

STUDIES ON SAVING FAITH Part III COMING TO CHRIST

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Transcript

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Part III

COMING TO CHRIST

By way of introduction let us bring before the readers the following Scriptures. (1) "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life" John 5:40. (2) "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" Matthew 11:28. (3) "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" John 6:44. (4) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" John 6:37. (5) "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" Luke 14:26,27. (6) "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" 1 Peter 2:4. (7) "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" Hebrews 7:25. The first of these passages applies to every unregenerate man and woman on this earth. While he is in a state of nature, no man can come to Christ. Though all excellencies, both Divine and human, are found in the Lord Jesus, though He is "altogether lovely" (Song of Sol. 5:16), yet the fallen sons of Adam see in Him no beauty that they should desire Him. They may be well instructed in "the doctrine of Christ," they may believe unhesitatingly all that Scripture affirms concerning Him, they may frequently take His name upon their lips, profess to be resting on His finished work, sing His praises, yet their hearts are far from Him. The things of this world have the first place in their affections. The gratifying of self is their dominant concern. They surrender not their lives to Him. He is too holy to suit their love of sin; His claims are too exacting to suit their selfish hearts; His terms of discipleship are too severe to suit their fleshly ways. They will not yield to His Lordship—true alike with each one of us till God performs a miracle of grace upon our hearts, The second of these passages contains a gracious invitation, made by the compassionate Saviour to a particular class of sinners. The "all" is at once qualified, clearly and definitely, by the words which immediately follow it. The character of those to whom this loving word belongs is clearly defined: it is those who "labour" and are "heavy laden." Most clearly then it applies not to the vast majority of our light-headed, gay-hearted, pleasure-seeking fellows, who have no regard for God's glory and no concern about their eternal welfare. No, the word for such poor creatures is rather, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days

of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Eccl. 11:9). But to those who have "laboured" hard to keep the law and please God, who are "heavy laden" with a felt sense of their utter inability to meet His requirements, and who long to be delivered from the power and pollution of sin, Christ says, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." The third passage quoted above at once tells us that "coming to Christ" is not the easy matter so many imagine it, nor so simple a thing as most preachers represent it to be. Instead of its so being, the incarnate Son of God positively declares that such an act is utterly impossible to a fallen and depraved creature unless and until Divine power is brought to bear upon him. A most pride-humbling, flesh-withering, man-abasing word is this. "Coming to Christ" is a far, far different thing from raising your hand to be prayed for by some Protestant "priest," coming forward and taking some cheap-jack evangelist's hand, signing some "decision" card, uniting with some "church," or any other of the "many inventions" (Eccl. 7:29) of man. Before any one can or will "come to Christ" the understanding must be supernaturally enlightened, the heart must be supernaturally changed, the stubborn will must be supernaturally broken. The fourth passage is also one that is unpalatable to the carnal mind, yet is it a precious portion unto the Spirit-taught children of God. It sets forth the blessed truth of unconditional election, or the discriminating grace of God. It speaks of a favored people whom the Father giveth to His Son. It declares that every one of that blessed company shall come to Christ: neither the effects of their fall in Adam, the power of indwelling sin, the hatred and untiring efforts of Satan, nor the deceptive delusions of blind preachers, will be able to finally hinder them—when God's appointed hour arrives, each of His elect is delivered from the power of darkness and is translated into the kingdom of his dear Son. It announces that each such one who comes to Christ, no matter how unworthy and vile he be in himself no matter how black and long the awful catalogue of his sins, He will by no means despise or fail to welcome him, and under no circumstances will He ever cast him off. The fifth passage is one that makes known the terms on which alone Christ is willing to receive sinners. Here the uncompromising claims of His holiness are set out. He must be crowned Lord of all, or He will not be Lord at all. There must be the complete heart-renunciation of all that stands in competition with Him. He will brook no rival. All that pertains to "the flesh," whether found in a loved one or in self, has to be hated. The "cross" is the badge of Christian discipleship: not a golden one worn on the body, but the principle of self-denial and self-sacrifice ruling the heart. How evident is it, then, that a mighty, supernatural work of divine grace must be wrought in the human heart, if any man will even desire to meet such terms! The sixth passage tells us that the Christian is to continue as he began. We are to "come to Christ" not once and for all, but frequently, daily. He is the only One who can minister to our needs, and to Him we must constantly turn for the supply of them. In our felt emptiness, we must draw from His "fullness" (John 1:16). In our weakness, we must turn to Him for strength. In our ignorance we must seek afresh His cleansing. All that we need for time and eternity is stored up in Him: refreshment when we are weary (Isa. 40:3 1), healing of body when we are sick (Ex. 15:26), comfort when we are sad (1 Pet. 5:7), deliverance when we are tempted (Heb. 2:18). If we have wandered away from Him, left our first love, then the remedy is to "repent and do the first works" (Rev. 2:5), that is, cast ourselves upon Him anew, come just as we did the first time we came to Him—as unworthy, self-confessed sinners, seeking His mercy and forgiveness. The seventh passage assures us of the eternal security of those who do come. Christ saves "unto the uttermost" or "for evermore" those who come unto God by Him. He is not of one mind to day and of another tomorrow. No, He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1), and blessedly does He give proof of this, for "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." inasmuch as His prayers are effectual, for He declares that the Father hearest Him "always" (John 11:42), none whose name is indelibly stamped on the heart of our great High Priest can

ever perish. Hallelujah! Having sought to thus introduce some of the leading aspects of the subject which is to engage our attention, we now propose to enter into some detail as the Spirit of Truth is pleased to grant us His much-needed assistance. Let us consider some of the obstacles in coming to Christ.

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