

FFWPU Europe and the Middle East: Not Ready for Greatest Invitation of Them All?

Knut Holdhus
December 1, 2024



Not ready

18:36)

In his parables Jesus spoke about being ready 2,000 years ago. Now, Dr. Michael Balcomb delves into the vital question if you are not ready when the great day comes

Part 2 of extracts from a sermon titled "The Spirit and the Bride Say, 'Come!'", that Dr. Michael Balcomb, the President of the Europe and the Middle East Region of the [Family Federation for World Peace and Unification](#), gave at the Sunday service at the River South branch in London, UK on 24th November 2024. Slightly edited.

See [part 1](#), [part 3](#)

Jesus said,

"My kingdom is not of this world." (John



But we know that actually it was supposed to be of this world, right? Jesus came to build the [Kingdom of Heaven](#) on the earth. And it was only the disinterest of the people of his time that forced the alternative path of the cross.

Jesus himself did not talk about the "marriage supper of the Lamb" in the Gospels. That Revelation comes later in the Book of Revelation [Editor's note: Revelation 19:6-9], but he did talk a

lot about [marriages](#) and gave several illustrations of good and bad behaviour at a wedding.



Dr. Michael Balcomb Nov. 24, 2024

How many people here have been to a wedding? I think you all have, right? How many of you have been here a wedding and been silently appalled by some of the guests?

[...] Weddings are meant to be happy, joyful occasions, and they are. But sometimes, people get out of hand, and they either say the wrong thing or do the wrong thing or drink too much. And what should have been a glorious celebration, can be a little spoiled by the behaviour of the guests - hopefully not by the behaviour of the bride and groom.

I just want to share with you two parables that Jesus spoke about, explaining about [marriage](#) feasts. And it's interesting that Jesus chose a [marriage](#) as the metaphor or illustration of what it's like to be invited to the [Kingdom of Heaven](#). Jesus wanted people to think of it in terms they understood, right?

Almost everyone's been to a wedding, so Jesus used that as a sample of what it would be like. And there are two parables. They're almost the same, but they're a little bit different.

The first one is in the Gospel of Luke. I think we're familiar with it. It's Luke 14:16-24.

"Jesus replied, 'A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests.'"

You know this story.

"At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who'd been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'"



Parable of the wedding feast

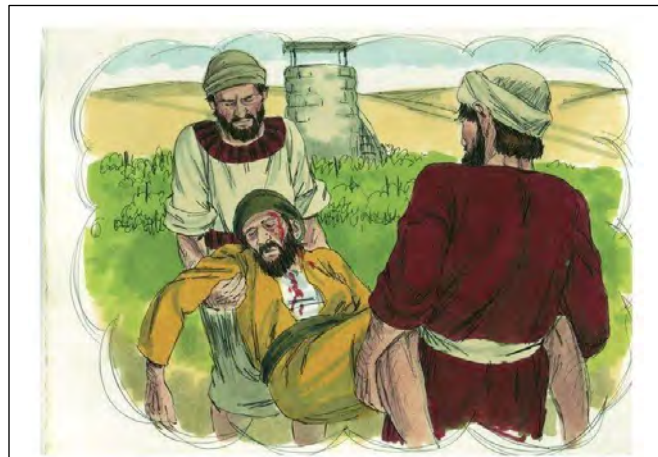
come."

What could possibly stop a young married couple from going to another wedding, right? The excuses are laughably bad; they're so weak. It's like almost not trying. And we used to laugh at that. Remember that song we used to sing, "I cannot come, I cannot come to the banquet." We used to laugh. It used to be a famous workshop song. [...]

The other parable - a bit more pointed - is in the Gospel of Matthew, and in this case, it really is a marriage supper. Just to remind you,

"The [kingdom of heaven](#) is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused.

Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fatted cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'"



The messengers were beaten up

Here's that word again - come!

"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'"

How lame is that, right? Nobody buys property without looking at it first.

"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please, excuse me.'"

Just like that. He couldn't wait. And perhaps the strangest is,

"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't

come.'"

But they don't. In fact, not only do they not; they go off, one to his field, another to his business, and the rest actually seized the messengers and beat them up.

The king was infuriated, and the servants were sent out to invite other people, anybody, and even to force them to come in.

To give you a little bit of context, how it worked in Jesus' time with [marriages](#) and weddings. Usually, the bride and the groom would be introduced by their parents, and the parents would make the [marriage](#) contract and there would be a signing, a bit like our dedication ceremony [Editor's note: engagement

ceremony practiced in the [Family Federation](#)].

And that might be the very first time that the bride and groom actually met each other. It might sound familiar for some of us here.

I actually witnessed this for myself live in Jerusalem about 20 years ago, because we were staying in a hotel that was popular with Orthodox Jewish families.

And on a Sunday, normally you'd see these nervous young people come in and meet each other for the first time, basically to agree, "We're going to get married."

But then if they agreed and signed the contract, what would happen is that the bride would go back to her parents, and the bridegroom would go to get ready. It was not just to change his suit, but to get a house, to

prepare everything so that he could welcome his new bride.

And of course, that would take time. It could take days, could take weeks, could take months. So there's this period of time when people are expecting the bridegroom, but nobody's quite sure when he'll come. That's why Jesus told other parables about people who got tired of waiting and let their oil run out. But that's not today.



Marriage contract being signed by young Jewish couple

This is the metaphor that Jesus used twice. There's a banquet. It's great. In fact, everyone needs that invitation. It's the hot ticket in town. [...]

You get the invitation, but then for whatever reason, you start to get distracted. You start thinking about other things that you feel would be more important, that you need to do.

And finally, almost unexpectedly, the great day comes, and you're not ready. And I put it to you that this is not just a cautionary tale for the Jews of Jesus' time, or for guests at a workshop 40 years ago, or even to Christians that [Mother](#) has asked us to reach out to right now.

But first of all, what about myself? Am I really ready for that invitation? Am I ready to prioritise that day above everything else? When the Spirit says, "Come!", will I come?

As I mentioned, we're not just talking in spiritual or vague terms here. We're talking about a practical, real invitation that is coming soon, and to which you are invited again.

Continued in [part 3](#).

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Invitation: The Spirit And The Bride Say, "Come!"

• November 30, 2024 • Knut Holdhus



"One of the favourite words of God is 'come'", claims Michael Balcomb, extending invitation. "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'"

Part 1 of extracts from a sermon titled "The Spirit and the Bride Say, 'Come!'", that Dr. Michael Balcomb, the President of the Europe and the Middle East Region of the Family Federation for

World Peace and Unification, gave at the Sunday service at the River South branch in London, UK on 24th November 2024. Slightly edited.

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As you can see, my title is "The Spirit and the Bride Say, 'Come!'"




Illustration used on 24th Nov. 2024. Screenshot

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
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This was the theme of the seminar in Las Vegas that I just returned from late Friday night. And of course it's talking about this verse in Revelation 22:17.

By the way, this is the 13,997th Bible verse, only two from the end in the 1189th chapter. And **True Father** said that **God** deliberately concealed the final message of the Bible right at the very end. And it is in fact the last word from **God** for 2000 years if we consider the Bible as the authoritative word of **God**.

We're going to read it together [...] Shall we give it a try?

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!'
And let the one who hears say 'Come!'
Let the one who is thirsty come;
and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life." (Revelation 22:17)

I think our Heavenly Parent's favourite word is "come". For example, in the Old Testament time, **God** said to the people of Israel,

"Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, I will make them white as snow [...]." (Isaiah 1:18)

And Jesus said,

"Come to me all you who labour, [...] and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28)

And in this verse we have the Spirit telling us to come to receive the water of life.

So there's a principle here. Although **God** has been longing and waiting for thousands of years, our Heavenly Parent does not force or insist on what he wants, what she wants. It's always a matter of an invitation, but it's a really pointed invitation:

"Come! Don't think about it! Don't check your calendar! Come! And come for something really special – to live eternally in the **Kingdom of God** with our Heavenly Parent."

But it starts, as we well know, with a very special event which we've heard a lot about this year – the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' [[Editor's note: Revelation 19:6-9](#)].

You may have heard so much about it that you don't want to hear anymore, but the bad news is you're going to hear about it one more time today.

Of course, **True Mother came to Munich** in May. [...] It is a windy autumnal day today, with the leaves blowing on the ground. So I thought,

"Let's go back for a moment to spring and that very happy day when **True Mother** came to **speak to us** in Munich."

We had two and a half thousand people in the room, but later on we found out another 20,000 had been watching online, which is really quite extraordinary. [...]

True Mother was really smiling the rest of the day. And of course, she talked about the 'marriage supper of the Lamb',

"I came here today because of Jesus' wish, Jesus, who said that he would come again. And when he returns, there will be the 'marriage supper of the Lamb', and only then can we see the completion of the Christian providence."

And later on that day, at lunch, and again that evening when we went to visit **True Mother** in her hotel room, she emphasized,

"What I really want you to be doing in Europe is to testify to



Jesus of Nazareth. Photo: Nesrine Younes. License: [CC ASA 4.0 Int](#), Cropped



Mother Moon speaking in Munich, Germany 19th May 2024. Photo: [Andranik Karagezian-Skrodzki / FFWPU](#)

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the Christian churches and people of other faiths. For 2000 years, Jesus has been working in Europe to prepare for this day."

But you need to give the invitations, right? You need to invite people to come to this event.

This summer, Fumiko [Mrs. Balcomb] and I were happy and fortunate to celebrate not the 'marriage supper of the Lamb', but the marriage supper of our little lamb, our youngest son. And when you plan a big event, there's a number of things you think about, right? First of all, you try to set the date, and then you start thinking about the potential guests, who might be a good person to come. And then you think about who will actually get an invitation and then hopefully they'll RSVP (respond) and they'll say, "Yes, I'm coming." Then, with that information you can plan the event.

Who's invited to the 'marriage supper of the Lamb' – not one family's wedding, but this culminating event at the end of history?

A long time ago, a famous evangelist went to Chicago, and he was welcomed by the mayor. The preacher said,

"Could you give me a list of some of the people in Chicago who need to hear the gospel message?"

He was thinking, "Perhaps the civic leaders or persons with positions."

The mayor said, "Just a moment." He went out and came back with the Chicago phone book. He said,

"Here it is. Everybody in Chicago is in need of the gospel message."

Reaching out to Christians. I've been doing a bit of that lately with your help. For example, we held a [Divine Principle](#) workshop in Birmingham about six weeks ago in a Christian church with 150 or so people of all faiths actually coming to hear the [Divine Principle](#). [...]

And as you know, I've just come back from Las Vegas where this week we had the *World Clergy Leadership Conference* which is now called the *World Christian Leadership Conference*. [...]

Continued in [part 2](#), [part 3](#)

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You are invited! Illustration: Microsoft Designer Image Creator, 30th Nov. 2024

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