

There is something else so sad about people making light of the gospel message and life. Jesus brings out how making light of it is just one form of actually resisting and opposing the gospel way altogether. He tells about how others didn't only passively pay no attention to the gospel, but they actively rejected it and went against it, not hesitating even to kill those who came with the invitation. With this description Jesus relates the history of the unbelieving Jews, and how often they refused to listen to God's Word brought by the prophets and how many of them they killed even. And Jesus knew even as He was telling this parable of the wedding feast about the plots of the Jews to kill Him too. This parable was told in the week of Jesus' crucifixion.

Taking lightly the gospel message is hardly different than despising the prophets and yes, slaying God's servants and even Jesus yourself. Do you realize this too? When you won't pay close attention to God's Word but you are all attention to everything and everyone else around you, it is like you too saying in regards to Jesus, as the people shouted long ago, "Away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him!" When you care not for the wedding feast God makes known and prepared with His gospel message, you are not simply being careless about some teaching only, but you are despising and rejecting a Person, no one less than God's beloved Son and the only Saviour from sin, Jesus Christ the Lord! Should people not be afraid, too, how when passively not responding to the gospel now perhaps and going on in that way can lead to, and often does, becoming actively hardened and hostile to anything to do with the gospel message and way? Is that how you will continue on in your ways and become more and more hardened in heart as time goes on? Or do you shrug this point off as well, thinking, what is this preacher talking about anyways?

Jesus' sad commentary about so many people in his day, "*They made light of it, [the gospel] and went their ways.*" Are you making light of the gospel message and invitation and the only Saviour from sin and death and hell for us? When will you stop making light of it - when it is forever too late? Amen

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



MAKING LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL [1]

This gospel message is based on Jesus' so called parable of the wedding feast found in Matthew 22:2-14. What I would highlight from this parable is how people so often and too often sinfully and tragically make light of God's Word. Let us read the parable first.

"The kingdom of heaven [said Jesus], is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would 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. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? 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."

Jesus here exposes and opposes how the people made light of the gospel. The setting of the parable brings this out and so does the content and ending of the parable. It is not an uncommon problem either that people make light of the gospel. In dealing with this passage and parable, it could be that God's Word with this message is exactly addressing what is true about you. In connection with God's Word, especially the call to repent of sin and believe in Christ and follow after Him, you more or less make light of it all, just shrug your shoulders with it all, and it has no real effect or impact on your life at all. Is that perhaps true of you?

We will study this passage with verse 5a as our main thought, "*But they made light of it [the gospel call and life] and went their ways.*" They went on in their ways, not really paying attention to anything Jesus said. Not listening, not obeying, each went on in their own ways. It is Jesus' sad commentary here. That is what we will focus on this time, and next week we will consider Jesus' solemn condemnation of this response to His call and Jesus' salvation call even in this situation.

Notice Jesus' sad commentary here. With this parable Jesus is speaking to the sinful resistant attitude of the scribes and Pharisees against Him. Everything in their lives and with their manner before Jesus the Saviour shows they are not taking Jesus Christ for Who He is and they are not believing nor receiving Him as only Saviour and Lord in their lives. The exact opposite is the case, and it is rooted in this, they made light of Jesus and the gospel message and invitation He brought and taught.

To make light of something means not to take something all that seriously, indeed, not to take it seriously at all. To make light of something means to disregard that something, to despise it, and reject it really. When people live making light of the gospel, they don't listen to the gospel call and demands, but they do their own thing instead. Is this perhaps true of you, my friend, if you are honest now? You live life, under the gospel message, but your basic and ongoing response is one of making light of it all? Is this an uncovering Word of God, striking home to where you are at presently in your life in connection with God and the Christian gospel? Is this more or less true of you that you live making light of the gospel?

Jesus brings out how people make light of the gospel. It is not always that they rather do bad and wicked things, but they are so preoccupied with so many other things, even so many things that are legitimate and necessary, and not bad in themselves. You make light of the gospel because you have so much else on your mind and you are busy with so many other things pressing for your attention. You may not be hostile to the gospel, at least not yet, but you just can't be so bothered with it right now because there is so much else to think about and to do, to enjoy and live for. Oh, you will go to church once in a while maybe, and you aren't against being religious and the Christian gospel, but apart from some rituals, if you are honest, you make light of the gospel. There is much of this world you don't make light of, but the gospel message, yes, you make light of it, could it be? I mean the gospel call to live in humble repentance and sincere faith and godliness and service before the Lord in the light of Jesus Christ and to be living members of the body of Christ, loving God above all, and loving your neighbour as yourself. If anything at all, you say, "Later, yes, later, one day I will take that all more to heart, but not yet, and not now." Am I describing you? Is God's Word exposing you with Jesus' analysis here, His sad commentary about the people: "*but they made light of it, [His gospel] and went their ways.*"

I call it Jesus' sad commentary here because from this parable even about the wedding feast, what do we learn from Jesus that people are making light of? When you pay no attention or very little attention to the gospel message and way, you are making light of the greatest treasure and blessing there ever could be! If you make light of a job offer that would double your wage or salary, that would be one thing, but to make light of the gospel message described in this parable as the royal wedding feast is to make light of receiving the greatest blessings in life for here and hereafter, and to make light of receiving all those blessings freely and abundantly offered to us in the gospel. This wedding feast is about the King's Son and His marriage to His people, His bride, the Christian church, and it is a feast with food supply so rich and so free and abundant! The picture Jesus makes is that with Him there is fullness of supply in all our needs for body and soul. Hearing Jesus' voice and following after Him and His invitation to have Jesus as your only Saviour and Lord, you will never be disappointed. Indeed, the Bible makes clear it is the only way really never to thirst again and never to hunger anymore. The wedding feast invitation here is about being saved and delivered from our union and condemnation with the first Adam in whom we all fell into sin, and being brought into union and salvation with the second Adam, Jesus Christ, the Saviour from sin.

What you make light of in life is so telling, and nothing can be more tragic than to make light of what counts above all things, and to be preoccupied instead with all kinds of lesser and earthly things that in the end amount to nothing at all and profit us in nothing at all. This is why I call this first point, Jesus' sad commentary here. Are you perhaps having things all backwards in your life, focusing on what doesn't count and not paying attention to what counts above all, not making light of the trinkets and trivia of this world, but making light of the truth and treasures of the gospel and the world to come?

We need to see something else that brings out the sadness of Jesus' commentary here, "*but they made light of it, and went their ways.*" Jesus is speaking especially about God's covenant people, the Old Testament Jews in particular. God's covenant people then, and still today you can say, are people with the special invitation from God, indeed, with sign and seal even, that coming to Christ they will not be put to shame; they will be welcomed and blessed beyond measure and beyond words, and beyond this world to the next. Have you been raised in a Christian home and church? Are you a member of God's New Testament covenant people, raised with many gospel privileges above others, and yet you are making light of it all? The people in our Scripture passage, the scribes and Pharisees, were trusting in rituals and their own works and traditions and making light of the gospel of grace through Jesus Christ. Is that what you are doing too, in some way? Or are you taking God's gospel call most seriously?