

Matthew 22:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

Analysis

But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise (οἱ δὲ ἀμελήσαντες ἀπῆλθον, ὃς μὲν εἰς τὸν ἴδιον ἀγρόν, ὃς δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν ἐμπορίαν αὐτοῦ)—The verb *amelēsantes* means 'to be careless, neglectful, indifferent'—not hostile, but dismissive. They didn't attack the invitation; they simply ignored it as unimportant. The *agron* (field/farm) and *emporian* (business/trade) represent legitimate earthly pursuits that become idolatrous when prioritized above the kingdom.

This is the sin of ordinary life—not obvious rebellion, but the slow drift into preoccupation with temporal concerns. Luke 14:18-20 expands this: 'I have bought land...I have bought oxen...I have married a wife.' Good things become God-substitutes. The tragedy is not that they chose evil, but that they chose the lesser good.

Historical Context

In first-century Jewish culture, refusing a royal wedding invitation for business reasons would be considered incomprehensibly foolish and dishonoring. Agriculture and commerce were important, but to miss a royal feast for such mundane concerns demonstrated a complete failure to recognize the honor being offered.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What 'legitimate' pursuits in your life might be causing you to 'make light' of God's kingdom invitation?
2. Why is indifference sometimes more dangerous than outright hostility to the gospel?
3. How does Jesus's warning about 'cares of this world' (13:22) connect to this parable's portrayal of farm and merchandise?

Interlinear Text

οἱ	δὲ	ἀμελήσαντες	ἀπῆλθον	ὁ	μὲν	εἰς	τὸν
G3588	But	they made light of	it and went their ways	G3588	one	to	G3588
	G1161	G272	G565		G3303	G1519	
ἴδιον	ἀγρόν,	ὁ	δὲ	εἰς	τὴν	ἐμπορίαν	αὐτοῦ·
his	farm	G3588	But	to	G3588	merchandise	G846
G2398	G68		G1161	G1519		G1711	

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 2:3 (Parallel theme): How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;