

### Lectionary passages:-

**Exodus 32: v1-14;**

**Isaiah 25 v1-9;**

**Philippians 4 v1-9;**

**Matthew 22 v1-14**

I sometimes make a cake, eggs flour and all the ingredients required, together with a bit of elbow grease (or a mixer!) Once the mixture is ready, it still needs time in the oven!

When we read the Bible, we make the mixture, if you like, by digging out the verses and mixing them together as we consider, think and pray.

Over these last weeks I have produced notes to read and often used them to speak on Sunday morning. But we have done no more than get to the mixture stage as it were....we need to cook! Time is needed for the words to make changes to our hearts and lives before the cake is complete.

I want to encourage us all to follow through our Sunday thoughts, allowing our lives to change, develop and grow, to be different as the mixture changes into a cake in the oven.

Once again this morning we have a parable of Jesus in Matthew, when a wedding feast is prepared and like last week the Isaiah passage also refers to a great feast prepared by God for his people.

*A king prepares a wedding banquet for his son, and proudly sends out the invites.*

*The King is surprised when his guests do not wish to come to the lavish celebrations, amazingly they all have better things to do, one to work in his field and one to his business! Amazing!*

*Yet others even seized the messengers of the King and ill-treated them or even killed them.*

In the parable Jesus is referring to Israel and to us, to all who reject God's invite to come to the celebration of Jesus, the bridegroom marrying his bride, the church.

*The King wants a full house so sends out invites to all and sundry, to those who would normally not expect to get an invite, or deserve one!*

Jesus came to the nation of Israel to invite them to heaven itself, but they roundly rejected him.

This means that the Gentiles, you and I have been given the chance to come to the King's feast.

There is always the chance that we also may be too busy! So sad if we are, rather work than feast!

Jesus comes to us in church and invites us to the feast, but we can be so busy or distracted.

There is a problem, a wedding guest has come without the proper wedding clothes, and he stood out like a sore thumb, like turning up to a wedding in one's swimming wear!

(We need to remember that in the ancient world an invite to a wedding came with a set of clothes just as the main party these days usually all wear hired suits and look the same!)

The point Jesus is making here is:- we can only appear in heaven at the banquet if we wear clothes given by God, his righteousness, his forgiveness and his grace no one can be there based on their own clothing/actions or good deeds.

The man without the right clothes was kicked out, just as we shall be if we seek to appear before God in clothing of our own design and paid for/earned by us. We need God's grace our own

Efforts are not acceptable, a difficult truth to swallow, as many have proved over the years!