There’s a mobile app on the market. It’s called Got This Thing. It’s sort of a fake calendar app. It fills the calendar with all sorts of events – these are real local events based upon where the user lives – but that they may not necessarily be events the user plans to attend. But the app populates the user’s calendar with all these events so they can pretend to be busy if invited to something they don’t want to attend. A friend is moving and wants you to help? Oh gosh, you’d like to help but unfortunately you got this thing already scheduled in that time slot.

In the parable today, the king, which, of course, is God, has invited people, in this case, the Jewish people, to his Son’s wedding feast. The wedding feast represents Jesus’s Passion – his death and Resurrection that draw us to Him, that allow us to feast continually with Him around His table eternally – the feast we take every Sunday that foreshadows that heavenly feast.

In that time and culture, one would invite someone to come to the feast ahead of time and then when the feast was ready, go back out and tell those who had accepted the final invitation to come. This was kind of like a save the date, only with an RSVP clause. If one responds that the date has been saved for the feast, one receives a second invitation when the feast is ready. God had previously invited the Jewish people to the feast through extending a covenant to them through the Old Testament prophets, patriarchs and matriarchs and they had accepted.

Now, it is the week of Jesus’s passion. This parable is told after Jesus has entered Jerusalem triumphantly on the donkey and before his last meal with his disciples. The feast is ready, but those with whom Jesus has covenanted are going to reject Him and shout crucify Him rather than enjoying the feast.

So the King does what almost any host would do once the feast is ready. Not wanting the food and preparations to go to waste, he sends his servants out to bring in anyone they can find to enjoy the feast, the good people and the bad people. Jesus is offering a place at His table to everyone regardless of our own personal righteousness. Jesus will die to restore all of us to perfect relationship with Him and to bring us into everlasting joy with Him. In the parable, those invited only needed to come properly clothed to enjoy this lavish feast. We only need to come, clothed in Christ to receive this grace from God. We need to be willing to say, I follow Christ, and to allow Christ’s goodness and love to surround and clothe us.

Now this sounds easy, and in many ways it is easy. God doesn’t ask that we be perfect. We’re not required to host a reciprocal feast and invite our Lord to it, like social etiquette often demands when we’re dealing with a human host.

But in some ways, accepting this invitation is difficult. Sometimes we fill our calendar too full of real events that we have no time to spend with Jesus in prayer or worship. Sometimes we become so involved with the secular business of life, the everyday busyness of mundane details, that we don’t think about Jesus and we miss the joy that is part of this feast. We’ve filled up our calendar with all these events and when Jesus issues an invitation to us, all our slots are full. We have no time to pray with Jesus; we have no time to attend worship; we have no time to minister to a friend or to invite someone to church or to do work to help the poor. We have no time to come to the feast and we miss out on the grace and joy that is part of that feast with Jesus.

Sometimes we come to the feast, but don’t seek the renewal of life that Jesus offers – we don’t want Jesus to change us and make us the best of who we were created to be; we just want to keep being the worst of ourselves. In that way we are like the poor unfortunate man who was thrown out of the feast for wearing the wrong clothes. He was a hypocrite. Some of us are hypocrites – we talk the talk but we don’t really believe in what Jesus offers and we don’t really want it to change us – we don’t want Jesus to clothe our lives. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus’s worse condemnation is for those who are hypocrites – those who take part in the outward aspects of faith, especially those who take part to impress others, while on the inside not really being open to the transforming love of Christ. Hypocrites also miss out on the joys of feasting with Jesus. There is, however, grace even for the hypocrites. In the parable, when Jesus finds the improperly clothed man among his guests, he calls him friend and gives him an opportunity to make that important connection with him and to open up to Jesus’s love, but the person can find nothing to say to Jesus, who has invited him to this wonderful feast.

Jesus has offered to bless us lavishly, no matter how bad or good we are. Jesus has offered us a place at the table with him, now and forever. We are to accept that invitation and once we accept it to be open and ready for God to pour out His grace in our lives, to change us, to mold us and to be Christ in Us.

Amen