

Matthew 22

Decisions that determine our destiny.

- Again Jesus confronts Israel's leaders, not by asking them for a decision but rather by holding a mirror in front of them and allowing them to see the decisions they have already made.
- The challenge for us is the same as for them. What decisions have we already made.

1. **Are you responding to God's invitation properly? (Parable of the wedding feast). (22:1-13)**

"¹ And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, ² "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son. ³ And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. ⁴ Again he sent out other slaves saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast.' ⁵ But they paid no attention and went **their way**, one to **his own** farm, another to **his** business, ⁶ and the rest seized his slaves and mistreated them and killed them. ⁷ But the king was enraged and sent his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and set their city on fire. ⁸ Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. ⁹ Go therefore to the main highways, and as many as you find there, invite to the wedding feast.' ¹⁰ And those slaves went out into the streets, and gathered together all they found, both evil and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests. ¹¹ But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, ¹² and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴ For many are called, but few are chosen."

- The point of this parable is quite clear. God is inviting Israel to His Kingdom but they are preoccupied with "more important" things. As a result the invitation is extended to those who were seen as less qualified .
- Key expressions in this story are "their own way" and "his" in verse five. This stands in contrast to "the wedding feast for his son." Their plans were more important than the King's plans.
- But even among those who respond to the invitation there are some who are not properly prepared and those do not belong. They are excluded with those who did not respond at all.

- The simple fact is that many will not respond to the Kingdom. This is as true today as in Jesus' day. Do our plans crowd out God's plans.
- Do we think we are serving God just because we invite him to be a consultant to our plans?

2. Are you rendering to God appropriately? (Rendering to Caesar). (22:15-22)

15 Then the Pharisees went and counseled together how they might trap Him in what He said. 16 And they sent their disciples to Him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and defer to no one; for You are not partial to any. 17 Tell us therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to give a poll-tax to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus perceived their malice, and said, "Why are you testing Me, you hypocrites? 19 Show Me the coin used for the poll-tax." And they brought Him a denarius. 20 And He said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said to Him, "Caesar's." Then He said to them, "Then render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." 22 And hearing this, they marveled, and leaving Him, they went away.

- Jesus is angry with Israel's leaders lack of concern for rendering to God while being preoccupied with Caesar .
- We too can look at the pages of Scripture for guidance in managing life's "trivial" affairs while missing the bigger call to connect responsibly with God.
- Where is God's image? Is it not written on our souls. Are we not made in His image? Does He have a right to us?

3. Are you focused on this life sufficiently? (22:23-33)

23 On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Him and questioned Him, 24 saying, "Teacher, Moses said, '*If a man dies, having no children, his brother as next of kin shall marry his wife, and raise up an offspring to his brother.*' 25 Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother; 26 so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh. 27 And last of all, the woman died. 28 In the resurrection therefore whose wife of the seven shall she be? For they all had her." 29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures, or the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. 31 But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?* **He is not the God of the dead but of the living.**" 33 And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching.

- Those asking the question do not even believe there is a resurrection and want to show Jesus how foolish any belief in a resurrection looks under the logical scrutiny of any person. Again, Jesus points out that when Israel's leaders do give attention to the issues of heaven, it is on trivial issues. While trying to answer trivial questions, they ignore the importance of their responses in this present life.
- It is the land of the living that needs the attention of Israel's leaders at this time as they are missing the call. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive because of the resurrection.
- There is an eternity that those in this life will face. What they do while alive here will not die with them.
- Too many Christian commentaries look at this passage and do the same thing the leaders of Israel did. They become preoccupied with marriage, angels and heaven while missing the real point.

4. Are you loving God fully? (22:34-40)

34 But when the Pharisees heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they gathered themselves together. 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.* 38 This is the great and foremost commandment. 39 The second is like it, *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* 40 On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

- In this passage and encounter Jesus makes the point of the Law very clear. We are to start with an appreciation for the underlying principles of the Law which are love for God and man.
- Our love for God should be from our whole being and our love for man should be as important as our preoccupation with our own affairs and welfare.
- The challenge for us, as for the leaders of Israel, is to be careful not to major on that which is minor while marginalizing that which is most important.

5. Are you respecting Messiah adequately? (22:41-46)

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ, whose son is He?" They said to Him, "The son of David." 43 He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, 44 *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet?* 45 If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" 46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question."

- When I look at this text in the context of what has gone before in this chapter, I conclude that Jesus is forcing the leaders to "connect the dots" and see that Messiah is greater than David. Indeed, he is one with God.

Matthew 22

Decisions that determine our destiny

Distracted by our own agenda
(1-14)

Seeking first His Kingdom

Preoccupied with the state
(15-22)

Rendering to God

Hypothetical theology
(23-33)

Practical theology

Tactical details
(34-40)

Strategic priorities

Jesus as chaplain
(41-46)

Jesus as Lord