

# Good News for Families

## The Ideal Wedding Guest

October 2020

Like many things in life, you don't become well acquainted with a situation until you go through it yourself.

Until you're a parent, you simply don't know what it's truly like to raise children. If you've never moved to a new house, you can merely sympathize with someone who is packing endless boxes and switching over their utilities. Unless you've supported a loved one through cancer, it's difficult to know what it actually entails.

I'm fairly sure that I was a terrible wedding guest—until I got married. When you're the one who has to get the RSVPs to the caterer on time, strategize about table settings, and plan airport transportation for thirty-eight out-of-town guests, you gain a bit of perspective. Suddenly, you learn what it is to be a fantastic wedding attendee. And what it means to be a royal pain.

In Matthew 22, Jesus tells a parable about a particular king whose invites are just that—a royal pain. He sends his servants out to bring in the crowds, only the crowds who were invited never come. In fact, they mistreat the messengers and add insult

to injury. They're the worst kind of wedding guests, because they care nothing for the king, nothing for his son, and nothing for his grand feast. They know better; they're concerned with their own lives, and they don't have a spare moment to show gratitude for the wonderful gifts the king is presenting (Matthew 22:1–14).

Are we any different? We aren't exactly stellar wedding guests either. We insist on our own way, we pretend that God doesn't exist, and we have a habit of taking His gifts for granted. We complain about and mistreat our family, friends, pastors, and teachers, leaving God no choice but to move on from us. After all, a forced love is no love.

Thankfully, we have Someone who stands in our place. The ideal wedding guest. Of course, He's not exactly a guest—He's more the guest of honor. He's the Son. He is well acquainted with the ins and outs of this wedding feast. He cares deeply for His Father, the host, and there is nowhere else He'd rather be than together in celebration with His family.

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What's more, we are His family. He doesn't let us stay home but instead clothes us in His own wedding attire and ushers us in, because it wouldn't be a party without us. He wipes away our excuses, shows us firsthand what it means to be a guest at this feast, and forgives us when we fall short. Why? Because He knows what it is to be separated from the Father. He'll never let us get away with ditching the party. He wants every last one of us to be there—us and our families.

So the wedding hall was filled with guests. (Matthew 22:10)

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## Recommended Reading

### Grace, Faith, Scripture Portrait of a Lutheran

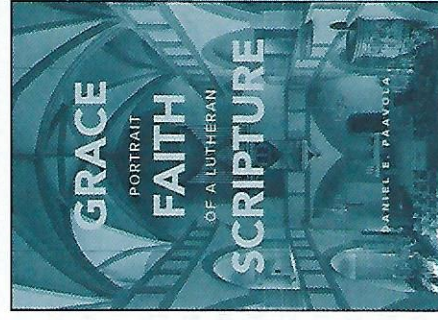
by Daniel Paavola

Grace, faith, and Scripture: three solas, or “alones,” that have long been used to characterize the unique theology of the Lutheran faith. These three solas are also about relationship—our relationship with God. We as Lutherans have a unique view of our relationship with God, built on grace alone.

Using these three solas as an outline, Dr. Daniel Paavola starts to deepen our understanding of a Lutheran life and viewpoint. While all Lutherans are different, this book paints a portrait of what, at its core, it means to be Lutheran.

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This is good news for us! We may feel we're unworthy attendees—more like wedding crashers than wedding guests. As parents and grandparents, we're daily confronted with our shortcomings. Through His death and resurrection, Christ makes us, too, into the ideal guests, holy and blameless, just like Himself. For three days, Jesus was separated from God the Father in death. He abstained from the feast so that we would be welcomed in with open arms instead of left to ourselves in the dark. Now, we'll never have to know firsthand what it means to be separated from God—we can only sympathize, and that's just the way He wants it.



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