

A Wedding Invitation

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Preacher: Donnie Maclean

[0 : 00] I don't know if you ever stop and listen. Quite often when I'm in this kind of position, I kind of don't sing.

It sounds really daft because I want you all to sing and praise God.! And you hear you singing. And you hear people praising God. There's something reassuring, something good, something really gives you a buzz and lifts you up when you hear the people in the congregation lifting up their voices to praise God.

So I want to, because I know I'm going to forget, I want to thank you guys who are leading the worship tonight. It's really good to be able to do that. I'm presuming you've been invited to a wedding at some point.

I don't want to be presumptuous, so it would be quite good if someone would nod a head occasionally. But have you all been invited to a wedding? Have you ever been to a wedding?

[1 : 19] Or am I the only one? Yeah, well this side have. So have any of the rest of you been invited? Yeah. I got an invitation a few weeks ago. And I want to tell you about it.

Because this wedding invitation came through the door. I was out at our Tuesday night meeting. When I came home, there was this envelope.

There's only one thing wrong with it. It's kind of the colour of the envelope. But I got this envelope, and it was really, really good. And I kind of looked at it, and I thought, what is it?

And I opened it, and I read it. And the more I thought about this invitation, my mind came to this passage. A passage that tells me and you about God's love towards us.

Here is a passage that we read that tells us about a wedding. Now, I have to make a confession straight away here and say, that there's absolutely no way someone like me can really dig deep into this passage of God's word.

[2 : 31] But this passage is so deep. I'm leaving it to Thomas the Gordon. So in the next few weeks, tell them that I said you're to preach on this passage again to sort out everything I've done wrong.

I want to keep this nice and simple because that's what I understand. And I want tonight to look at this wedding.

I want to see what Jesus is telling us in this passage. It's about a wedding, but it's not just any wedding.

It's a wedding organised by a king. Weddings are events that all of us understand.

We all recognise weddings. We've all been at weddings. Some of us have been at our own weddings. So we all recognise it.

[3 : 34] But it's important also to remember that weddings are symbolic as well in the Bible. And so if you went to Isaiah 54, or if you went to Jeremiah chapter 2, or John 3, or Revelations chapter 19, you see the image of a wedding.

And that means it's a symbolic picture of the groom and the bride. The groom being Jesus, God's son. The bride being us, believers, followers of Jesus.

So there's two pictures here. One is the actual physical event. But there's also the symbolic picture as well.

And I'm going to try and do a bit of both. Look at the physical picture of a wedding and relate it spiritually as well.

And I want to begin by looking at the sender. It's a cracking invitation. I hope nobody recognises this wedding.

[4 : 45] But it's a really nice invitation. It's really fancy. But the great thing about this is it tells me who sent it. Who is it that's inviting me to this wedding?

And in this occasion in our culture, it's actually the parents of the bride. It's the parents of the bride who...

I'm going to put it there just so you all know I've been invited. So it's the parents of the bride in Lewis and in Scottish culture who do the invite.

But in this passage, it's the father of the groom. It's the father of the groom. But it doesn't really matter too much who it is.

It's the parents. It's the parents who are doing the invitation. The principle is the same. But the difference between the Bible and that invitation is it's a king.

[5 : 47] The Bible in this passage tells us the kingdom of heaven might be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son.

We have an invitation from the king to the wedding of his son. So that means the person who was getting married was the prince.

Straight away, from the very beginning, we are seeing in this passage that our father in heaven is giving you and I an invitation to trust in Jesus as our Lord and as our Saviour.

This is what this passage is really about. It is about God the Father inviting you and me to trust in Jesus for ourselves.

This isn't just a parable for 2,000 years ago. This is a reality for you tonight in Carlway. It is a reality for me here in Lewis.

[7 : 06] God the Father is inviting me and you to trust and know Jesus as our Lord and as our Saviour.

It's for you. And I could start straight away by saying are you willing to trust in Jesus as your Lord and Saviour? Do you know Jesus as your Lord and Saviour?

because this is the whole point the whole crux of this part of the passage that we're looking at. I've told everyone about this wedding but you know there's another wedding coming soon.

I think it's Princess Anne's son is getting married. I wonder what you would do if you got an invite to the royal wedding in a few weeks time whether you're a monarchist or not or 15 years ago if Prince William when he was getting married had sent you an invitation would you have accepted it?

Because it's a decision we have to make. And I know there's people who aren't really into the royal family it might be not the done thing for some people but I reckon I reckon supposing it's out of sheer nosiness everybody would say yes we want to go.

[8 : 38] The women the women want to go to Glasgow to get a new hat and a new outfit for the wedding. They want to see everything that's going on. They want to see who the guests are.

They want to see what the food's like. They want to see how the church is made up. they are going to definitely go there. And well as men we're going on a diet to get into our cults.

But we would accept the invitation wouldn't we? Even if it's just to see what was going on. yet our Father in heaven the King of Kings the Lord of Lords invites me to know a son and come to this great wedding feast and I say no and I put it off and I say not yet.

isn't it strange how that we are so ready to go to other events but when it comes to knowing Jesus hold on a moment hold on that's a bit much.

would any of us really say to Prince William and to the family if he was coming up and he sent you an invitation who here would honestly say well actually do you know what I'm dipping the sheep next week or actually you know they've had the lambs I'm going to take the lambs away from the sheep so I'm a wee bit busy that week.

[10 : 23] actually I've powered the croft and I've been a wee bit late in planting because that's exactly what we find here. They had to go off to their farm they had to get on with their business on the croft they had to go about their business in their banking they found excuse after excuse after excuse all of them every excuse legitimate in its own way.

nothing wrong in normal circumstances but not when you put them above Jesus not when you put your croft and your sheep and your sports and your family and your friend and your garden and whatever it might be it's not right when we put them before Jesus have you noticed have you noticed in that short passage the number of times invite is mentioned do you think it's once twice three times we go for four verse three they were invited to the wedding verse three verse four tell those who were invited verse eight the wedding feast is ready for those who were invited verse nine we read again go to the main roads and invite them that's four but let's turn to verse 14 for many are called but many are called many are invited five times we hear about the invitation that God gives to

you and me to know Jesus as our Lord and as our Saviour isn't it amazing how often God invites us to know

Jesus if I was going to be personal here from the age of I don't know when was I five I might have been earlier than five I went to Sunday school week after week I was brought to go to church every Sunday night between now it's a done thing I'm not good do we have any people good at numbers just say I went once a month for a year well that's 12 for 10 years that's 120 for 20 years that's 240 240 if I went once a month to God's house and I heard it been invited again and again and I I would see it almost every week God invited me so many times not once not four times not five countless times I heard the gospel how many times have you been invited to know Jesus for yourself if this is your first time it is great to see you it's so so good that you are with us tonight and if you've been coming for generations almost it's fantastic you are faithful at coming but do you know

Jesus for yourself that is the question I have to ask what is my relationship like with him one of the other things about this invitation here I haven't really seen it before but there's a website on it it tells me for information about the wedding please visit our wedding website I thought that was quite fancy then I realised God has told us where to go to find out about his son to find out about the groom I don't need to go on the internet I just need to go into my bible and I can find out about God's love towards me and how God has prepared a way of salvation for me someone was telling me earlier on today a story about

Oreo biscuits I never heard it before I hope you haven't either because it's going to totally ruin it about it about God's word that we need to open God's word how we need to read God's word how we need to enjoy God's word how we have to obey God's word and then you've got an Oreo biscuit so every time you have an Oreo biscuit think of what these initials say and go into God's word and see what he is saying to you and to me the king prepared for the most significant event in his son's life he prepared a massive great feast for his son and he wanted he wanted the invited guests to come and tonight tonight he wants you tonight he has brought you here and he has given you this invitation a personal invitation to come and know him to come because marriage in the bible speaks as I said about the relationship with

[16:31] Jesus can you imagine I really hope this doesn't happen so if you've been invited to a royal wedding you can correct me but imagine going to a royal wedding and all you get is a cup of tea and a tray big or a ham sandwich with a bit of cucumber on it how disappointed we would be how gutted we would be to have travelled all that way and that is all we are getting at a royal wedding what do we read about this feast what does God say to us what does Jesus say in this parable tell those who are invited I have prepared my dinner my oxen my father calves have been slaughtered everything is ready come to the wedding feast it's not a picnic it's not a barbecue you have been invited to a feast

I am being invited to the most wonderful wedding feast that there would ever be God has taken great planning into the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord and our Saviour Jesus is his only son no expense was spared his one and only son to be our Saviour didn't Jesus was Jesus not described by God in Luke 19 when he said when God said this is my beloved son listen to him will you not listen to the voice of Jesus tonight will you not listen to that stirring that thing that is going on in your minds and your hearts just now when you are hearing this invitation will you not respond the invitation is not from the

McDonald's it's not from a cousin it's not from a friend we've we've all I'm sure been invited to a wedding and you know they don't really want you for one reason there in America and you can't actually jump on the plane and be there for two days they invited you because they feel duty bound God is inviting you because he wants you tonight God wants you to be part of his family through what Jesus has done for you and for me but the other thing about invitation is it's personal this invitation has my name on it and so I know it's for me and you know the good thing about this wedding invitation it's not for you it's for me

I'm going because it says my name on it but it's a bit of a slight problem because if they used my proper name Donald it could be for anybody how many Donalds are there in this room tonight when I grew up there were six Donalds in my class in my year in school every person of my age growing up in my community was called Donald so imagine the invitation came just addressed to Donald it could be any of them it didn't come to Mr.

McLean as someone called me today it came to Donnie so it's mine and you ain't getting it it's a personal invitation to you and it's got your name on it whatever your name is because I don't know

you all and if I was going to write an invitation to you I probably would get your names mixed up or I'd spread it wrong and I would add confusion there's no confusion with God that invitation is personal to you but you know the great thing about this invitation it gets even better there can be no shadow of doubt I looked at it and I thought I didn't deserve it why am I getting invited to this wedding why why why and I looked and I looked and I looked and I thought no there's something wrong here but you know the green envelope

[21 : 35] I criticized it's got my name on it it's got more than my name on it you know Lewis we've got a nickname it's got my nickname on it as far as I'm aware there is only one Donnie Shuggles in Lewis in fact I'm pretty convinced there's only one in Scotland and I've never met anyone in the whole world with my nickname so I know I know this invitation to this wedding on Friday is for me that's how personal Colin and Ailey have been inviting me to their wedding God is more personal with his invitation to you to come and trust in Jesus as your Lord and as your Saviour no doubts no doubts can be in your mind that he is asking you there can be no doubts or there should be no doubts that he wants you it's not to the person next to you it's not to your friend it's not to anybody else if you were to look at

Moses next is chapter three God called Moses by name Zacchaeus the tax collector up a tree Jesus called him by his name go to the grave the empty grave Mary upset confused not understanding what was going on and Jesus called her by name Andrew the disciple was called by name and time and time again as we go through the Bible we find God speaking to people and calling them by name we find Jesus calling people by name and tonight tonight he's calling you by your name and he's saying to you come to this wedding come and understand and follow Jesus my son

I have prepared this feast for you look at what my son has done for you will you not come and follow him if you were to turn to Isaiah 43 God says I have called you by your name you are mine you are his what a great promise for those of us who know Jesus as our Lord and Savior we have been bought with a price that money cannot pay for and we are his and he knows us personally he knows he knows what you're going through he knows your struggles he knows your worries he knows what's going on in your head at two o'clock in your morning when the person in your own house is snoring away God knows that is his knowledge and his care and his love for you today tonight's not really a good example to refer to the stars in the sky because you can't see the sky but see on a nice clear night and you look up and you see one star appearing and then you see another and all of a sudden the sky is filled with a multitude of stars that you can't number and God named each and every one of them and this is the same

God who in his personal invitation knows you I don't know if any of you have played the lottery but there's an advert on the TV and there's this people that a village scene and there's this big red hand that appears from the sky and it says this voice booms out saying it could be you tonight you could win the lottery that's not how it works with God God doesn't say it could be God says it is God says to you tonight it's you it's not a million pounds or ten million pounds he's offering you his son he's not offering to make a millionaire he's offering you to be a son to be invited into his family will you not trust in him and tonight is something that's gone on in your life and something has happened in the past where once you are walking hand in hand with a saviour and you have fallen off and you've grown cold in your love for him and your relationship is not what it ought to be not what it used to be not what you want it to be

God is saying it's you come back come back to me come and have that right relationship another thing about this invitation this is a bit I don't like because somewhere it says I have to reply to reply it says RSVP apparently that's a posh word for replying I think it's French or something but it gave me a date where I had to reply and actually I've got a slight problem because the wedding's this Friday and I'm pretty sure the wedding well the wedding's the 29th of May but the invitation has to be replied by the 29th of March so if I haven't replied I'm too late there's a reply

[27 : 52] I have to respond have you responded to this invitation when God says to us and invites us are you willing to come and trust see if we have to reply to our wedding if we have to invite reply to invitations to events surely surely we need to reply to God so weddings have to make preparations for the numbers can you imagine if I had waited till the 30th can you imagine if I phoned up Colin tonight and said Colin I've changed my mind I'm coming to you wait hold on Donnie we've filled up you didn't reply we took it you weren't coming we've actually invited somebody else God is saying today is the day of salvation will you not follow will you not respond

today for you for me it's for us to respond and say yes

I will follow Jesus for myself will you not say yes to Jesus surely when it comes to spiritual matters when it comes to a relationship with a saviour it is only right it is only proper that we say yes because if we don't say yes we're actually saying no and we're saying no to him one of the amazing things about this passage is this that the people who it refers to each and every one of them already knew they had been invited they knew they had had the invitation once or twice before if you look at it go and tell those who were invited go and speak to them remind them to come everything is ready and still they decided they had no room no time for

Jesus they'd rather be out on the cross than be with Jesus they'd rather be out on the hills they'd rather be in the shops they'd rather be on holiday than know and follow Jesus us they had several invites how many times have you heard the gospel how many times have I heard the gospel and yet God in his love and his mercy says to us come come to me what is the priority we give there's an old time that asks the question have you any room for Jesus he who bore your load of sin he who knocks and asks our merchant sinner will you let him in room for pleasure room for business but for

Christ the crucified not a place where he can enter in the heart for which he died see it's so true we've got time for everything but even as believers even for those of us who claim and follow Jesus as our Lord and Saviour how hard it is to find time to spend with him in the morning because we slept in and we have to get to work and in the evening we're so tired we don't have time to read our Bibles and pray before we go and while the midweek meeting I've got homework I've got work to do I have to go into the office I actually there's a match on I think I'll go to the match tonight we have time for everything and all these things in themselves are good and proper but not when they come before a relationship with Jesus do you have time for Jesus in your life they had all been invited they didn't earn it they didn't deserve it it wasn't because they were great people just like I did nothing to invite my invitation I can't pay for that invite it would be an insult to go to this family and say do you know what I'll pay for my meal that's not how it works it's all been paid for we don't in ourselves deserve to be there and yet out of love we get invited there's one other thing for those of us who do know Jesus I've told you about this wedding told you lots about it but isn't it amazing those of us who know Jesus who trust in him will tell about weddings on this on the mainland but when it comes to telling people our friends our families our neighbours we just are a bit reluctant if we got invited to the garden party in

[33 : 56] Holyrood we would tell people if we got invited to a royal wedding not only would we tell people we'd probably have a feature in the cassette we'd certainly have it on whatsapp we'd certainly have it on instagram and facebook and yet we are so shy but there's one other thing I say with weddings weddings with weddings quite often if you're part of a family they'll come addressed to Mr.

and Mrs. McLean if you're married if you've got children Mr. and Mrs. McLean and family in the invitation from God there are no plus ones the invitation is to you you can't accept invitation for anybody else so whoever you are today come and accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour this passage this passage that we have read with all its deep meaning tells us that God invites people to the wedding he invites people to trust in his son it tells us it's personal it's to you and it's to me and it tells us we have to reply and tonight at seven o'clock in

Carlway Free Church that invitation is to you and you either accept it or you reject it and at two minutes past seven it is to me and I have a duty to accept it or reject it will you not accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and as your Saviour let's bow in prayer before we close in singing who