

If Any Man Thirst: Part Iii

by James Webster

The sermon emphasizes the importance of coming to Christ, highlighting the evil of unwillingness, the call to come, and the necessity of coming for union, communion, acceptance, and access.

Scripture: Matthew 17:5

Topics: "Divine Nature", "Faithful Witness"

Description

The preacher delves into the concept of 'Majestic Glory,' exploring the Greek word 'Megaloprepes' which signifies greatness, magnificence, and splendor, often used to honor political figures. This term is also used in the Septuagint to describe God's magnificent nature, as seen in Deuteronomy 33:26. The sermon emphasizes the divine affirmation of Jesus as the beloved Son of God, highlighting the Father's delight and approval of Him, as witnessed at the Transfiguration. The preacher underscores the importance of being faithful witnesses to the truth of Christ, as demonstrated by the disciples' experience on the holy mountain.

Transcript

The last thing in this use of lamentation is to consider the evil of this unwillingness to come! O what might be said here! I shall only give you two, three thoughts. First, it is the perfection of folly. Thou art thirsty, there the water, and yet thou wilt not come to it. Thou art poor, there the unsearchable riches of Christ, and yet thou wilt not take one penny when ye may have all. Ye are sick, and there the physician, crying, for my Father's sake, for my own sake, for your soul's sake, take my plaster that ye may not die; and yet ye will rather die in your wounds! O what folly! O what madness! Ye are blind, and ye are walking upon precipices; we are waylaid by a thousand enemies, and Christ says, Man, take my eye salve that will discover your danger. No, if I should fall into a pit, if I should fall into the bosom of the devil, I will not do it. The man will have none of him.

Secondly, it is a most provoking thing. I know not a higher sin in the world. I might, as divines do, compare the sin of unwillingness to come to Christ, with any sin that ever was committed, except the unpardonable sin, and could let you see that this unwillingness is greater than any of them. When Adam murdered a world, when Sodom brought a hell out of heaven upon themselves, when an old world died in a dropsy, when the Jews murdered the Lord of Glory, when the witches make a compact with the devil, they are not guilty of a greater sin than this, of a direct unwillingness to come to Christ. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and there is no rebellion like that against God's greatest command: This is his commandment,

that ye believe on his Son. Christ tells plainly, Sodom and Gomorah are innocents compared with Chorazin and Bethsaida, that were unwilling to come to Christ. Sodom and Gomorah, on whom God and Christ (the Lord rained from the Lord) sent hell out of heaven and roasted them alive, and sent them from one fire to a worse, for their unnatural uncleanness shall have a softer hell than Chorazin and Bethsaida, that would not come to Christ: It shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment. There are many folk that hear sermons that one day will say, Would to God I had been a son of a Mohammedan, would I had been a daughter of a pagan, that never heard of Christ! Would I had never heard a preaching, cursed be the day when I went to a communion! Unwillingness is the greatest sin you can be guilty of, except that against the Holy Ghost.

I come to the last use, an use of exhortation, to invite you to come to him. I call every one of you to come to Christ: If any man be athirst, let him come unto me and drink. The call I give you to come to him is real, it is not imaginary. The call ye have to come to Christ is as real (though infinitely short of the way of delivery) as if Christ himself were standing in my place, and calling you to come: We in his stead beseech you to be reconciled to God. I tell you, sirs, the Master is come, and calleth for you. It is a distinct call, he calls from darkness to light, to come from sin to happiness, from Satan to the living God, from hell to heaven, from your own to his most perfect righteousness. He calls you to come from a fullness of ignorance to a fullness of illumination, from a fullness of corruption to a fullness of sanctification, from a fullness of sorrow and grief to a fullness of joy. A distinct call I tell you it is. And it is a particular call; I call you as particularly, as if I would name and surname every one of you: If any man thirst, if any woman thirst, let them come and drink. If ye were not called, ye would not come, ye could not come, ye were not obliged to come; but he calls you, and I in the name of God, I call all the thirsty, all pained with desires and cannot them satisfied. If any man be athirst, let him come unto my master, and they shall get a draught they never got the like thereof before! O it will taste well, sirs, it is the very prologue of a draught of the water of life above. It is the same water that the patriarchs are drinking, that the apostles are drinking, that the prophets are drinking, that the primitive martyrs and our worthy ancestors are drinking of, it is the same water of life, though ye get not such a large draught. I invite the thirsty, in God's name come, and lay to your mouth to the pierced heart of Christ, and take a full draught of bliss.

I invite all the withered souls. Perhaps ye will say, I am not thirsty. I am sure ye are withered, many a withered head that cannot have right thoughts of God, many a withered heart that can have no love to God, many a withered hand that cannot do or act for God, many a withered foot that cannot go in the ways of the Lord, are here. What a blessed promise is that, I will pour water on the thirsty! Alas, but says the man, I am not thirsty; yea, but says the Spirit of God in the same breath, I will pour floods of waters upon the dry ground.

I am sure ye are dry ground. Man and woman, come in his name and welcome; I invite you to come to Christ, all that are laboring, toiling with the law. The law is a good directory, but a bad husband, an uncomfortable husband. You run the round of duties, ye go the tower of performances, and never come at satisfaction, to no quiet of conscience, but are still upon the rack. I invite you in God's great name to come to Christ, and ye shall have a drink and ye shall never thirst so again.

I invite here all the backsliders, you that have made many a foul step from God, apostatized from your frame, from your principles, from your profession, from your practice. Return, O backsliding children, for God is married unto you; return, return, return, return, and he will heal your backslidings, he will so heal you that ye shall never get leave to depart again. Hast thou fallen from thy first love, from thy first zeal, from thy delight in him? Hast thou done it, backsliding soul, though thou has played the harlot with many

lovers, return, return unto my Lord.

I invite all the heart-broken folk to come to Christ; says some folk, I believe that all the angels in heaven cannot give consolation, I have such a flood of sorrow. Grief hath taken such a seat, so deep root in my heart, that I believe all the angels could comfort me no more than the white of a wall could make a bright noon day. But I tell thee, man, If thou wilt come to my master in God's name, I promise you consolation. Believing, that is, coming, we have joy unspeakable and full of glory.

An universal monarch has not the thousandth of the joy that thou shall find springing up in thy soul upon thy coming to Christ, joy unspeakable. What are thou, what hast thou done, man and woman? If thou were like a devil in flesh, if ye come yet to Christ, ye shall get a drink. Whosoever will, let him come. I will give you some motives, and a direction, and conclude. First, to persuade you to come to Christ, to persuade you to accept of my master, consider the necessity of coming.

It is necessary first unto thy union with him. This is the uniting grace: To whom coming as unto a living stone, ye are built up. Faith makes a superstructure of lively stones, cemented with and joined to a living stone, the foundation stone. Now ye are united to your lusts, and I believe there are some folk here that had rather have their soul and body severed than their soul and lusts. Say some, I cannot live without my lusts, they are my riches, they are my happiness, they are my all. Yea, but when thou comest to Christ, thou will be disjoined from them, and what was your God before, ye will look upon it as your hell then; I tell you, without coming to Christ there is no union.

Secondly, coming is necessary unto communion. Ye cannot partake of one saving blessing without it: We are justified by faith, Rom. 5:1; we are adopted by faith, John 1:12; we are sanctified by faith, Acts 26; we are reconciled by faith, Romans 5; and by faith we are stand, Romans 11. And by faith we are saved. Faith, that is, coming, is the mother of many children, and the teeming womb of all thy blessings. It is necessary unto thy communion with him. Ye may have communion with visible saints, but ye shall never have communion with God, without coming to him. Ye may go to the communion here, but ye shall never go to the eternal banquet above.

Thirdly, it is necessary to thy acceptance: Without faith it is impossible to please God. O, says the man, will not my preaching please him? No. Will not my hearing please him? No. Will not my mourning? No. Will not my sitting up half a night crying for mercy do it? No. Will not going to a communion table do it? No. Will not my giving all to the poor, and my body to be burnt for him? Will not that do it? No, no, nothing will please him, without coming to Christ. Without faith it is impossible to please God; ye lose not only your soul, but all your labor to the bargain. Fourth, your coming to Christ is necessary to access. There is this difference, I conceive, between coming and access. The coming looks more to what is our work, the access looks to the privilege he grants us, when he casts open the door and invites you to come forward. Who shall ascend the hill of God? Would ye have access tomorrow, would ye have access this night? Come to Christ, let all your heart receive him: that is coming. To have recumbency on him, that is coming. To close with him in all his offices, that is coming. Let every act of faith go out, look to him, hearken to his voice, taste his sweetness, handle the word of life, come to him and partake of all that he has to give.

I should have given you a motive from the person who invites you to come. What are the excellencies of the Lord Jesus? I should have told you his absolute excellency, his relative excellency, his comparative excellency. I shall only tell you this is a word as a motive. All the fullness of a Godhead is in him, the fullness of the Spirit is in him, the Father himself is in him, the mercy and truth of God is in Christ. What

would ye have but what is in him? O my heart is broken to think upon my own and the world's atheism, that with Herod and his men of war, set this Christ at naught! For Christ's sake come and take a heaven.

Thirdly, consider that if ye come, ye shall get a drink. This is the very motive in the text. I might enlarge upon this, but I shall give it in so many words. The water ye shall get is medicinal; have ye any diseases, men and women? God knows, says the man, I am like Lazarus, I am overrun with sores, unsound from head to foot. I can scarce get one of them cured by many communions. I tell you, if ye will take a draught of this water, if ye will come to Christ and drink, ye shall be healed. But I am black like hell, I am like a devil, as black as the devil can make me. I tell thee, if thou take a drink of this water it shall cleanse thee. I am discouraged, I have loads, I have pressures upon my spirit, I cannot get them thrown off; I come to the communion pressed, I go away pressed, I come from home pressed, I go home again pressed. Come to him, ye shall get a refreshful drink that shall make thee forget thy sorrow.

I give you a direction or two. Would ye come to Christ? First, in his name I desire that ye may be sensible of your impotence: No man can come unto me, till the Father draw him. It is a sweet word, though it be a sad expression of our weakness: No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. The Father hath a double work, he sends Christ to the man, and says, There is the best gift I have, I have not another Son, there is not another Messiah, thy misery is great, but here is a sufficient Savior. There is a remedy for every case that ever hell could put thee in, will ye take my Son? And that same God the Father brings the sinner to Christ, and brings Christ to the sinner: No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him. Now be sensible of this, that all the means in the world cannot bring thee one step to Christ. Wert thou dipped in hell seven years and come out again, you would not make one step of advance towards Christ; if they would take thee up to heaven to see the glory that is there, and hear the accented songs there, ye would not come.

Secondly, seek the Father's drawing. The believer cannot advance or move to Christ, even though he be in Christ, without drawing, much less can the unbeliever. What, says the spouse? Draw me, we will run after thee, the king must bring me to his chamber to the banqueting house. Even the believer that is already come can go no further without new pulls, without a new draught of omnipotence, far less canst thou. Seek drawing, then; when ye hear his call, say, Lord, draw with the cords of a man. Thou that was lifted up from the earth, to draw all men after thee, draw me, draw me.

Thirdly, to increase your desires after this drawing, consider thy misery. Before thou comest, thy misery is great. Mark 16:16: He that believes not shall be damned. It is a sad expression. He does not say he shall be miserable, he shall die, he shall be a beggar, he shall be grieved, but he shall be damned. It is the complement of the misery; consider thy misery is irremediable, if thou wilt not come to Christ. There is not an angel in heaven that can save you. Who can deliver thee, if love itself be thy enemy, if mercy itself be incensed, if the advocate Christ plead against thee, if the throne of grace be turned into a flaming throne of justice? They case is desperate, there is not another covenant of grace to save you, there is not a new plank after shipwreck, there is not another Christ to save you, so that your misery is irremediable; all the angels in heaven will not keep you out of hell. Again consider how ye come, for coming must be qualified.

First, this coming must be cordial; with the heart man believes. In a philosophical sense, the mind believes by giving assent unto a proposition; but in divinity, it is the heart that believes, the will closes with an incomplex object, some good, a great good, a superlative good: With the heart men believe to righteousness. Ye have given the devil all your hearts many a day. Ye have given lusts, ye have given the world, ye have given wife and children your heart many a day, and will ye give Christ any less than you

gave them? With my whole heart have I sought thee.

Secondly, this coming must be chaste. Ye must not come to him for the loaves, ye must not come to him merely for pardon. Yea, ye must not come merely to him for grace and for heaven. Ye must come to him for his own sake. Ye must come to him for his own personal worth and excellency, not only for what he is to you, but for what he is in himself. Ye must take the cross as well as the crown; ye must take him going to Golgotha, as well as when riding to Jerusalem in triumph, when the mob cries, Crucify him, as when they cry, Hosanna to the Son of David. It must be a chaste coming. Welcome Christ, and welcome his law, welcome the conviction, welcome his people, welcome his government, and welcome his cross and suffering. Ye must take all Christ and divide none of him.

Thirdly, it must be a confident coming. Ye must come with a holy boldness, that God will give you acceptance and reception. Do not come doubting, do not come trembling. I remember what the emperor Augustus, that great universal monarch, said when a poor man came to him trembling with his petition, Take you me for an elephant that will devour you? Come with confidence to me. Christ will have poor sinners, thirsty sinners, come with a holy boldness unto the throne of grace. For as God hath a throne in heaven, encircled with all awful majesty, challenging our highest and most profound reverence, so he hath a throne of grace below inviting us to approach. Then again, your coming must be solemn: Behold, we come unto thee, thou art the Lord our God. What is that? We would have all the angels taking instruments, we are coming unto thee; behold it cherub, behold it seraph, let the stars look on, let the spires of grass look on, let every thing be witness, that we are come to him. Come solemnly, the distincter the better; your assurance will be the greater, and your peace likewise in a dying hour.

Thirdly, ye must come under some relations. First, ye must come as a servant comes back to his master, from whom he has run away. Ye know what churlish Nabal says to David, there are many servants run away from their masters. All the tribe of Adam have thrown God's laws behind their backs, saying, We will serve him no more. When a servant comes back again, he cries out, O my dear master, O my good master, nail my ear, my hand, my heart, my foot to thy post, that I may serve thee forever! Come back as a servant to his master, and take up his yoke, and wreath it about your neck. Secondly, ye must come to him as a son to a father. The prodigal child thinking of coming back again saith to himself, How mad have I been! I thought I could not run far enough away from my father's house. I run and I run till I went to a far country where my father might not so much as hear of me, where I might debauch myself with wine and women, where I might take the full swing and inclination of all my lusts. But he begins to mind his father, and thinks of coming back again. Ye must come back to your father again. God knows in how far a country some of you have been, since ye came out of your mother's womb. Some have been in the country of uncleanness, some in the country of drunkenness, some in the country of Sabbath breaking, some in the country of neglecting of family worship and secret worship. Ye have been in a far country. Come back like children to a father.

Lastly, ye must come back as a whorish wife comes back to her husband, after she has played the adulteress: Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord. Come back, come back; God has not torn the contract, he has not taken away his subscription, though ye have yours. O come back and say, now other lords, other husbands, other lovers, have had my heart, but through the grace of an eternal God they shall have it no more: Return unto me, I am married unto you, saith the Lord.

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