

Dear Fellow Redeemed by the blood of God's own Son,

There is so much confusion about who will be saved before God. More than fifty years ago the Second Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church declared that all who live good lives on earth will gain heaven, even those who reject Christ! Recent popes have agreed. The Unitarian-Universalist church agrees, as do a growing number of people who like to be thought of as "non-judgmental."

On the other hand there are still many people in the world who believe that they are so bad they will never live with God in heaven.

Some Christian churches even teach that only a few are saved for heaven, because God only wanted to save a few. So what is the truth? Jesus gives the correct answer to this important question in the parable before us.

ARE THERE FEW WHO WILL BE SAVED?

I.

We are told that a certain king arranged a marriage for his son. That's what God did when He promised to send His own beloved Son to the nation of Israel. The O.T. prophets – Moses, Isaiah, Hosea and all the rest– had invited the Jews to the life-giving food and the eternal riches of heaven through their promised Savior.

But when Jesus came, and John the Baptizer called the Jews to the wedding feast, **"they were not willing to come."** (V. 3) The Lord of heaven came **"to His own"** people and **"His own did not receive Him"** (Jn. 1:11). It's the same sad story when children who, are brought up in Christian families, hear the invitation of Jesus again and again, and yet are not willing to receive His blessings when they grow up.

But neither the king in the parable nor the God of heaven gave up. **"Other servants"** were sent out with an even stronger appeal: **"See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the**

wedding.” God sent out His apostles, and “the seventy.” Later He sent Stephen, Philip, the great apostle Paul and all the rest of his “other servants.”

With great power and sincerity they announced to the Jews that “all things” had been finished for their salvation, that the Christ had conquered the power of sin, death and the devil, and had risen from the dead. But the Jewish nation “**made light of**” the gospel’s invitation to believe in Jesus. They “**went their ways**” – their farms and businesses were far more important to them. Violent Jews actually “**seized**” the Lord’s servants, mistreated and “**killed**” them!

Why? Because those who trusted in their own goodness for salvation could not bear to hear that they were still sinners before God. It’s the same to this day: Those who continue to reject the invitation and call of Christ’s gospel become more and more hateful toward those who keep on proclaiming salvation by Christ alone.

But those who oppose God’s servants oppose God Himself! When the Jewish nation began to mistreat, torture and kill God’s servants, God became like the king in this parable. He was “**furious, and He sent out His armies, destroyed those murderers and burned up their city.**” This happened when the Romans brought divine judgment upon the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Are there few who will be saved? Yes, there are few. But this is NOT because the Lord did not prepare the feast of salvation or try hard enough to call sinners by the Gospel. Toward the end of Jesus’ ministry He “**wept**” over the Jewish nation, because of their unwillingness to believe the good news that was brought to them. Few were saved among the Jews even though they were the first to be invited to the marriage feast. They “**were not worthy,**” as it says in v. 8, because they did not see their own need for the grace and forgiveness freely offered to them in their Savior.

II.

Now the servants are ordered by the King to go down **"the highways"** – the main routes of travel. The servants are commanded to invite **"as many as"** they can find to the wedding. Everything is ready, and the king still wants to fill his house with guests, so he invites Gentile strangers to join him!

Since the apostles **"turned to the Gentile nations,"** as reported in Acts 13, the Gospel's call is worldwide. For nearly 2,000 years the Lord's servants have gone into the highways of this world, gathering **"together all whom they have found, both bad and good."** The world distinguishes between "good and bad" people. But we are not to make any such distinctions – The Good News of grace and forgiveness is for ALL!

Next we are told that, at last, **"the wedding hall was filled with guests."** So today, the outward Christian Church in the world is filled with millions of people. How can it be that only **a "few" will be saved?** Part of the reason is hypocrisy in the outward church. We read that when the King came in to see the guests, **"He saw a man who did not have on a wedding garment."** The King immediately said to him: **"Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?"**

The undressed man represents those in the churches who want to sit down at the feast of salvation without the robe of Christ's perfect righteousness. The putting on of this **"wedding garment"** is true, Spirit-worked repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Hypocrites have all kinds of reasons for belonging to a Christian congregation. But their method of gaining salvation does not agree with God's method.

Since they prefer their own self-righteous rags to the robe of Christ, their life, no matter how "good" before the world, is a continuous rejection of the grace of God! Those who stand spiritually naked before the great King of salvation at His wedding feast, whether they were church-goers or not, will be

“speechless.” In the end, all hypocrites will be **“cast into outer darkness”** where there will be **“weeping and gnashing of teeth!”**

III.

Are there few who will be finally saved? Yes, as a matter of fact, Jesus says, **“many are called, but few are chosen.”** These last words of Jesus are an “axiom” – a statement of truth that applies for all time. **“God our Savior would have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth,”** Paul wrote to Timothy (1Tim. 2:4).

So the gracious Gospel of the kingdom is preached everywhere, and ALL are invited to the wedding feast of salvation in Christ. But the great majority are not interested. In their own eyes they are too “good” for a Savior. They are too busy with the affairs of this world to receive the Word and Sacrament with repentance and faith. They simply hide out in the churches until the Day of Judgment!

Meanwhile, the gracious God of heaven keeps on sending out the invitation through His believing servants: “Come! I have prepared your eternal salvation from sin by the life, sufferings and death of my own beloved Son! All things are finished and ready! Only believe Me when I tell you, and you shall live!” The **few** who come and continue unto death to receive the grace that covers all sins are the **chosen few**. God grant that we may be among these few. . . .

And may He grant us more! This is no time for Christ’s servants to stand around with our hands in our pockets, mourning and shaking our heads because of those who reject the invitation we bring. The command to **“go out” and “invite” to the wedding “as many as” we find in our neighborhoods and in the world,** still applies, dear brothers and sisters. Our Lord is still saying to you and to me: “I have chosen few who will be finally saved. That’s MY business. But YOU get out there and do the calling. That’s YOUR business!” Amen.