, bringing it to mind and allowing God to speak to you in your heart.
5. Finally, come back to the text to conclude: What is God in this scripture asking of you this week? What is the one challenge, one little change you are asked to make or the thing you have been asked to do? Then say a prayer of thanksgiving for the good news in the passage. End in quiet prayer.



### THIS SUNDAY'S GOSPEL – Matthew 22:1-14

#### ***The king who gave a wedding banquet for his son***

*'Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet." Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.*



*'But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, "Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'*

### A Short Thought

Today's contains two related parables. In these the Kingdom of Heaven is presented as the wedding banquet of a certain king's son -obviously God's. Can you imagine being invited to a historic wedding, a royal wedding and not attending, and even making a joke of it? Even those of us not bowled over by royal pomp and splendour would watch the reruns on television, to catch a glimpse of The Dress, or simply because we were charmed by the sweet affection evident between the bride and groom. In the parables of Jesus, wedding feasts are mentioned from time to time. The original parable may have ended with the words "invite everyone you can find to the wedding." The detail of the troops—highly unlikely as an actual part of a wedding invitation(!)—realistically portrays the later destruction of Jerusalem, which Christians did indeed look back upon as punishment precisely for that rejection. The final verse is difficult for us today on a spiritual level. However, it is meant to provoke (re)conversion in a possibly (!) complacent church.

So, what do these two related parables mean for us? Well, they're both concerned with God inviting us to the marriage banquet of His kingdom. In the first parable there are those who refuse to come, because they think they've got more important things to do. That can be very true of us if our preoccupations lead us not to heed Christ's call to follow Him. This is developed in the parable about the white garment. We will only be welcomed into God's kingdom if we welcome Christ's gift of salvation. We must shed the soiled garments of sin and be clothed with Christ. In other words, we must acknowledge our failing, be sorry for them and allow ourselves to be wrapped in the gift of God's love and mercy. God invites and wants to welcome all of us into His kingdom. But do we really want that, and are we prepared to do what He requires of us?

Do you, do I, chose to say, 'Yes' to God and eagerly welcome His invitation to His Son's heavenly banquet? Or do we find what we think are more important things to do? Are we sorry for our sins and wear Christ's garment of salvation? God wants us welcome us; do we really want to be with Him?!

