

BLESSINGS ALWAYS

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Association Minister Message

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"GUESTS." Many protocols determine the *GUEST* lists for family gatherings and social interactions. Matthew (chapter 22) writes about the *Parable of the Wedding Party* and in it the king is having trouble getting guests to come to his son's wedding party. It is significant that Jesus indicates it is the invitation of the king, the one who rules and has dominance over the *GUESTS*. Who would not want to be there, at least it seems that way. There is *"the list"* and the king sends out his servants that it was time for the party—and those on the list refuse to attend and *"paid no attention and went away..."* Some of the *GUESTS* even killed servants which lead to the king sending soldiers *"to destroy those murderers and set their city on fire."* Everything was prepared for the party and no *GUESTS*. The king then sent his servants to *"invite everyone you find to the wedding party."* Matthew notes that the servants found people who were *"both evil and good. The wedding party was full of GUESTS."*

There seems to be a ranking of *GUESTS* for parties. Hosts try to seat together *GUESTS* who get along and making sure antagonists are at separate tables (or having thoughts that certain *GUESTS* not show up). It certainly is thought provoking that Jesus states that *"both evil and good"* are at the party. What kind of *GUEST* are we—wanted *GUESTS* who are on the prime list or *GUESTS* of dubious character? The wedding party happens and there is a celebration with *"evil and good GUESTS."*

There are many versions of the following prayer usually prayed at mealtime: *"Come Lord Jesus be our GUEST, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen."* What would happen if Jesus is invited to be present wherever we are? Can we categorize our lives with or without Jesus? WWJD (What would Jesus do?) is incomplete, for our intentionality, motives, and decisions come from within as we wrestle with what Jesus calls us to do and be in relationship with one another. Another insight from the prayer is to recognize that all we have been given, have now and will receive, are GIFTS. We say we *"own"* our houses, cars, bank accounts, the day—but in reality God has entrusted these things to our care and stewardship. We are just *GUESTS* of God on a journey of time from birth to eternity; it is how we live that in-between time as *GUESTS* of the kind and generous God. We are both the invitees to have the Triune God as our *GUEST*, and *GUESTS* of the Triune God who invites us to have blessings now and forever. It is time to celebrate with God and one another! In the 106th Psalm the psalmist declares, *"Praise the Lord! Give thanks to the Lord because God is good, because God's faithful love endures forever."* **BLESSINGS ALWAYS.**