

# You are invited to a royal banquet. R.S.V.P.

Sermon for Sunday, August 5, 2007  
by Bruce Fraser

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:20-28

Let's suppose something really crazy happened. Let's suppose you were invited to dinner with the Queen. You were stacking dishes in the kitchen of the restaurant where you work, when a courier arrives at the back door.

"The owner won't be back until tomorrow," you tell him.

"I'm not looking for the owner, I'm looking for you."

"Huh?"

"I'm from Buckingham Palace," he says, which explains the British accent.

"Are you for real?"

"I've come to deliver this letter."

Part of you wonders what you've done wrong; another part of you wonders if this isn't a joke your cousin Alfred is paying to get you back for the horseradish in his car; and all of you thinks that this guy has the wrong person. But you dry your hands on your apron and take the letter.

It's a personal letter. There is an emblem on the envelope and your name is written, not typed, in cursive. The stationary is the heavy, expensive type. You open the letter, and there it is, a letter from the Queen of Canada. It's an invitation — an invitation to a dinner... a dinner given in your honour... a dinner dedicated to you.

Your spouse threw you a surprise party during the first year of your marriage, but besides that you can't remember when someone has thrown a dinner for you. And now the commander in chief wants to.

"What's the catch?" you ask

"No catch, just a request that you come to Buckingham Palace. May I give Her Majesty your response?"

"Huh?"

"May I give Her Majesty your response? Will you come to the dinner?"

"Well, of course, I'd love to go"

And so you go. On the appointed day, you've flown to England, you put on your best suit, and you go to Buckingham Palace. You're met at the guest entrance and escorted in. Your steps echo as you follow the guide down the halls of a royal palace. At the end of the corridor is a room. In the centre of the room is a long table, and in the centre of the table there is one plate, and beside the plate is one name — yours.

The attendant motions for you to sit down, and when you do, he leaves you and you do the one thing you've wanted to do since you stepped into the palace. You look around and say, "Wow!" You've never seen a table this long. You've never seen crystal so nice. You've never seen china this valuable. You've never seen a setting with so many forks or a candelabra with so many candles. Under your feet is an Oriental rug. Over your head is a chandelier with a billion pieces of glass. The table and chairs are made of polished teak. Straight ahead is a hearth with a fire and a white mantle. And above the mantle is a picture of — you! Same eyes, same goofy smile, same nose you wish was half the size — you!

"I keep it in here so I can remember you," the voice from behind startles you.

You don't to turn and look who it is — you know the voice. You wait until she is right beside you before you look up.

It *is* her, Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. A bit shorter than you imagined, but every bit as regal: the crown, the dress, and... an apron. Her Majesty is wearing an apron! A common kitchen apron just like what you wear to work! And if that isn't enough, behind her is a dinner cart.

She reaches for a plate and gives you a dinner roll. "I'm so glad you could come and be my dinner guest."

You know you should say something, but you've forgotten what you were going to say. "What's going on here?!" you think.

You thought it was shocking to get the invitation. You thought it was breathtaking to enter Buckingham Palace. Your jaw hit the floor when you saw your picture on the wall.

But all of that was nothing compared to this: Her Majesty, your waitress? The Queen, bringing you food?

All of a sudden, you blurt out, "This isn't right. You aren't supposed to be doing this — I am. You aren't supposed to serve me. I'm the dishwasher. I work at the

diner. You're the Queen. Let me have the apron and let me put food on the table."

But Her Majesty won't let you. "Keep your seat. Today, I honour you."

This story is adapted from one of Max Lucado's books.

This sort of thing doesn't happen today — or does it?

It happens here at Friendship and Wesley Churches every couple of months. In banquet halls around the world, the King of kings honours the common. There they are — regular folk right out of the kitchens and car pools of life, seated at the King's table. The honoured guests, VIPs, hosted and served by the one in charge of history.

"This is my body," he says as he breaks the bread.

"This is my blood."

And we sit here, in an "I can't believe it's me — pinch me I'm dreaming" experience, invited to sit at God's table by the King himself.

It is a holy invitation. It is a sacred moment bidding us to leave the chores of life and to enter his splendour.

When the bread is broken, Christ breaks it. When the cup is poured, Christ pours it. And when your burdens are lifted, it is because the King in the apron has drawn near to serve you.

Let's pray together and thank the King of kings and Lord of lords for serving us today.