Quit That. Do Better.
Matthew 22:1-14
Wedding Banquet Parable
Christ United, Dewitt
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May the God who creates us, redeems us and sustains us, be with us this day and remain with us always. Amen.

Good Morning.

Don't' be a jerk. Quit that, do better. Those are just a few of my mottos I try to embrace on a daily basis. Today, I believe, I have found a biblical, basis for these life truths.

I love a good parable, except for when I don't. Truth be told, the parables I don't like are usually the ones I don't understand right away. So, this was never one of my favorites. But, after rolling around with if for a while, I may have more of an understanding, and so it's grown on me. This particular parable is allegorical, metaphorical and hyperbolic. Let me give you my read on it and you all can decide if it's a fan favorite or not.

The king's son is getting married.

The King invites all of the high-end people to the banquet. The "A" list: the worthies, "the importants", the celebrities of the day. But they all seem to have more important things to do. So, they blow off the king. The king gets testy and a bit vindictive. It turns out the King does not suffer fools lightly. So, he sends his soldiers to impress upon the people the fine print of his gracious invitation to this lovely party. But still, they blow off the king's representatives. Some just wander away and continue with their very important day to day activities. Others grab the king's servants and kill them. (Remember I said this was allegorical, metaphorical and hyperbolic?) The king is peeved. Mayhem ensues. Enough said.

The king moves on. He has a banquet prepared. He needs people to attend. So, he sends out another invitation. This time to the "B" list of people. I kinda figure I'd be on the "B" list. The invite goes out to absolutely everyone—good and bad. Everyone gets invited. And pretty much everyone shows up. The king has a party on his hands. He wanders through the crowd, taking it all in, pretty happy. Until he spots one fellow, who has answered the invitation, but failed to change into a celebratory, festive, formal wedding garment. The fellow has ***failed*** to change.

The king is furious, and he throws the poorly dressed fellow into outer darkness. At first read, and as someone who is not always known for my fashion sense, I'm appalled that this poor guy gets thrown out because he doesn't have on the right outfit.

But the more commentaries I read, the better sense I had of the allegorical meaning. Let's be clear on more than one occasion my spouse Susan has accused me of being a bit too literal in all things. So, let's let go of a literal interpretation and look at it this way.

Everyone gets invited—absolutely everyone gets invited all are issued an amazing invitation to God's Kingdom. We are all, made in God's image and likeness and we are all invited to the wedding banquet. The only catch—is having been called—we can't just show up—in our old garments—as our old selves. We cannot accept the invitation and keep doing the same stupid things we did before we heard God's invitation. Simply put, quit that. Do better.

We are accepted and we are loved and God invites us to be with God. And being accepted and completely and utterly loved well that's our invitation to change. To set aside the deeds of darkness, to put on the armor of light (Romans 13:12) To lay aside our previous ways, to not settle for being dressed as our old ratty selves, to no longer let the essence of who we are, made in God's image and likeness, be dimmed by cloaks of past sins, past self-absorption.

The invitation comes to all of us as we are. Accepting the invitation requires that we no longer limit ourselves to how we have been but instead be willing to grow and to change. Relinquish the old, instead, adorning ourselves in God's hope and clothing ourselves in God's love.

Because, friends, there is a Banquet, a table set for us, waiting for us, here and now. I say to myself, "Bonnie, quit that, do better. Don't be a jerk. God is calling you. God is calling all of us.

May it be so.
Amen.