

First surprise – Jesus describes his kingdom as a great banquet – EXPAND

Do we see it like that? Negative stereotypes

Importance of hospitality – reflects the kingdom of God – e.g. at Go4th, coffee morning, but more as a way of life - hospitality

Second surprise – those who enjoy it are not necessarily those who we expect – CONTEXT

INDIANAPOLIS, Saturday 15th July 2017 — An Indiana woman didn't want her canceled \$30,000 wedding to go to waste, so she threw a dinner party for the homeless.

A bus pulled up to the swanky event center on Saturday that Sarah Cummins had booked for the reception in Carmel, a suburb north of Indianapolis. About a dozen veterans from a local organization were among the guests who dined on bourbon-glazed meatballs, chicken breast with artichokes, roasted garlic bruschetta and, of course, wedding cake.

Cummins told the Indianapolis Star that she and her fiancé called off the wedding a week ago. She declined to give a reason, but she said they were left with a nonrefundable contract for the Ritz Charles in Carmel and a plated dinner for 170 guests.

“For me, it was an opportunity to let these people know they deserved to be at a place like this just as much as everyone else does,” Cummins said.

Cummins said she decided that rather than throw away the food she would bring some purpose to the event and contacted area homeless shelters. She cheerfully greeted and welcomed her guests when they arrived Saturday. Three of Cummins' seven bridesmaids, along with her mother and aunts, came to support her at the event. Several local businesses and residents donated suits, dresses and other items for the guests to wear.

Charlie Allen, who's spent three months at a homeless mission, received a donated jacket. “I didn't have a sport coat,” he said, tugging gently at the lapels. “I think I look pretty nice in it.” Like other guests, Allen said he was grateful for the invitation.

Cummins said she is not sure yet what she will do with the wedding dress.

“It's too painful to think about.”

My own e.g. – Wild Goose – first evening big Port Salut cheeses to take away (also trout, stuff from Tesco Finest and Sainsburys Taste the Difference etc

See it elsewhere – prison, China

Challenges for us:

Jesus invites all of us – what excuses do we make? ‘Just too busy’ – God is incredibly gracious but there are plenty behind us to take our place

Beware judging others' faith or standing before God – may be surprised. That homeless person we pass might just be nearer to Jesus' kingdom than us....