

7097

SILVER STAR BIBLE SCHOOL 1994

I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES

Speaker: Bro. Dev Ramcharan

Study # 4

A Certain King Made a Marriage Feast for His Son

Reading: Matthew 21:43-22:14

Good Morning Brethren and Sisters, how are you all feeling today? The Lord Jesus Christ was now very close to the time when He would accomplish His death, as it was once described. If we go to John chapter 11, we begin to see the historical circumstances, surrounding the particular parable that we are going to look at today.

John chapter 11 beginning at verse 55, 'And the Jews' Passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that He will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priest and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he was, he should shew it, that they might take him. Then Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.' Then, drop down to verse 9, 'Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death'; Verse 12, 'On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.' Now, why did they say these things? Why do they believe this? Look at verse 11, 'Because that by reason of Lazarus many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus'.

Now the Lord Jesus Christ had done many things, many miracles, had taught them principles that had taken their world and turned their world upside down, so that everything that they were used to, they were now made to understand, was really wrong in connection with what God really required of them. But, one of the particularly powerful witnesses to the validity of this man's claims to the people, in this country at this time, was the raising of Lazarus. That one act seems to have affected more people in their belief in the nation of Israel, than any other of His activities. And so they come and they are identifying Him as the Messiah. They believe that this is their Messiah, now they don't really understand what the Messiah is really going to be, and what His

kingdom is really going to be. They're thinking along the same lines as what his disciples were assuming this kingdom would be all about, something that would be worldly, materialistic and really of the flesh. Flesh, independent and standing on its own, without any Gentile domination. That's what they were thinking of, 'Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord'. Now there are the people who are held under the sway of the Pharisees and Scribes, the Sadducees, the priest, the chief priests, the high priest, the Herodians; they're all under the power of these leaders. And here are the people coming along with this unschooled, poverty-stricken, carpenter from Nazareth, and He's on a donkey and they're laying their clothes, palm branches in the way, and they're bringing Him into Jerusalem, claiming that He is their Messiah.

Try and put yourself in the place of the Pharisees and Sadducees and priests, and think of what they stood to lose, if they were right and if this man was actually their Messiah. Think of what you stand to lose. Remember how the disciples felt when the rich young ruler showed up on the scene with every qualification that they wished they had, that they wanted to have, in order to fill the role of 'greatest in the kingdom' next to the Lord Jesus Christ. Remember the panic, the feeling that they'd lose everything because of this young man. That's the kind of panic that was in the minds of the Pharisees, the Scribes, the Sadducees and all the rulers at this time. And when this poor man, this gentile man, the Son of God, is led into the city on a donkey, there's mass panic among the leaders. Verse 17, 'The people therefore that were with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare witness'. They bare witness to all that were there with him. Who is this man? What had He done, and the ones that have seen what He has done, bare witness, so that the Word of His healing, what He'd done, and no doubt, the claims that He made, were spreading like wild fire through the people. 'For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone out after him'. Everything that they had in their control, they were losing; the whole world, all of the people, the multitudes of Israel, were going after this man. And what do they do? Well, they've got to deal with Him, they've got to engage Him in argument in front of the people. Where do they do it? He comes into Jerusalem; He makes His triumphal entry; He knows what's in the heart of man, and as Bro. John pointed out, six days later, these same people would say not, Blessed is the King of Israel, but, Caesar is our King. We have no king but Caesar, so when we go, brethren and sisters, to John chapter 12, we read the following, verse 19, no, we just read that, they'd done all kinds of things, they'd spread the tares of doubts and wrong teachings in the midst of the multitudes, and all of their efforts and all of the threats that they made against those who followed Him, prevailed absolutely nothing. So they were desperate men, they were desperate men in an ugly temper trying desperately to protect their particular position.

When we go to Matthew chapter 21, we find them finally engaging Him in hand to hand combat verbally in the temple. Matthew chapter 21 beginning at verse 23, 'When He was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?' You unschooled, untutored, country bumpkin, who gave you the

authority to come here and teach these people? No one gave you that right. Whose school did you attend? At whose feet were you raised? You're not a schooled man, you don't know anything about our traditions, in fact you're fighting against them. This is how we kept these people alive! It's putting a hedge around the law. That's how we kept these people alive, that's how we've kept them away from idolatry. Who do you think you are to come in here and do these things and say these things? They're desperate men trying to protect their interests, that's what they're doing. 'By what authority doest thou these things'? Who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'I will ask you also one thing, which if you tell Me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?' And you know the answer to that question, and you know what they said. They couldn't give Him an answer. 'We don't know', because they worked out in their extremely sharp, clever and well trained argumentative minds, they worked out that if they gave Him an answer one way or another, they He's have them. So they didn't give an answer. We don't know they said. And so, He said to them, 'then I shan't tell you whose given me this authority'.

Now, they hate Him, brethren and sisters, these are the people to whom God had sent His Son, and they hate Him. They want to kill Him, that's how much they hate Him. And so He tells them three parables while He's there with them. He tells them the parable of the 2 sons; the one that says that he would obey his father and doesn't, and the one who initially refused to obey and did. And then He compares those Pharisees there, who are disobedient, stiff-necked to the Publicans and sinners and harlots, those who accepted His principles, saying to them in verse 31, towards the end of the verse, 'Verily I say unto you, Pharisees, Scribes, chief priests, elders, 'that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you'.

And so there are more parables that He tells them. He tells them also the one about the wicked husbandman, and the stone that the builders rejected, all of these are firmly entrenched in what He is dealing with in the people that He's talking to. The parables are not separate from what was going on when they were given. They are connected to exactly what is talking place at the time. And finally, brethren and sisters, He tells them the parable of the marriage feast for the king's son.

And so, at the beginning of chapter 22, Jesus talking to this utterly stiff-necked, contemptuous, hostile crowd, answered and spake unto them again by parables and said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage (feast) for his son'. Who is a certain king? Well, the king obviously, brethren and sisters, is God. There's a marriage feast that He's making for His Son. It says, 'He sent forth His servants to call them that were bidden to the marriage feast, and they would not come'. So the implication is the king is inviting individuals who are under his authority, and so if they don't obey him, then, they run the risk of being disciplined by the king that they are disobedient to. 'He called them', 'he called them that were bidden', that means they had already being alerted to the fact that a wedding was coming. They were already bidden and now he calls them saying, alright, the wedding that I invited you to, it's ready now. Come'. That's what he says to them. The call is to people who were

already invited. Now, does that relate to the Pharisees, and the Scribes and the Sadducees and all of the leaders? Well, the first call to these things, brethren and sisters, had been issued by the prophets. There had been pictures of the kingdom to come, of the Messiah and His reign. This invitation had already gone out to this people. Now, they liked the prophecies in a general sort of way, but they taught lessons about the disciplining of God's people, but they particularly liked the pictures of a time when the earth would be rejuvenated, and Israel would assume her full greatness, and the Messiah would rule over the nation and then, as a consequence of that, over the whole world. They delighted in those general pictures. They didn't reject those things, those were things that they talked about. A rejuvenated earth, with Israel as the primary people, that's what they enjoyed looking at and listening to. But, Israel, brethren and sisters, never responded to the prophetic demand placed on them for righteousness. For right behaviour, for changing their lives. All they were prepared to hold onto, to the flimsy hope that they didn't really comprehend in detail. The hope of a kingdom, but amendment of their lives, well, that was an entirely different thing. They were fully prepared to keep up the ritualistic worship of Yahweh, but to be moved by that worship to change their behaviour, well, that was something that they weren't prepared to do. In fact, it was a problem that the even the prophets themselves, talked about. Right in line with what we are reading about, in this parable.

If we go for instance to Isaiah chapter 58 we will read the following words. These are words that are addressed to a people who are keeping up the rituals; put in our time, they are going to bible class, they are attending the memorial meeting, they are there for the evening lectures, they sing the hymns out of the Christadelphian hymn book, they have their bibles open in their laps during talks, but look at what they're doing? Chapter 58, 'Cry aloud, Isaiah, lift up thy voice and cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily (they look for me daily, these people) and they delight to know my ways, (just as if they were) a nation that did righteousness and had not forsaken the ordinance of their God: in fact, they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching Me'. Well, brethren and sisters, we read that and we think, what's wrong with that? That's what we'd like to do. We would like to be the kind of people that seek God daily. We'd would like to be the kind of people that delight to know His ways. We would like to be the kind of people that were doing these kinds of things, and yet, look at what He says in the connecting words, 'they do these things as if they were a nation that was doing righteousness'. They did these things as if they were a nation that had not forsaken God's ordinances. They do these things as if they are really making an impact on their lives and their relationship and real service to Yahweh their God, because that's what He's saying. Yahweh, Himself is saying that they don't really seek Me when they seek Me daily. And they don't really delight to know My ways, when they give every indication of delighting to know My ways.

Look, at the attitude of mind they have, when they have their fasting period. It might be during the day of Atonement; 'Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.' So the period of time in

which they were keeping their fast or when they were, for instance, keeping the Sabbath as He had ask them to, rather than looking at that as a delight and a joy and a period in which they might do complete service to Him, and make Him the absolute pinnacle of their lives, everything to them, instead that was a time of irritability. It was a time they had to deny their flesh, and they didn't like it one bit. It was irritating and frustrating to them. They kept up the ritual, the outward appearance of things, the outward worship. The community life they kept up. These Christadelphians did everything that Christadelphians do, but their heart was not right with their God. Verse 4, 'Behold, ye fast for strife', instead of their ecclesial living and their times of coming together as a people, being times when they would put strife away from themselves, where they would be a light shining in darkness, where the principles of the truth would be uppermost in their minds and in their speech. Where they would comfort and strengthen each other and encourage each other, where Christ would be the absolute pinnacle of their lives, where Yahweh would be the one that they would speak to each other about often, so that He might hear them doing it. Rather than do that, there was strife, debate, and smitting of the fist, smitting with the fist of wickedness. 'Ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is that the kind of fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Isn't this the fast that I have chosen?' (This is what I want you to do. I want you to change the way you live, change the way you behave, change the way you interact with your brethren and sisters.)

'I want you to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out (or afflicted) to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?' That's what He wanted them to do. He wanted this people, this selfish people, to become selfless in their worship to Him. He wanted them to break beyond the confines of their individual and immediate problems and difficulties. To look after the needs and help with the problems that other people had. He wanted them to be people, that whenever they did anything in connection with Him, did it with their whole heart and soul; their whole mind, all their strength, giving to others. Brethren and sisters, there is so much need in this community, so many broken hearts, so many families going through tough times. There are so many young people who are on the edge of leaving behind everything that we stand for. There are so many unmarried, single people, grown adults, yearning for companionship and friendship and encouragement. There are so many people who are doubting that the truth is the truth. You know what we're doing when we neglect to look after those needs? We are doing what He says here in verse 7, hiding ourselves from our own flesh. He's saying, 'you are somebody's brother or sister, and when that brother or sister is in need and you're not helping them, you're hiding yourself from your own flesh and blood, because that's what we are to each other, and when we don't have the time or the concentration or the desire or the inclination to look after other people's needs, and to be able to strengthen them out of the Word, and to help them in the raising of their children, then we are doing exactly this. And in our community, in this age, we are marked by laziness by

selfishness and by a desire to jealously protect our privacy and our individual, leisure time, and we shall be called to account for that. We will.

'Is it not to deal thy bread to those who are hungry for the truth, and that thou bring the poor, those who have become spiritually poor, and that are afflicted (those who are in trouble) bring them (where?) into your house? Not talk to them for five minutes in the ecclesia, or pick up the phone and have a two minute conversation, 'is everything alright'. To bring them into our homes, so that our home becomes an extension of the ecclesial hall. That's what He's telling us to do. 'But hide not thyself from thine own flesh', you see, these people didn't want to do that. He's told them if they did this, 'then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily; and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of Yahweh shall be thy rereward'. That is what will back you up when you shine forth like the light of the morning, for all to see. These are Yahweh's children; these are those who are the followers of His Son.

Well, when we limit this message to Israel, we see that they didn't really take heed to the requirement of right living. Oh! they loved to hold onto the lovely pictures and they delighted in feeling bad, in short fits and doses, because of the unrighteousness and stiff-neckedness of their forebearers. Well, they were prepared to do that, to bow down their heads like a bulrush, but the strife and contention in their midst, marked them off as a people that did not understand that the change in their lives was what was required by God's Word and His principles and the prophecies and the pictures that they were given.

Now, Ezekiel had the same problem, brethren and sisters, perhaps we can see ourselves to some degree here too. Ezekiel chapter 33 beginning at verse 30, 'Also, thou son of man' (now this is referring to Ezekiel, let us bring it up to our day, and think of that as the Lord Jesus Christ. And not just the Lord Jesus Christ, but of those who bring to us His messages from the platform) 'Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people are talking about thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what the word is that cometh forth from the Lord' (Let's go and hear what God wants us to do). 'And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people' (that's their status. They're sitting before me as thy people. We're sitting before Yahweh as His people; we are sitting before these principles as His people ourselves) 'and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not'. 'Thou art unto them as a lovely song', so they are people who are entertained by the Word of God. It's something that they enjoy listening to. They want to hear these principles, they want to hear these words, they want to hear about the kingdom but the requirement of a changed life, of a life that is broken away from all the selfishness of flesh, that profiteth as Bro. Ullman said, 'Nothing, Nothing'. Well, they don't want to do that, that requires changing the way they live, behave, talk, the way that they love and give. The way they work in the work place. They don't want to do that. 'Lo, the art unto them as a lovely song'; 'Oh, that's so

wonderful to hear. It makes me feel bad a little bit. If only I could really try and do that!, can then, they carry on with life. That's all that they've ever done, they've listened to the message, it was like a lovely song, and it was gone, and you see, these were the people, these were the people who were destroyed. When God brought nations against His people, these were the ones that were destroyed. The ones that couldn't be bothered to listen and change the way they lived. The ones who liked hearing about God's principles but did not live God's principles. The ones who had an interest in knowing the truth, but they wouldn't do the truth, because the truth is something you do, not just something you believe. So, they had received these messages, brethren and sisters, they had received invitations from God to a marriage feast to come. They had already being bidden, but they didn't want to change their lives, and if going to that marriage feast involved a change of life, they wouldn't go. It wasn't convenient for them.

So, when we go back to the Matthew record, chapter 22, we listen to what the Lord Jesus Christ is saying, chapter 22, 'there is a certain king, he has made the marriage feast (it's all ready) and he sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding:' (Who are the servants? It's John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. They are sent and their joint message was the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The kingdom of heaven is at hand.) 'They went to call them that were bidden to the wedding feast' and it says 'they would not come'. (Do you know what that means? Would not, they preferred not to, they preferred not to, in other words, 'I'd rather not come, thank you.' I would rather not come, I would rather not come.

'Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage feast', so the message that these servants go out with, is more developed, fuller, in greater detail than the message brought by the first batch of servants. Look, what these say in their message! They say a number of things - there's a meal, there's a marriage feast, a meal, it's associated with marriage. It involves the slaying of a sacrificial offering provided by an inviting Father, who is the King. It's the gospel message in detail, that was the detailed message that was taken by the apostles, whose message gave this same generation another chance, another opportunity, because that's the loving heartedness of this King, who could have easily sent out destruction, destructive forces right after the rejection of the first invitation. So, He gives them the message in more detail taken by the apostles, 'sent forth other servants', verse 5, 'but they made light of it', they made light of it. That means to neglect something, to be unconcerned. They made light of it, brethren and sisters, 'and they went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise'. What does the word 'merchandise' mean? Trade, business, wealth, but abundance, but more than anything else it means 'abundance'. What does that remind us of? Doesn't it remind us of the bushel basket, the farm - business labour, and here we have on the other hand, merchandise - ease of life. Abundance - luxury, luxurious circumstances. 'I'd rather not' and this group says, it says of them, 'they were unconcerned' because their concerns were wrapped up with what they had, what they did for a living; their individual, personal, fleshly pursuits that's what they were concerned with. And coming

to this wedding feast involved making the wedding feast preeminent in their lives, and the Son and King at that feast, the most important people in their lives, 'one went to his farm, another to his merchandise, and the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them'.

Entreated them spitefully, and slew them, these same words were used of Christ when He was talking to His bride, saying, 'Look, I'm going to Jerusalem, I'm going to die. They will spit on Me, they will scourge Me, they will spitefully entreat Me', that's what He told them, and the same words would be used later on of Paul and Barnabas, who would be shamefully entreated, spitefully entreated, same way. It means to 'publicly humiliate somebody' to 'break them down small' in front of everybody. That's what they did with these servants that took this message out. 'The remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth:' Jerusalem, Judeah had it's time to turn, had it's time to respond to a message, that in their history, they had claimed to always believe, but, rejected in the final analysis, when it required of them that they change their lives, and fill up their hearts with their God and the Word of their God. 'So he sent forth his armies, (it doesn't say 'army' it says 'armies', his multitudes of armed forces that are going to be coming) and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city'. And that's exactly what happened to Jerusalem, that's exactly what happened to those people that refused to respond to God's requirement of righteous living, - unselfish, God-directed, bible filled, truth oriented, Christadelphian living. That's what happened to them.

'Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways', what were the 'highways'? It's the parting of the ways, that's what it refers to, it's the place where a street cut across a city boundary and went out into open country. That's what the highway was, and so this is talking about a message that was taken to people like you and me. It was taken out into Gentile territory, that's where the truth went out next in this historical prophecy, this orderly arrangement of exactly what would happen with the truth. The gospel message was taken out into the highways; what did they do? He told them 'to gather together all as many as they found, both bad and good'. So gathered in together, if we look at it, from the point of view of individuals, we're wheat and tares, sheep and goats, good and bad. Those that would accept the truth and be moved to 'yield the fruit of righteousness' in their lives; the fruit of righteous behaviour, God ward, those would be the good; and bad would be those who, well, who would not do that, who would hear the message and who would come before their God as if they were God's people, but would show no amendment of life, no change in their behaviour.

And so, in verse 11, 'when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment', now, in these times, garments that were worn to weddings were beautiful and had to be cleaned, and everybody had to wear a wedding garment. All of the guests, this was your way as a guest of ascribing 'honour' to the person that was being married, and his parents. That's how you showed it, and if you didn't have a wedding garment on, how would that be read by the groom and his family? and his father? So, there's a man, 'take me as I come', this is the way I am, I'm happy

with the way I am. Don't you be shouting at me from the platform and telling me, I have to change my life, because I'm happy with my life the way it is. I go to the meeting, I do what I have to do, I speak, I pitch my money into the collection every week, I attend campaigns, I go to the odd bible school. Don't you tell me that I have to change my life any more than it's already been changed. Take me as I am. There he is, a man who had not on a wedding garment. What does that mean? What's the wedding garment?

Galatians chapter 3 verse 27 says, 'that when we are baptized we put on Christ', and the words 'put on' in the Greek mean 'putting on a jacket, or a robe, a piece of clothing', in other words, you are clothed with Him. Well, we like that because it's so general and it's not specific enough to make us feel uncomfortable. So we put on 'Christ', that's wonderful!

Look at what Colossians chapter 3 says. Colossians chapter 3, brethren and sisters, is a description of aspects of that garment that we put on when we were baptized. Colossians chapter 3 beginning at verse 5, 'Mortify therefore (put to death) your members which are upon the earth (this is flesh, this is you, this is me) fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things sake the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience', and then what does he say, verse 8, 'Put ye off these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth'. Put these things off; it means 'strip them off', so there's a garment we're to take off that already on. Put these things away from you, that's what he's saying, everything that's related to an easy, full of flesh, to do, put these things away and then he says, verse 12 or verse 10, 'You've put off the old man with his deeds and you've put on the new man, which is being renewed unto knowledge, after the image of Him that created Him.' It means being renewed daily, when we put on Christ, the way of life that's associated with Christ, is renewed daily. It is renewed daily by watching television, by reading trashy novels, by sitting on the deck in the back every evening in summertime because we want to work on our tan. It is renewed by shooting directly out of the ecclesia as soon as the closing hymn is ended, it's renewed daily by keeping this closed and dusty in a corner (the bible) until Sunday morning when we arrive at the meeting. That character of Christ that grows up in our lives is renewed daily by seeing other people in need in the ecclesia and refusing to look after them, that's how it's renewed isn't it? It can only be renewed, brethren and sisters, if we are everyday reading our bibles, if we are everyday doing what it tells us to do for our own good, if everyday we are pushing ourselves beyond exhaustion, because we all get tired. We cannot be too tired to be Christadelphians; it's everything, that is the future of mankind, what we will become. So, it doesn't matter how tired we are, we have to do the readings, we have to read the bible and get it into us somehow, because it is the only thing that will cleanse us, and make our lives really Christadelphian lives. If you feel a hole and vacuum inside of you, and you feel, yes! I know the kingdom's coming but I feel so empty inside, fill it up with God's Word. It's the only thing that will help us. Our community is sick; we're so full of illness, will we last ten years? We have to put the bible into our lives; that's how our minds are renewed daily. Not by sitting down on our rumps, filling space, by actively living out these principles. With all the difficulties of our lives, with all the ups and downs, whatever we

may be going through, brethren and sisters, we run the risk of losing everything, everything that has ever been done for us, and if we don't fight for these things, they're going to slip through our fingers. Are we going to lose our children and everything that we hoped for? These people lost everything, they lost everything! When they had the chance to change their lives, it didn't mean anything to them. It was something they thought they could be associated with, but not changed by. We all have troubles and problems, we all have difficulty living the truth, but it's all we've got and there's nothing else worth holding on to, and there's nothing else that can carry us through this life, but God and His Word, and the hope of God's kingdom. And we've got to hold on, so these people that Christ is looking at and saying, 'This is what's going to happen to you. Change while you have the chance. You're going to lose everything'. And you Christadelphians, will lose everything if you don't read your bibles and know what you believe and why? Because it's all we've got! Our careers are not going to sustain us; our homes and our money will not sustain us, so we've got to hold on to the truth, and you can't hold on to something you don't know and understand and live for, because you are holding onto straws when you hold onto what this world has to offer. It doesn't pull you through difficulties in marriage; it doesn't help you raise your children. THIS DOES! THIS IS ALIVE, THIS WILL KEEP US ALIVE! (THE BIBLE) If we want to live, if we really want to live, so He says as He goes on further to these people in Colosse, He says, this is what the comment is all about, it's about loving your husbands and submitting to them. That's what it is, not being stiff-necked, hard hearted, strong willed, disobedient woman like the woman of this world. It's in submitting for your love of God, because it's your duty. It's being a husband who isn't prudish and insensitive, who has no regard for his wife and her character. It's being a husband who loves through all of the ups and downs and isn't critical, and backbiting against his wife. It's being a child, somebody's child, and obeying your parents because it is your duty to do it, because there they are right in front of you. Honour them, cherish them, love them. 'Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged' and feel they can't please and fall out of the way. Don't criticize them! and humiliate them! That's what He's saying. Verse 22, 'Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice' (when they're there to see you), work hard, work honestly. Be a Christadelphian in all areas of your life, and know what it is to be a Christadelphian. The putting on of this garment, involves being clothed with a way of life that Christ can see and recognize, and when we don't have that garment on, when He comes and finds us naked. When we are at the marriage feast of the Lord like this, this foolish man, we are going to be speechless. What have you done in your life, what have you done to make ready for Me? What have you changed or got rid of, and dispense with, and did you even know what you were? what you believed? what the truth was? Did you even understand what I was offering you?

That's what He's telling them, 'You people, listen to Me, you're going to die, and there's going to be different stages that will lead to that kingdom. Change while you have the chance', that's what He's saying. It goes on and He says to the man without the wedding garment, 'Friend, friend, you who I knew and should have known me, how did you come in here with no wedding garment? One could have been provided at the door for you, if you wanted it. How did you come in here without this on?' And then,

he's speechless. What could he say? What could he do at that point in time? Can't do anything then, brethren and sisters. Now is when we have the opportunity to do it. Doesn't matter how tired we are, how rough our life is, NOW IS THE TIME to become a Christadelphian, to become a brother or sister in Christ, so that we can hope to be found wearing our garments when He returns.

'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' (Matt.22:12-14). Many are called to this wedding feast, many are called to work in His vineyard, but few of that many, are chosen to stay working in the vineyard. Few are chosen to attend that wedding feast.

Brethren and sisters, to lift our spirits, let us look at a wonderful verse in Revelation chapter 19. Let's end with this picture, knowing all the trouble we have living the truth, yet the need to continue to strive to live by its principles, let's be uplifted by this picture of us, may it be God's will and it is, that this be us, verse 7, 'Let us be glad and rejoice and give honour to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen (she's clothed in a garment) she's arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints (not righteousness, righteous acts). The things she's done in preparing herself for her marriage. The things she hath done to make herself ready. That's what her clothing is. That's what your clothing is. That's what my clothing is. We want to be clothed with a way of life and an understanding of our beliefs, that Christ can see a reflection of Himself in, when He comes back to the earth. We stand to lose everything, brethren and sisters. The reason that we have so many problems in the brotherhood in North America, is because we don't read our bibles, and because we don't know what we believe. We think when we've learnt the truth at our baptism, we know everything that we need to know. That's just the beginning; if we do not understand what we believe, any controversy that comes up, is bound to rip us to pieces, because then we're pulled apart, not by God's Word and principles which are clear, but by people's personalities, and their eloquence and their gifts as communicators. That's what we're pulled away by.

The garment that we wear and the new man that we've put on, is renewed day by day, so the reading of God's Word, through the understanding of the truth, and the deepening of our understanding, and through the righteous acts of unselfishness and care for our brethren and sisters, that is what we must be found clothed with, when the marriage feast is come.