

Come Unto Me

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Tonight and probably again next Lord's Day evening--for I doubt we'll be able to adequately cover the next--I would direct your attention to a very familiar portion of Scripture, at least one verse is quite familiar. Perhaps the verses preceding and following are not so familiar. But we shall be looking at the entire paragraph. Matthew 11. And I shall begin reading at the 20th verse and conclude at the end of the chapter, verse 30. Speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ, Matthew says,

"Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, shalt thou be exalted unto heaven? thou shalt go down unto Hades: for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in thee, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee. At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been delivered unto Me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Let us once again look to God in prayer that He might be pleased to open to our understanding this portion of His truth.

Lord Jesus, we would hear You speak these words with power to our hearts. Your Word tells us that the hour is coming and now is when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live. O Lord, make these words to be life-giving words tonight. That some who in this very moment are laboring and are heavy laden may find the fulfillment of this word of promise err the final amen is spoken tonight. Speak blessed Lord. We call upon You for that gracious assistance of the Holy Spirit, without which your servant seeks to preach but in vain, and without which this people would hear but in vain. Come, O breath of God to open to us the very mind of Christ as revealed in holy Scripture. We make this plea believing that such a blessing is purchased in the death of the Lord Jesus. So we come in His name. Amen.

I deliberately read the verses of the paragraph beginning with verse 20 and ending with verse 24 rather than starting with the paragraph that will be the focus of our study tonight, particularly the last few verses of that paragraph. For the Holy Spirit is

careful to guide Matthew to indicate that the setting of these words of our Lord's rejoicing that the Father sovereignty reveals Himself to babes and withholds His revelation from the wise and prudent is a context of unbelief and rejection of the truth. Our Lord has just spoken these terrible words of woe upon these cities that had beheld His miracles. He had given these very sober words that if commensurate light had been given to the wicked cities of Tyre and Sidon, there would have been genuine repentance. And the fruit of that repentance would have been marked even in the hour in which our Lord ministered. And so in the face of unbelief, in the face of rejection, in the face of human hardness, our Lord finds great comfort in the doctrine that is one of the pillars of our faith, the doctrine of divine sovereignty. And He thanks God that in the Father's good pleasure, He has hid truth from the wise and prudent and has revealed truth unto babes. And the reason He resolves into the sovereignty of God, for He says in verse 26, "Yea Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight." And yet it's interesting that immediately following that profound and beautiful statement of the fact that the ultimate issue in the unbelief or the sight and faith of men is the sovereignty of God, our Lord no way makes this a barrier to the free offers of His mercy, but, as it were, makes it the very platform from which He extends this gracious appeal, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." And I suggest that any view of the invitation beginning with verse 28 and ending with verse 30 that fails to take this twofold context into consideration will land you in error. If you look upon the invitation, "Come unto Me" as though the whole issue of the salvation of men was ultimately resolved by the will of man, you come up with a doctrine contrary to Scripture. This invitation is couched in the context of our Lord's rejoicing in the divine Father's divine sovereignty, which to some reveals truth and to others hides truth. Conversely, if we confess with the loudest confession our belief in the divine sovereignty and find some problem with extending the free general offers of mercy, then we do not understand that truth as our Lord did. And so taking this invitation in its total context will keep us, on the one hand, from the curse of freewill-ism, and on the other hand, from the terrible curse of a paralyzing hyper-Calvinism. And yet God's people have fallen into those two extremes constantly. And this very context would keep us from that if we would but take heed to the emphasis of our Lord.

So much for the general context. And I say that simply so that if your tendency is to that error of freewill-ism, you'll not put what I say in expounding the words of Christ through the sieve of your own defective theology and make me say something I never said or that Scripture never said. And conversely, that if your tendency is allowing the doctrine of divine sovereignty to become a couch upon which you rest instead of a spur to goad you on to activity, you'll not put my words through that sieve and make me say or Scripture say something that is not said.

Our focus tonight is upon the gracious invitation of Christ set in this context beginning with verse 28: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The prayer of my heart has been that God would cause some of you to hear His voice tonight. For the Lord Jesus said in those words I quoted as we prayed before opening the Scriptures, "The hour is coming in which those that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of and live." Jesus said, "The hour is coming and now is," speaking of that spiritual resurrection that comes when the voice of Christ breaks in to the realm of spiritual death, and life issues. Jesus said in Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear My voice and open the door...." The door is never opened until the voice of the Son of God is heard. The voice of the preacher may be heard for months and years, tender,

entreating, full of the overtures of grace, full of the terrors of the law. The preacher's voice may be resisted, but those who hear His voice always fling upon them, for He said, "Other sheep I have. Them I must bring. They shall hear My voice." And may God grant that some of you shall hear the voice of the Son of God speaking in these gracious words of invitation, "Come unto Me."

Consider with me in the first place the people our Lord addresses in this invitation. The people addressed--who are they? In the second place, consider the invitation He issues: "Come unto Me." And then in the third place, consider with me something of the wonder of the promise He gives: "and ye shall find rest".

The people addressed. To whom do these gracious words of Christ come? Some invitations of Scripture come to all men irrespective of their particular spiritual condition. We read in Scripture that God commands all men everywhere to repent. And the basis upon which a sinner is warranted in embracing the promise of mercy is not that he is this kind of a sinner or that kind of a sinner but simply that he is a sinner. There is a free, general, unfettered invitation of the Gospel. But this is a more limited invitation. Notice, our Lord delineates those to whom this invitation comes. "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." He is addressing a peculiar class of people, and they are described by the two words "laboring" and "heavy laden". What does the word "labor" mean? It's the strong word for labor. It's the word which means to toil unto weariness and pain. What does "heavy laden" mean? It means to be encumbered with crushing weight that bends a man over and almost presses him to the ground. Now, both of these concepts were very vivid to the minds of those to whom our Lord Spoke. This was the day before unions and seven-hour work days. This was before the day automation. This was the period in which men worked as long as the sun was up. Remember, Jesus said there are twelve hours in the day in which to work (a little indication of how long their work day was). People knew what it was like to be out in the burning noonday sun and to labor unto pain beneath the heat of that sun and not to quit their fields and lay down their sickles until the sun made it impossible for them to labor anymore. The concept of toil unto labor was very vivid to the minds of our Lord's hearers. The concept of being heavy laden--this was the day before you had mini buses and pickup trucks and all the means to convey burdens, and not everyone was wealthy enough to own mules or camels. And some of you perhaps have seen the pictures of porters of Eastern parts when loads were laid upon their backs that were two or three times the size of the one carrying them. Sometimes they'll carry as much as three to four hundred pounds. And you'll see them stooped beneath this great crushing burden. Now, our Lord uses word pictures to very vividly describe all who feel the active and the passive effects of sin. The active effects of sin: men toiling unto pail, laboring in this course of sin and estrangement from God, feeling the pressure and weight of sin and effects of sin like a heavy burden. Our Lord is addressing in this gracious invitation those who've been brought to a consciousness of the effects of sin in their own hearts and lives.

Consider certain aspects of this. In the first place, He calls and invites to Himself those who labor and are heavy laden beneath the guilt of sin. The accusations of a condemned conscience lash and scourge a man, holding over him the fear of death, the thought of impending judgment, the awfulness of hell, and the terrors of the damned. What greater burden to bear than to be bent down with a sense of impending wrath? Hebrews gives it to us this way: "a fearful looking to of judgment and fiery indignation that shall devour the adversaries." Am I speaking to some tonight who know what it is to be heavy laden, who feel the crushing weight of a

conscience that will not let you alone. It reminds you of those lies told way back in infancy, the defections propagated, the corruptions tolerated, the dishonesties perpetrated. All of those sins, and conscience is alive and will not be silenced. And try to still his voice--you cannot. But by the influence of the holy law of God probing the conscience and bringing before you your sin, your specific sins of uncleanness and ungodliness, and that great sin of unbelief and impenitence. Tonight you know what it is to feel the crushing weight of sin. You may be laboring to make amends. You may be doing everything in your power to somehow bring some peace to your conscience. You may be praying; you may be reading the Scriptures. And you may be laboring, but it's not the labor of delight. It's that terrible toil unto weariness and pain. The Lord Jesus has a word for you tonight. He's addressing his words to all who labor and are heavy laden, those who labor and are heavy laden because of the guilt of sin.

Secondly, those who labor and are heavy laden because of the bondage of sin. In Proverbs 5:22 we read: "His own iniquities shall take the wicked, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sin." What a picture! Our Lord said in John 8:34, "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin." It's not so much the future punishment of your sin that makes you heavy, but its present bondage. You say to yourself, "O, that I could go back to that time in my life when I was not ensnared by this sin, when I was not held captive by that sin, when I was not the slave of this passion, of this lust, of this attitude, of this deflection from God's holy law. O, that I could somehow burst the bondage." And that bondage is a heavy burden. It makes life toilsome, just as toilsome as a man wrapped about with heavy cords attempting to live a normal life. Everywhere you go (to the shop, to the place of business, to the school, to the privacy of your own bedroom) there it follows you, the nagging toil of the bondage of sin. You labor, you toil to free yourself with vows, with resolutions, all to no avail. The Lord Jesus has a word for you tonight. All that labor and are heavy laden, whether its under the terrible lash of the guilt of sin, the oppressive bondage of sin, or the confusion and hopelessness of sin.

Your problem that makes you labor tonight and makes you pressed down is not so much that you've offended God (your thought hasn't developed that far yet) or that you're in bondage to your own corruption (this hasn't been the area of your particular concern). But you labor and are heavy laden tonight because of the confusion and hopelessness which sin has brought into your life. Here you are, a few short years to live, and then like all who have gone before you, you're going to pass on to be no more. What's it all about? What am I here for? Is there any meaning to life? Is there a God? If so, how do I know Him. Life's ultimate questions--we call them at camp life's most basic questions. No answers! Who am I? What am I here for? What lies beyond the grave? Confusion! A thousand voices saying, "This is the life. This is the meaning of life. This is right; this is wrong." And that hopeless confusion standing in the midst of all this swirling mass of ideas. Hopelessly confused. Do I speak to some who are toiling for answers, weighted down with a sense of frustration because there seems to be no answers? I want to read that poem I read at a prayer meeting about a couple of months ago. I sit and study this thing at times because this is a man laboring, toiling under the hopelessness and confusion of sin. Listen to his words:

When I was a lad,
Simple notions I had,
There was wrong; there was right,
It was plain as black and white,

Ah, but now that I'm grown
In a world on my own,
The scenes I survey
Show nothing but grey,
I looked all around for the bright spots,
The lights that would lead me ahead,
I must have not looked in the right spot,
Nothing bright, nothing gay,
Just a muddy old world full of gray,
Ah, but now I'm a man
And at crossroads I stand,
Confronted with doubt
And all turned about,
At night in my sleep I hear voices;
I'm never quite certain what's said,
They offer me too many choices,
There's black; there's no white,
Where is wrong? Where is right?
I'm confused and unable to say
How does a man find his way
In a world full of gray?

That thing makes me weep inside every time I read it. Why? Here's someone laboring for answers, and there are none. Heavy laden with a sense of hopelessness and confusion. Dear ones, that's what's behind the hopeless quest that's driving multitudes of the now generation to LSD and to dope. Beneath it, you see, is this substructure of the hopelessness and despair brought about by sin. Do I speak to someone tonight, maybe educated, cultured, refined? And you can answer a lot of questions about a lot of things, but the simplest little question dumbfounds you and leaves you silent: Who are you? What are you here for? Where do you go when you're done? No answers. Does a sense of that hopelessness of having no answers crush you? The Lord has a word for you tonight: all that labor and are heavy laden, be it with the oppressive sense of guilt, with the awful awareness of this bondage, whether it be in this state of the hopelessness and confusion of sin.

Or in the fourth place--and we could extend this on in many other areas--whether you labor and are heavy laden with what I'm calling the emptiness of formal made-made religion. Many commentators feel that this is the primary reference of our Lord's words, for the word "weighted down", "heavy laden"--the only other use in the New Testament is in Luke 11:46, where our Lord is indicting the Pharisees, and He says, "You bind burden upon men too heavy to bear." And when you read the context, you see what it was: all the trappings of manmade religion--form and ceremony, do's and don'ts, and ritual--that men by doing this, might somehow find acceptance with God and peace of mind. And the Lord says, "No, that brings nothing but labor unto toil and weariness and heaviness and oppression." And our Lord addresses such tonight. Do I speak to some to whom all of the relatively informal--but nonetheless, we all have a ritual, even of our own assembly as we're in. Do I speak to some of you young people? This is all weariness to you. And deep within your heart, you long you could be in a home where you could just lay in bed till 10 o'clock, read the funnies till noon, and watch TV till bedtime on Sundays. All of the external activities of the worship and life of this assembly is weariness to you. It's toil; it's burdensome. The Lord has a word for you tonight: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden ."

Well, so much for those who are addressed. Now will you notice the invitation He issues to them. Here it is: "Come unto Me." And the most important thing about this invitation is not the word "come". But it's the word "Me". For you see, the invitation means nothing if we divorce it from the person who spoke the words. The meaning of the words and our confidence of their fulfillment is dependant upon the one who utters them. Who is it that makes such claims, that in Him the problem of guilt can be resolved, the problem of bondage can be resolved, the problem of confusion can be resolved, the problem of empty, formal religion can be resolved? That's quite a claim. Who makes it? Ah, that's the secret. We must never divorce these gracious words of invitation from the person who made them. So as we consider the invitation issued in the first place, consider who is the "Me" who gives them. And He has told us in the preceding verse, verse 27, that He is none less than God incarnate. Notice His claim: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." What a claim! He says, "My person is such that no one can fully comprehend who I am but the Father Himself." It takes God to comprehend fully God. Can you imagine an angel saying, "No one knows me but another angel"? Why, the God who made angels know angels fully and completely. There's a lot we don't know about angels. There's not a thing He doesn't know about them because He made them. But the Lord Jesus said no one knows the Son but the Father. Why? For great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifested in the flesh. And in the mystery of the true deity and the true humanity of Christ fused in one person, we just stand before this vale of brightness and we prostrate ourselves and say, "God, the mystery is beyond me." Faith lays hold of it, but who can comprehend God and man joined in one person forever? "No one knows the Son but the Father." Ah, but these words of invitation come from God incarnate.

In the second place, they come from the One who is the appointed mediator between God and man. Notice His words: "All things have been delivered unto Me of my Father." The best commentary on this verse is John 17:1-2, where our Lord makes clear that this giving of authority to Him is for His performance of a role as a mediator. Listen to His words: "These things spake Jesus; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee: even as Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He should give eternal life." Who speaks these words: "Come unto Me"? God incarnate as the appointed mediator between God and man. The only way to God is Jesus Christ. There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. So you see, when we come to the words, "Come unto Me," we must not put them into the context of "Well, I've tried this; I've tried that. Now, I'll try Jesus. And if that doesn't work, I'll try something else." O no, He who speaks them says, "Everything is delivered into My hand. I'm the only mediator." "No man comes to the Father but by Me."

And then He speaks them as the exclusive revealer of God. Notice later on in verse 27: "Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son [He knows Him perfectly], and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him." Men can know Him partially. We see through a glass darkly. Bless God, we may see by the revelation of the Son, but He's the only one who reveals God. No one knows the Father except that person to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. It is only as He exercises His office as a sovereign mediator revealing the Father that any man can know God. That's why Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." The whole idea that we incorporate the best of Jesus with the best of Mohammad and the

best of all the other religions is absolutely false. You have Christ in all the inclusiveness of His claims or you have Him not at all. John 1:18 says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Now, when you put the words of the invitation in that context, see the difference in the weight and power with which they come. What is the gracious invitation? "Come unto Me." Who speaks? God incarnate, the only appointed mediator, the only revealer.

Now, what does He say? What is the substance of His invitation? Here it is: "Come unto Me." What does the word "come" mean? It's a synonym for the word "faith", "believe", "trust", "commit". It's used interchangeably in a verse like John 6:35. Letting Scripture be its own infallible interpreter, notice the meaning of the word: "Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." What is it to believe? It is to come. What is it to come? It is to believe. So what does our Lord do? He calls upon all who labor and are heavy laden to believe on Him, to come to Him, to let the weight of their need be cast upon this unique God-man, the only appointed mediator, the only revealer of God. And why does He invite us to Himself alone? For the simple reason that He alone is suited to meet those needs which cause us to toil and to be heavy laden. Are you toiling and heavy laden with the guilt of sin? Jesus says, "Come unto Me." Why? Because He's the appointed Lamb of God to bear away the sin of the world. It was He that went to the cross and there exposed Himself to the wrath of His Father until the billows of that wrath funneled down upon His own holy head and caused Him to cry out in agony, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Why doesn't He invite us to His church or to some philosophy or to way of life? Because no church, no philosophy, no way of life hung in agony and blood. He hung in agony and blood. He poured out His soul unto death. And so He says, "Come to Me. I alone have borne the guilt of sin. Are you heavy laden? Do you toil beneath the lash of a nagging conscience? There is peace and rest in My wounds and in my sufferings. Come unto Me." Or is it that you toil and are heavy laden under the bondage of sin? He says, "Come unto Me" because it's only as the ascended Lord sends forth His Spirit in the plenitude of power and grace that can break the bonds of sin. Acts 5:31 says, "Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." Ephesians 1 declares that He has been exalted, and all things have been put under His feet. "He is able to break the power of canceled sin to set the prisoner free." Is it that you have heavy laden with that hopelessness and confusion of sin? Why did He say, "Come unto Me"? Because He said, "I am the light of the world. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness." In Jesus Christ, life's ultimate answers are found, and only in Him. He is the fulfillment of all the types and shadows of all the Old Testament sacrificial systems. We need now no great rubric of ceremony, for the ceremonies have found their fulfillment in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is both priest and offering. He is the bread; He is the light of that true tabernacle. Scripture says He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He says, "Come unto Me." Why? Because in Christ and in Christ alone our needs can be met.

Now, He not only delineates those to whom He speaks; then gives His gracious offer, but will you notice the promise that He gives. This is the third area of our study. To whom is He addressing Himself? Those who labor and are heavy laden. What does He say? He says, "Come unto Me." Now notice the promise He gives: "Ye shall find rest unto your souls." What does the word "rest" mean? It means no more hopeless toiling under the crushing load of guilt and bondage, no more despair; release from

the things that bind us, release from those things that crush us. That's what rest means. Now notice the certainty of the promise: "Come and ye shall find rest." God incarnate is speaking. Of God Scripture speaks and says He cannot lie. This is why it's so important that we pause to think who speaks the words. For if I'm not certain that these are words of infallible and unerring certainty, how do I know that maybe if I come, they will not be fulfilled? How can I know that that which causes my labor and that which makes me heavy laden will be released if I come? Because the promise is certain. He who speaks them is God, and God cannot lie. And if you do not know soul rest tonight, it's because you've not yet come to Christ. If your conscience is tormented by the terrors of a broken law and the fear of hell hangs over you like a billowy cloud, it's because you haven't come. For He says, "Coming, you'll have rest." If you're held in the grip and bondage of sin, not those terrible outcroppings of remaining sin, but the cruel tyranny of reigning sin, you're its willing slave and servant. There's only one reason: you haven't come. For He says those who come shall have rest. And so the promise is certain.

But the promise is also an exclusive promise. "Come unto Me, and ye shall find rest." The implication being that rest is to be found no where else either now or in eternity. That's why the cold concept of the invitation is charged with the spirit of authority and command--come or you perish! "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

Then our Lord goes on--and I can only be suggestive in our study of this, and Lord willing, in our study next Sunday evening seek to enlarge it. The invitation does not end with verse 28. It's as though those who heard it said, "But O Lord, what will it mean? What are the implications of coming to You for rest?" Our Lord then, in the fourth place, enlarges on the true nature of faith. Notice: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." Is faith a matter of trying Jesus as I indicated before? You've tried maybe dope and sex and liquor and things and pleasure; now try Jesus. No, no, Jesus said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." But He says, "I invite you to a relationship of absolute, unreserved commitment to Myself and to My truth. Take My yoke upon you. That's utter submission to My person. Learn of Me. That's utter submission to My truth. Then and only then will you find rest for your soul." We don't dicker with Christ. We don't, as it were, stand on the outside to bargain with Him. Some of you come from societies where bartering and dickering on prices is just a part of the society. I believe it was in a missionary conference recently that I talked with some missionaries who said in the Philippines that this is just the way it's done. You may go down to the store on Monday morning to buy a dozen eggs, and the shop keeper may start out at 15 cents a dozen or whatever it would be, and you may haggle over for a whole hour and come down to your price of a nickel. You may go back to the same store in the same shop with the same shop keeper the next morning, and you've got to start this business all over again until you come to terms. There's no dickering when we come to Christ. The terms are fixed. When you're looking for real estate and you see \$22,500 firm, they're saying no dickering. The price is fixed; the conditions are settled. You meet them or no house. The Son of God says, "Here are the conditions--firm, no dickering. Come unto Me." Gracious invitation, but what are the implications of coming to Christ in faith? Here they are: unreserved commital to His person--"Take My yoke upon you." What is a yoke? It is that instrument that binds two animals together that they might plow the same furrow, move in the same direction. There's an identity of will and of effort and of labor and of purpose.

Christ says, "Come for rest." And what is that rest? Not freedom from all restraint and obligation. No, it's freedom from the tyranny of sin into the liberty of a bondsman of Christ. That's freedom! Not freedom to do what I want to do but freedom to do what I ought to do. Freedom for a bird is the ability to do what a bird was made to do--fly in the air. Freedom for man is freedom to be what I've been made to be. What? A servant of Christ doing the will of God from the heart. That's what I was made for. And until the will of God is precious to me and following Him is my delight, I'm not yet what I was made to be. And so He says, "Come, take My yoke. Utter resignation to My person--that is rest.

And then absolute submission to My truth: learn of Me." And lest some should say, "Ah, but Lord, I've been burdened and heavy laden with my sin. And now you call me to another burden?" He says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." The Lord just clears away every last excuse, and He holds His gracious invitation this morning. So what does coming to Christ involve? It means coming to Him as our Rest, coming to Him as our Ruler, coming to Him as our Teacher. And if you change the words, what do you have? Coming to Him as our Rest, as our great high Priest who bore our sin, who succors us in our need--He's our Priest. Coming to Him as our Lord--that's our King. Coming to Him as our Teacher--that's our Prophet. And here in this text, the Lord Jesus sets Himself as the only mediator appointed by the Father, the only revealer of God who does His work of mediation and revealing as a prophet, priest, and king and graciously invites burdened sinners to cast themselves upon Him with the assurance that they shall find rest for their souls.

O, may God grant that some of you who may be burdened tonight--I know of a few of you who are. You've disposed your hearts to me. And you've told me of the burden of sin that crushes, the sense of guilt and impending judgment. I plead with you tonight, come unto Him, come unto Him. Take His yoke upon you; learn of Him. Right where you sit, throw yourself at His feet and say, "Here Lord, I come on your terms. I don't come to dicker. And I long for release from the terrible crushing weight of guilt, from the terrible cords of bondage, from the hopeless confusion and emptiness. Lord Jesus, You promised rest. This is Your pledge. I venture upon it." In the words of that wonderful Gospel hymn of invitation,

"Venture on Him, venture wholly. Let no other trust intrude.
None but Jesus, none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good."

And dear child of God, you have ventured upon Him for rest. There's no other place you go for continued rest. And when there is that nagging of conscience that you know you've failed, where do you go? Don't go to more prayer, to more Bible reading first. Go to Christ first. Don't make the means of grace the substitute for the fountain of grace. And when you've got a wounded, pricked conscience, the only place of refuge is Christ, even as a child of God. And when there's confusion and darkness, the only place of instruction is Christ. And so we don't come once for all. There is an initial coming, but we come continually. And we find Him to be true to His word of promise that we have rest in Him. May God grant that you may come, whether as a child of God in a state of some area of bondage or need and heaviness, He's a gracious succoring high priest. Or if you're out of Christ, young person, adult--I trust it would be some of both--would this night come to Christ and find rest in Him.