Room at the Table Q&A Guide

Oct 13, 2026

About this guide: anyone is welcome to use this guide, including members of the Intercessor Church Community Groups. Read it before class or on your own so you come prepared and well versed in the passage. It follows the Discover section of the group outline, section by section. For each question it gathers what trusted commentaries and the ICCEC Catechism say, then adds a Summary that pulls it together and a Deep Dive with background and passages to read ahead of time.

How to read this guide: each question is labeled to match the outline, so A1 is the first question in section A, A2 is the second, and so on. The questions are written for this guide. Each one covers the same ground as the matching outline question and takes it a step further. The linked passage after each question is the one the outline points to, so you can click it and read it in class. Anything after the word "also" is a wider range or an extra passage this guide adds. Every line under Commentary and ICCEC Catechism is quoted word for word from the source named in parentheses after it. The **Summary** and **Deep Dive** under each question are written for this guide, drawing on those quotes and the other sources listed at the end. Scripture quoted in the summaries and deep dives is from the New King James Version, and Q-numbers are question numbers in the ICCEC Catechism.

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This guide follows the Intercessor Church Community Group outline "Rooted Together, Week 2: Room at the Table."

A. The King's Invitation (Matthew 22:1-4)

A1. Jesus pictures God's kingdom as a royal wedding feast. What does that choice of picture tell us about the life God invites us into? (Matthew 22:1-4)

Commentary

- "That thou mightest learn God's tender care, His yearning towards us, the cheerfulness of the state of things, that there is nothing sorrowful there, nor sad, but all things are full of spiritual joy." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "Our merciful God has not only provided food, but a royal feast, for the perishing souls of his rebellious creatures." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)
- "The king is none other than God, and the wedding is that between Christ and His Church, the redeemed and purified Israel (Revelation 19:7-9)." (Ellicott's Commentary on Matthew 22:2)
- "A wedding was (and often is today) the most significant social event of a person's life. The wedding of a prince would be a spectacular event, and an invitation would normally be prized." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Salvation includes a familial relationship with our God that begins in this life and is perfected in the life to come." (Q-97)
- "The Holy Eucharist is the means of grace by which we receive the forgiveness of sins, abundant life in which our hunger and thirst for God is satisfied, and the foretaste and hope of the banquet in the heavenly kingdom." (Q-179)

Summary

A wedding feast is the happiest event most people ever attend, which is why Jesus uses it. The King is God, the Son is Jesus, and the feast pictures life in His Kingdom: joy, fellowship, and being wanted. Jesus chose a wedding so we would see God's tender care and know there is nothing gloomy about life with Him (Chrysostom). The feast points to the marriage supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9; Ellicott), which this week's closing reading quotes. Every Eucharist is a foretaste of that heavenly banquet (Q-179), and this family relationship with God begins now and is perfected later (Q-97).

Deep Dive

Before class, read Isaiah 25:6-9, this Sunday's first reading. Isaiah pictures the LORD making a feast "for all people" on His mountain, where "He will swallow up death forever." Jesus' wedding feast builds on that promise, and the Bible ends with the same picture: "Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!" (Revelation 19:9). The Greek phrase in Matthew 22:2 points to the wedding feast more than the ceremony (Vincent), and the Old Testament often pictures God as the Bridegroom and His people as the bride (Ellicott cites Isaiah 62:5 and Jeremiah 2:2). Matthew 22:1-14 is the Gospel reading for this Sunday in the Revised Common Lectionary (Proper 23, Year A).

Read before class: Isaiah 25:6-9; Isaiah 62:5; Revelation 19:6-9

A2. The King sends word that the meal is cooked and everything is ready. What does that say about how generous God is, and how often He invites? (Matthew 22:3-4)

Commentary

- "See how complete His banquet, how great His munificence." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "There is enough and to spare, of every thing that can add to our present comfort and everlasting happiness, in the salvation of his Son Jesus Christ." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)
- "The words point, under an imagery which Isaiah had already used (25:6), to the spiritual blessings of peace and joy which Christ came to offer." (Ellicott's Commentary on Matthew 22:4)
- "All things are ready is the message of the gospel." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)

ICCEC Catechism

- "This is a free gift of God given to us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who lived in loving obedience to the will of His Father." (Q-103)
- "Yes, Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for all, and obtained grace and salvation for all." (Q-118)

Summary

The King did all the preparing. The meal is cooked, the tables are set, and nothing is left for the guests to supply. There is "enough and to spare" (Matthew Henry), an echo of Isaiah 25:6, this week's first reading, where the LORD makes a feast for all people (Ellicott). Salvation is the same: a free gift (Q-103), offered for all (Q-118). The King's generosity shows both in what He gives and in how many times He sends the invitation.

Deep Dive

In Jesus' day a wedding invitation came in two steps. The first went out well ahead of time, and a second messenger came on the day to say the meal was ready (Barnes and Vincent, and Barclay as quoted by Guzik). Verse 3 even has a play on words, literally "to call the called" (Vincent). So the guests in this parable were not caught off guard. They had known about the feast for a long time and still refused when it was ready. Esther did the same,

inviting Haman ahead of time and then sending for him when the banquet was served (Esther 5:8; 6:14; Vincent). The "fatlings" were animals fattened especially for a feast (Vincent).

Read before class: Esther 5:8; Esther 6:14; Luke 14:16-17

A3. If faith is first an invitation to come rather than a task to complete, how does that change the way you come to God? (Matthew 22:4; also Matthew 11:28)

Commentary

- "And unto what doth He bid them? Unto labors, and toils, and sweat? Nay but unto pleasure." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "You don't come to God's feast and prepare your own meal. He has made it ready for you; you come to receive." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)
- "So God repeats his message to sinners when they reject it." (Barnes' Notes on Matthew 22:4)

ICCEC Catechism

- "By faith we must respond to the grace of God freely given in Jesus Christ and in His atoning work." (Q-105)
- "We respond to this free gift of grace by faith." (Q-103)
- "Jesus invites us to return and come into this personal and corporate relationship with God." (Q-224)

Summary

An invitation changes the question from "Have I done enough?" to "Will I come?" God calls us not to toil and sweat but to a feast (Chrysostom). You don't bring your own meal; you come to receive (Guzik). That frees us to approach God with gratitude instead of anxiety. Our part is to respond by faith to grace freely given (Q-103, Q-105), and Jesus invites us into a personal relationship with the Father (Q-224). God repeats the invitation even after people say no (Barnes).

Deep Dive

The word for "dinner" in verse 4 means a midday meal (Vincent), so the picture is a feast already on the table. God has sent this invitation many times: through the prophets, through John the Baptist, through Jesus Himself, and after the Ascension through the

apostles (Chrysostom). Jesus' own invitation is a good verse to memorize this week: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

Read before class: Matthew 11:28-30; John 7:37-38; Revelation 22:17

B. Too Busy to Respond (Matthew 22:5-7)

B1. The invited guests shrugged off the invitation, and some even killed the messengers. What do their responses and the King's anger show about turning God down? (Matthew 22:5-7)

Commentary

- "The reason why sinners come not to Christ and salvation by him, is, not because they cannot, but because they will not." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)
- "The words point to the temper of neglect which slights the offer of the kingdom of God, and prefers the interest of this world." (Ellicott's Commentary on Matthew 22:5)
- "The king rightfully brought judgment upon the offenders. Not only did they reject his invitation, but they also murdered his messengers." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)
- "This was a prophecy of what would happen to Jerusalem, the city whose religious leaders so strongly rejected Jesus and His gospel." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)
- "Jesus seems to escalate the tension here, suggesting that those who have treated the invitation of God with contempt will face dire consequences from on high." (Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 22:1-14)

ICCEC Catechism

- "It is never God's will that a person should perish or be separated from Him and His love. However, those who have rejected Christ Jesus and His grace will, at the death of their earthly bodies, be found separated from God." (Q-215)

Summary

They make light of it. Some simply walk off to their farm or business, and others seize and kill the servants. The problem is not that they cannot come but that they will not (Matthew Henry), a neglect that prefers this world's interests (Ellicott). The King's

judgment shows that refusing God's invitation is not a small thing, and it foreshadowed the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70 (Guzik). Jesus is speaking to leaders who are rejecting Him at that very moment (Sharp). God never wills that anyone perish, yet those who reject His grace will be separated from Him (Q-215).

Deep Dive

"Made light of it" translates a Greek word meaning they paid no attention, not that they mocked (Vincent). One man goes to "his own farm," a phrase that sets private interest against the honor owed the king (Vincent). The "armies" of verse 7 are better understood as "troops" (Ellicott, Vincent). This verse was fulfilled when Roman forces under Vespasian and Titus destroyed Jerusalem in AD 70, about forty years after the crucifixion, and that long delay was a sign of God's patience (Chrysostom). Luke tells a similar parable (Luke 14:16-24) without the violence or the burned city, and Matthew's version sharpens the warning (Sharp).

Read before class: Luke 14:16-24; Matthew 21:33-46 (last week's parable); Matthew 23:37-39

B2. The guests left for a farm and a business, not anything sinful. How do good things like work and family become reasons to put God off? (Matthew 22:5; also Luke 14:18-20)

Commentary

- "And yet the excuses seem to be reasonable; but hence we learn, though the things which hinder us be necessary, to set the things spiritual at a higher price than all." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "when spiritual things call us, there is no press of business that has the power of necessity" (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "Both farmers and merchants must be diligent; but whatever we have of the world in our hands, our care must be to keep it out of our hearts, lest it come between us and Christ." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)
- "Are the distractions of life getting in the way of responding with wholehearted commitment to God's grace in Jesus Christ?" (Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 22:1-14)

ICCEC Catechism

- "He taught his disciples to seek the Kingdom of God before anything else." (Q-227)

- "We disobey the first commandment by the idolatry of putting any person, place, or thing before God." (Q-289)

Summary

This is an application question. The excuses in the parable are a farm and a business, not anything sinful. The excuses "seem to be reasonable," but spiritual things must come first even when the things that hinder us are necessary (Chrysostom). Be diligent with work, but keep the world in your hands and out of your heart (Matthew Henry). Common examples people raise: a demanding job, caring for children or aging parents, a full school or sports calendar, and extra commitments that crowd out rest. Putting anything before God is idolatry, even good things (Q-289), and Jesus taught us to seek the Kingdom first (Q-227).

Deep Dive

Luke's version spells out the excuses: "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it," "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them," and "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come" (Luke 14:18-20). None of these is wrong in itself. The first man pleads necessity, "I must go" (Barnes), and "make excuses" is close to our phrase "beg off" (Ellicott). Good things become a problem only when they take God's place (Chrysostom), which is why Jesus says, "seek first the kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33).

Read before class: Luke 14:15-24; Matthew 6:25-34; Luke 10:38-42

B3. Many of us plan to give God more of ourselves later, once things calm down. What does that later look like in your own life? (Matthew 22:5)

Commentary

- "The affairs of the world, they pretend, are so pressing that they cannot find time to attend to their souls. They have no time to pray, or read the Scriptures, or keep up the worship of God." (Barnes' Notes on Luke 14:18)
- "And to me they seem moreover to make use of these excuses, putting forward these things as cloke for their negligence." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "Multitudes perish for ever through mere carelessness, who show no direct aversion, but are careless as to their souls." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)

ICCEC Catechism

- "We do not know the day nor the hour of His coming; therefore, we should live always in his presence." (Q-129)

Summary

This is an application question, so take a moment to answer it honestly for yourself before class. Common versions: "after the kids are older," "once this busy season at work ends," "when my health improves," or "after I get my life together." Some people believe they have no time to pray or read Scripture (Barnes), and busyness can be a cover for plain negligence (Chrysostom). Most people do not reject God outright; they just keep putting Him off (Matthew Henry). Since we do not know the day of Christ's return, we live in His presence now (Q-129).

Deep Dive

The first invitation went out well ahead of the feast so the guests "might have opportunity to prepare for it" (Barnes). The guests had plenty of time; the problem was what they filled it with. Notice that none of the guests in Matthew says no to the king's face. They simply "went their ways" to business as usual (22:5). Jesus names the same danger in the parable of the sower: "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word" (Matthew 13:22).

Read before class: Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23; Luke 12:16-21; James 4:13-15

C. Room for Both Bad and Good (Matthew 22:8-10)

C1. Why does the King call the first guests unworthy, and whom does He invite in their place? (Matthew 22:8-10)

Commentary

- "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you, but since ye judge yourselves unworthy, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew, quoting Acts 13:46)
- "Since then they were not worthy, go ye, saith He, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid; both the common sort, and the outcasts." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "The offer of Christ and salvation to the Gentiles was not expected; it was such a surprise as it would be to wayfaring men, to be invited to a royal wedding-feast." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)
- "The king was determined that he would not have an empty banquet hall, so an invitation was given to all who would hear." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)

ICCEC Catechism

- "He came to earth for the salvation of all humanity and not for one nation nor for some people only, but for all humanity universally and for each individual's salvation." (Q-96)

Summary

They are called unworthy because they refused, not because they were worse than the next guests. Paul's words in Acts 13:46 fit: by rejecting the word, they judged themselves unworthy (Chrysostom). The next invitation goes out to the crossroads, to anyone the servants can find, "both the common sort, and the outcasts." This is the gospel going out to the Gentiles and to all who will hear (Matthew Henry, Guzik), and Christ came for all humanity, not for one nation or some people only (Q-96).

Deep Dive

"Worthy" in verse 8 translates a Greek word meaning fit or deserving. Paul uses the same word in Acts 13:46 when he tells those who rejected the gospel that they "judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life." The "highways" were literally the outlets or crossings of the roads, busy places where all kinds of people could be found (Vincent, Ellicott, Barnes). This is a picture of the gospel going to the Gentiles (Ellicott, Chrysostom), and Matthew's Gospel ends with the same open door: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19).

Read before class: Acts 13:44-48; Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 28:18-20

C2. The servants bring in everyone they find, bad and good alike. What does that say to someone who thinks they must get their life in order before coming to Jesus? (Matthew 22:10)

Commentary

- "In this sense, we can say this is a parable about grace." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)
- "The being called was not of merit, but of grace." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "None are good by nature; if they were they would not need the gospel; but some are worse than others, and they have special need of it." (Barnes' Notes on Matthew 22:10)
- "the universality of the offer of the gospel, so that none were shut out through any previous sins" (Ellicott's Commentary on Matthew 22:10)

- "Crimes committed in the past are forgiven by the gift of grace ... a reprieve is granted to all." (Hilary of Poitiers, as quoted in Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 22:1-14)

ICCEC Catechism

- "The work of Christ in Baptism is not dependent upon personal maturity, intellectual development, or on an achieved degree of faith, but is a holy, unmerited gift of grace." (Q-168)
- "Even this faith is a gift, so no one brings anything to the waters of baptism but themselves." (Q-172)

Summary

The servants gather "both bad and good," and nobody is asked to qualify first. This is a parable about grace (Guzik): the calling "was not of merit, but of grace" (Chrysostom), and no one is good by nature, so everyone needs the invitation (Barnes). Baptism works the same way: it does not depend on maturity or an achieved level of faith, and "no one brings anything to the waters of baptism but themselves" (Q-168, Q-172). We come as we are, and the change comes after we arrive, which is where Section D picks up.

Deep Dive

The Greek of verse 10 says the hall "was filled," a stronger word than older translations' "furnished" (Vincent). It is like Jesus' parable of the dragnet (Matthew 13:47-48), where the net gathers everything and the sorting happens later (Ellicott). In the same way, the church gathers people at every stage, and the final sorting belongs to God, not to us. Two early church leaders from the 300s read "bad and good" as a sign that grace is offered to everyone (Chrysostom, Hilary of Poitiers).

Read before class: Matthew 13:24-30, 47-50; Luke 15:1-2; 1 Timothy 1:15

C3. Christ died for us while we were still sinners. What does that tell us about where God's love begins? (Romans 5:8)

Commentary

- "Christ died to save us, not in our sins, but from our sins; and we were yet sinners when he died for us." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Romans 5)
- "And that for such as these Christ should die, is a mystery; no other such an instance of love is known, so that it may well be the employment of eternity to adore and wonder at it." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Romans 5)

- "This emphasizes the fact that the reasons for God's love are found in Him, not in us." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Romans 5)
- "The love of Christ is evidenced by the fact of His death; the love of God is evidenced by the love of Christ." (Ellicott's Commentary on Romans 5:8)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Jesus has come because the Father's love for His people, is so great that He desires that we not perish but have eternal life with Him." (Q-232)
- "The ultimate act of mercy is the cross of Christ." (Q-270)

Summary

It shows that God's love starts with Him, not with anything good in us. Christ died for us while we were still sinners, a love without equal (Matthew Henry), and the reasons for God's love "are found in Him, not in us" (Guzik). The cross shows both the Son's love and the Father's (Ellicott). The cross is the ultimate act of mercy (Q-270), and the Father's love is so great that He desires we not perish (Q-232). This is why the invitation can go out to "both bad and good."

Deep Dive

Paul writes "God demonstrates His own love" in the present tense: the cross keeps on showing God's love (Vincent). The Greek word can mean both "prove" and "recommend" (Ellicott). Read the verses just before: someone might dare to die for a good person, but Christ died for the ungodly while we were still sinners (Romans 5:6-8). The small Greek word for "for" (huper) carries the sense "in behalf of, instead of," pointing to Christ dying in our place (Guzik).

Read before class: Romans 5:6-11; 1 John 4:9-10; Ephesians 2:4-5

D. Grace Changes How We Live (Matthew 22:11-14)

D1. One guest is found without a wedding garment. Why does that matter so much in the story? (Matthew 22:11-14)

Commentary

- "For the garment is life and practice." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)
- "Because although to be called and to be cleansed was of grace, yet, when called and clothed in clean garments, to continue keeping them so, this is of the diligence of them that are called." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)

- "He came in his common and ordinary dress, as he was taken from the highway: and though he had not a garment of his own suitable for the occasion, yet one had been provided for him, if he had applied for it." (Barnes' Notes on Matthew 22:11)
- "He came because he was invited, but he came only in appearance. The banquet was intended to honor the King's Son, but this man meant nothing of the kind; he was willing to eat the good things set before him, but in his heart there was no love either for the King or his well-beloved Son." (C.H. Spurgeon, as quoted in David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22)
- "No man has the wedding-garment by nature, or can form it for himself." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)
- "The wedding garments are the Lord's commands and the works that are fulfilled from the Law and the Gospel." (Jerome, as quoted in Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 22:1-14)

ICCEC Catechism

- "Those who have not been baptized by water in the name of the Trinity, those living in notorious and unrepentant sin, and those who do not rightly discern the Body and Blood of Christ should not receive the Holy Communion." (Q-182, which cites Matthew 22:11)
- "We should always seek to do the will of our Lord by trying to fashion our lives after His perfect life, in order to experience the blessedness of His Kingdom now as well as in heaven." (Q-253)

Summary

Because accepting the invitation includes letting the King clothe you. A host commonly provided festive robes for guests (Barnes), though scholars debate the custom (Guzik), so the man had no excuse: a garment was available if he had asked. The garment is "life and practice" (Chrysostom). The call is pure grace, and keeping the garment clean is our faithful response. The man came for the food but had no love for the King or His Son (Spurgeon). Those living in unrepentant sin should not receive Communion, a teaching that cites this very verse (Q-182), and we are called to fashion our lives after Christ's (Q-253).

Deep Dive

Three small Greek details in verses 11 and 12 sharpen the picture (Vincent). The king came "to see" the guests, a word that means to look carefully, an inspection. Verse 11 uses an ordinary "not" for the plain fact that the man had no garment, but verse 12 uses a different

word that suggests he knew he should have one and chose not to. And "speechless" literally means "muzzled" or "gagged," the same word Jesus uses to silence a demon (Mark 1:25) and the storm (Mark 4:39). The king's greeting, "Friend," is the same word used to the complaining worker (Matthew 20:13) and by Jesus to Judas (Matthew 26:50). The garment is the holiness Christ gives (Ellicott), "without which no one will see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14).

Read before class: Isaiah 61:10; Zechariah 3:3-5; Revelation 19:7-8

D2. Paul says those baptized into Christ have put on Christ. How does that picture help explain the wedding garment and a life shaped by grace? (Galatians 3:27)

Commentary

- "In baptism we put on Christ; therein we profess to be his disciples." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Galatians 3)
- "The putting on of Christ according to the gospel, consists not in outward imitation, but in a new birth, an entire change." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Galatians 3)
- "That is, they have put on his sentiments, opinions, characteristic traits, etc., as a man clothes himself." (Barnes' Notes on Galatians 3:27)
- "In the original language, the phrase has the idea of putting on a suit of clothes. So we 'clothe ourselves' with Jesus as our identity." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Galatians 3)
- "Reverence the love of Him, who called you, and let no one continue to have filthy garments, but let each of you busy himself about the clothing of your soul." (John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew)

ICCEC Catechism

- "In the sacrament of Baptism we are made children of God and inheritors of the Kingdom of God. The grace of God in the sacrament brings us fully into participation with the life of Christ. Hence we are made a new creation and born anew from above by the Holy Spirit." (Q-167)
- "All their sins are washed away by regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior." (Q-168, which cites Galatians 3:27)

Summary

Paul uses the same clothing picture. In baptism we "put on Christ," which means taking on His character the way we put on clothes (Barnes). It is not outward imitation but a new birth (Matthew Henry). Baptism makes us children of God and a new creation (Q-167), a teaching that cites Galatians 3:27 (Q-168). So the wedding garment is not something we sew ourselves. It is Christ, given by grace and worn in daily life. One early preacher's appeal fits here: care more for the clothing of your soul than for anything you wear (Chrysostom).

Deep Dive

Paul's phrase "put on Christ" appears only here and in Romans 13:14, but he uses the same clothing verb often, as in "put on the new man" (Ephesians 4:24) and "put on tender mercies" (Colossians 3:12) (Vincent). Some connect the picture with the white robes worn at baptism (Ellicott). Paul sees baptism "not as a mere symbolical transaction" but as union with the crucified and risen Lord (Vincent). Baptism is "the sacramental and incarnational participation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ" (Q-166).

Read before class: Romans 6:3-11; Romans 13:12-14; Colossians 3:9-14

D3. If grace is the garment, where in daily life should faith, repentance, mercy, and love show more clearly? (also Colossians 3:12-14)

Commentary

- "wrapped in the figurative sackcloth of repentance, or garbed in the virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and love" (Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 22:1-14)
- "How we dress has a real impact on how we think and act. How we dress has a real impact on how we appear to others." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Galatians 3)
- "Those who are the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to be lowly and compassionate towards all." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Colossians 3)

ICCEC Catechism

- "It is to see others no longer from a human point of view, but rather to see them as those created in his image." (Q-270)
- "Righteousness also rejects sin, chooses God's will and ways, and comes against evil with acts of mercy and compassion." (Q-268)
- "This is obtained through consistent self-examination, repentance, confession (sacramental if necessary) and amendment of life." (Q-273)

Summary

This is an application question. The "garments" that show are repentance, compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and love (Sharp). Places people often name: at home when tired, at work under pressure, online, in traffic, with difficult relatives, and with people who cannot repay us. Clothing affects both how we act and how others see us (Guzik). Mercy means seeing others as made in God's image (Q-270), and repentance is a regular practice of self-examination, confession, and amendment of life (Q-273).

Deep Dive

Colossians 3:12-14 reads like a list of wedding clothes for everyday life: "tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering," and "above all these things put on love." The same passage goes with Jesus' teaching on the sheep and the goats (Matthew 25:31-46), where those welcomed into the kingdom are the ones who fed the hungry, welcomed strangers, and visited the sick and the imprisoned (Sharp). The wedding garments are "the Lord's commands" lived out (Jerome, writing around AD 400). Two practical lists, the works of mercy, turn this into everyday steps (Q-271, Q-272).

Read before class: Colossians 3:12-17; Matthew 25:31-46; James 2:14-17

E. Respond Today (Hebrews 3:15; Philippians 4:4-7)

E1. Why do we put off something we already sense God asking of us? (Hebrews 3:15)

Commentary

- "Since to-morrow is not ours, we must make the best improvement of this day." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Hebrews 3)
- "Hearing the word often is a means of salvation, yet, if not hearkened to, it will expose more to the Divine wrath." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Hebrews 3)
- "He entreats them, therefore, as long as it could be said 'today,' or as long as life lasted, to take care lest they should harden their hearts as had been done in the temptation in the wilderness." (Barnes' Notes on Hebrews 3:15)
- "This dramatic parable warns strongly against complacency within the church." (Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 22:1-14)

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- "We ask that God guides us during times of temptation, grants us the grace to see the sin as it is, and mercifully encourages us to make the right decisions and not turn away from Christ." (Q-250)

Summary

This is an application question. Common reasons: fear of what obedience will cost, not feeling ready, waiting for a clearer sign, comfort with the way things are, or simply forgetting. Hebrews 3:15 answers with one word, "Today." Tomorrow is not ours (Matthew Henry), and the warning holds as long as life lasts (Barnes). Hearing God's word often without heeding it leaves us more accountable, not less (Matthew Henry), and this parable is a warning against complacency (Sharp). A fitting prayer asks God to help us make the right decisions and not turn away from Christ (Q-250).

Deep Dive

Hebrews 3:15 quotes Psalm 95:7-8, which remembers Israel testing God in the wilderness at Massah and Meribah (Exodus 17:7). The word "Today" comes up again and again in this part of Hebrews (3:7, 3:13, 3:15, 4:7). God's "today" lasts as long as life lasts, so His call is always in the present tense (Barnes). Psalm 95 has been sung for centuries as the opening psalm of the church's morning prayer, so many Christians begin each day with this call to hear God's voice. Paul says the same: "now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Read before class: Psalm 95; Hebrews 3:7 to 4:11; 2 Corinthians 6:1-2

E2. Worry can keep us away from God until we feel we have things under control. How do prayer and thanksgiving turn that around? (Philippians 4:6-7)

Commentary

- "Undue care is an intrusion into an arena that belongs to God alone. It makes us the father of the household instead of being a child." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 4)
- "Paul wrote that everything is the proper subject of prayer. There are not some areas of our lives that are of no concern to God." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Philippians 4)
- "As a remedy against perplexing care, constant prayer is recommended." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Philippians 4)
- "We must join thanksgivings with prayers and supplications; not only seek supplies of good, but own the mercies we have received." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Philippians 4)
- "We can always find something to be thankful for, no matter what may be the burden of our wants, or the special subject of our petitions." (Barnes' Notes on Philippians 4:6)

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- "He not only knows our needs but knows them before we ask." (Q-239, which cites Philippians 4:6-7)
- "Because he is our provider we can walk by faith, knowing that we are in His care." (Q-239)
- "There are many models of prayer, but all prayer includes confession, repentance, adoration, petition and thanksgiving." (Q-221)

Summary

Worry can keep us away from God because we feel we must handle things ourselves first. Paul's answer in Philippians 4:6-7 is to bring everything to God in prayer, with thanksgiving. Anxiety makes us act like the head of the household instead of a child, and nothing in our lives is outside God's concern (Guzik). Thanksgiving reminds us of what He has already done, and there is always something to be thankful for (Barnes). God knows our needs before we ask, so we can walk by faith knowing we are in His care (Q-239, citing this passage).

Deep Dive

"Be anxious" in Philippians 4:6 is the same word Jesus uses in Matthew 6:25, "do not worry about your life" (Ellicott, Vincent). "Requests" means the specific details of what we ask (Vincent). "Guard" in verse 7 is a military word: God's peace stands watch over the heart like a sentinel (Vincent), and the mind is guarded "as a camp or castle is" (Barnes). Paul wrote these words in chains (Philippians 1:13), which makes his call to "Rejoice in the Lord always" (4:4) even more striking.

Read before class: Matthew 6:25-34; 1 Peter 5:6-7; Psalm 55:22

E3. What would a full yes to Jesus look like for someone just exploring faith, and for someone ready to go deeper? (Hebrews 3:15; also verse 14)

Commentary

- "Many Christians seem content with just 'dipping a bit' into Jesus." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on Galatians 3)
- "The same spirit with which Christians set out in the ways of God, they should maintain unto the end. Perseverance in faith is the best evidence of the sincerity of our faith." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Hebrews 3)

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- "By faith we must respond to the grace of God freely given in Jesus Christ and in His atoning work." (Q-105)
- "For adults who have been baptized, it is as well a re-affirmation of their faith in Christ and for the same strengthening and release of the Spirit." (Q-183)
- "By Baptism in the Holy Spirit we mean both the moment and process throughout a Christian's life when he or she experiences the release of the Holy Spirit which immerses both soul and body in His presence to such an extent that His life flows from them." (Q-146)

Summary

This is an application question. For someone exploring faith, a wholehearted yes might mean praying honestly for the first time, reading one of the Gospels, asking questions openly, or talking with a pastor about baptism. For someone ready to grow, it might mean a daily habit of prayer and Scripture, Confirmation or reaffirming baptismal vows (Q-183), seeking a fresh release of the Holy Spirit (Q-146), or serving others. A wholehearted yes is more than "dipping a bit" into Jesus (Guzik), and perseverance is the best evidence of sincere faith (Matthew Henry). In both cases the first step is the same: respond by faith to grace freely given (Q-105).

Deep Dive

Hebrews 3:14, the verse just before this week's reading, says "we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end." A wholehearted yes is both a beginning and a lifelong holding on. The church's sacramental life follows the same pattern: baptism as the beginning (Q-166), Confirmation as a strengthening and, for adults, a re-affirmation of faith (Q-183), and Baptism in the Holy Spirit as "both the moment and process throughout a Christian's life" (Q-146). Ruth's words to Naomi are a good picture of a wholehearted yes: "wherever you go, I will go" (Ruth 1:16).

Read before class: Ruth 1:16-17; Luke 9:57-62; Philippians 3:12-14

F. Carry His Invitation (2 Corinthians 5:20)

F1. Paul calls believers ambassadors for Christ. What does representing Him look like at work, at home, and in the neighborhood? (2 Corinthians 5:20)

Commentary

- "An ambassador does not speak to please his audience, but the King who sent him. An ambassador does not speak on his own authority; his own opinions or demands mean little. He simply says what he has been commissioned to say. But an ambassador is more than a messenger; he is also a representative, and the honor and reputation of his country are in his hands." (David Guzik, Enduring Word on 2 Corinthians 5)
- "He is sent to do what the sovereign would himself do were he present." (Barnes' Notes on 2 Corinthians 5:20)
- "Though God cannot lose by the quarrel, nor gain by the peace, yet he beseeches sinners to lay aside their enmity, and accept the salvation he offers." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on 2 Corinthians 5)

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- "As ambassadors of Christ's ministry of reconciliation, they foster love and peace between God and man and facilitate reconciliation among persons on earth." (Q-275, which cites 2 Corinthians 5:18-21)
- "They are to proclaim the gospel in their homes, in the world and in the Church." (Q-203)
- "We take the Kingdom in ourselves to the world. We are its presence." (Q-235)

Summary

An ambassador represents someone else and carries their message. An ambassador speaks for the King, not for himself, and the King's reputation is in his hands (Guzik). An ambassador does what the sovereign would do if present (Barnes). In everyday life that can mean showing Christ's kindness at work, being honest when it costs something, offering to pray for someone, and inviting people in. Peacemakers are "ambassadors of Christ's ministry of reconciliation" (Q-275), and every baptized Christian proclaims the gospel at home, in the world, and in the Church (Q-203).

Deep Dive

"We are ambassadors" is one Greek verb related to the word for an elder (Barnes). Paul uses it only here and in Ephesians 6:20, where he calls himself "an ambassador in chains." Older English Bibles said "messengers," and "ambassadors" first appeared in the King James Version of 1611 (Ellicott). In the ancient world an ambassador's person was regarded as sacred and protected (Barnes), which makes the treatment of the king's servants in Matthew 22:6 even more shocking. Paul's message as an ambassador is short: "be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Read before class: 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Ephesians 6:19-20; 1 Peter 3:15

F2. Who around us might assume there is no place for them in church, and why might they feel that way? (also Luke 14:21-23)

Commentary

- "The very poor and low in the world, shall be as welcome to Christ as the rich and great; and many times the gospel has the greatest success among those that labour under worldly disadvantages and bodily infirmities." (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Luke 14)
- "They were commonly regarded among the Jews as living in highways and hedges cast out and despised." (Barnes' Notes on Matthew 22:9)
- "and his willingness that the most despised should come and live" (Barnes' Notes on Luke 14:23)

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- "It is to see others no longer from a human point of view, but rather to see them as those created in his image." (Q-270)
- "It is made visible in the Eucharist, in the Church's life of service to the poor, and in his healing and transforming work in the lives of people." (Q-231)

Summary

This is an application question. People often name newcomers and visitors; people who are single, divorced, or widowed; people with a past they are ashamed of; those struggling with addiction or mental illness; people with disabilities; the poor; those hurt by a church before; and anyone who does not look like the people already there. The gospel often has its greatest success among those with the fewest advantages (Matthew Henry), and the highways stood for people regarded as cast out and despised (Barnes). We are asked to see each person as made in God's image (Q-270).

Deep Dive

Luke's version of the parable sends the servant first to "the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind" (Luke 14:21) and then to "the highways and hedges" (14:23). The people living by the hedges were the lowest class of all, people with no home who slept in the shelter of a wall or fence (Ellicott). Luke shows a "characteristic pastoral esteem for those on the margins of society" (Sharp). Jesus was criticized for exactly this kind of welcome: "This Man receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2).

Read before class: Luke 14:21-23; Luke 15:1-2; James 2:1-5

F3. How could a personal invitation to a meal, coffee, or this group help someone feel God's welcome for themselves? (also Luke 14:23; Acts 2:46)

Commentary

- "The gates of the Father's house are open for evermore, and in its 'many mansions' (John 14:2) there is, and ever will be, room for all who come." (Ellicott's Commentary on Luke 14:23)
- "the constraint which they bring to bear on men is that of 'the love of Christ'" (Ellicott's Commentary on Luke 14:23)
- "Do not hear their excuses on account of their poverty and low rank of life, but urge them so as to overcome their objections and lead them to the feast." (Barnes' Notes on Luke 14:23)
- "The design of the gospel is to gather souls to Christ" (Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on Matthew 22)

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- "Showing hospitality to strangers." (Q-271)
- "The work of the Holy Spirit is to bring individuals into a relationship with the Father and the Son" (Q-140)

Summary

This is an application question. A personal invitation often says "you're wanted" more clearly than a sermon. One line fits this week's title well: in the Father's house there is "room for all who come" (Ellicott). The outline's Practice section gives a simple plan: name one person, pray for them daily, and invite them to the group, a meal, or coffee with a specific day and time. The only pressure Christians use is the love of Christ (Ellicott), and showing hospitality to strangers is one of the works of mercy (Q-271). It is the Holy Spirit who draws people into relationship with God (Q-140); our part is the invitation.

Deep Dive

"Compel them to come in" (Luke 14:23) has sometimes been misused in history to justify forcing people into the faith. That is a sad mistake: force "may produce proselytes and hypocrites, but cannot possibly produce converts" (Ellicott), and the only pressure Christians bring is "the love of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:14). The phrase means earnest, personal urging that does not accept excuses about poverty or social standing (Barnes). Sharing a meal was central to how Jesus welcomed people, and the first Christians kept it up, "breaking bread from house to house" (Acts 2:46). A meal or a cup of coffee is a natural way to say there is room at the table.

Read before class: Luke 14:12-14; Acts 2:42-47; Romans 12:13

Sources

Source	Where to find it
ICCEC Catechism (2014), cited by Q-number	iccec.org PDF
John Chrysostom, Homily 69 on Matthew	Bible Hub
Carolyn Sharp, Working Preacher on Matthew 22:1-14 (includes Hilary of Poitiers and Jerome)	Working Preacher
David Guzik, Enduring Word on Matthew 22 (includes C.H. Spurgeon and William Barclay)	Enduring Word
David Guzik, Enduring Word on Romans 5, Galatians 3, Philippians 4, 2 Corinthians 5	Romans 5, Galatians 3, Philippians 4, 2 Corinthians 5
Matthew Henry, Ellicott, Barnes, and Vincent's Word Studies on Matthew 22	22:2, 22:3, 22:4, 22:5, 22:7, 22:9, 22:10, 22:11, 22:12
Matthew Henry, Ellicott, Barnes, and Vincent's Word Studies on other verses	Luke 14:18, Luke 14:23, Romans 5:8, Galatians 3:27, Colossians 3:17, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 3:15, Philippians 4:6, Philippians 4:7, 2 Corinthians 5:20
New King James Version (NKJV)	Bible Gateway