

The Invitation: Come Unto Me

by Rolfe Barnard

The Savior's invitation is an easy and light yoke that is offered to those who labor and are heavy laden, and is qualified for those who are willing to come to the Lord Jesus for rest and salvation.

Duration: 50:16

Scripture: Matthew 11:28-29, John 5:40

Topics: "Salvation"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the need for a revival of preaching in today's generation of churchgoers. He compares the reverence and preparation that people used to have when addressing God to the lack of respect and seriousness in today's religious atmosphere. The preacher also highlights the bondage of sin and the need for individuals to be ruled by God rather than being enslaved by sin. He references Isaiah 55:1 to illustrate the thirst for God's word and the importance of hearing and learning from the testimony of God. The sermon concludes with the message of hope and salvation through the gospel, emphasizing the transformative power of God's good news.

Transcript

The scripture that was read this morning, before I say that, the mother of Israel, I forget her name, says I got to sing tonight, and so I'm going to do that, and if you can be here, a testimony that we love. Read before us the scripture this morning from the 11th chapter of the gospel of Matthew, and from that scripture I desire to speak this morning, and if you'll turn again to it, I should like to read the text, having given the subject, we'll speak to a subject this morning, and the subject is the Savior's invitation. The Savior's invitation.

And the invitation is verse 28 and 29, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. The better rendering, I will rest you. The next verse tells how he'll rest you.

Take my yoke upon you. If you're a hard-working man, you've found out long since that the thing that'll rest you is not to sit down, but to change what you're doing, do something a little different. That relaxes you and rests you.

And so the Lord Jesus said, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I'll rest you. How? By putting my yoke upon you. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I'll rest you.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. As an inducement to someone to accept and to receive his invitation, he says, For I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke, man's got to wear a yoke, and mine's so much more easy than he'll find anywhere else.

There's not a question of whether man will wear a yoke or not. That's already been settled. If you're a human being, you're wearing a yoke this morning.

You're in bondage to sin or to the Lord Jesus Christ. Man can't say, Well, I'll not bear, I'll not be a slave. That's something that's not optional.

And the Lord Jesus says, The way I'll rest you is to give you a different yoke. You enter my school and learn of me. My yoke is easy, isn't that precious? Blind men cannot see it.

If I speak to somebody who's not blind any longer, there was a time when you could not see it. But if you can see now, you've learned that the Lord Jesus tells the truth. My yoke is easy, oh, a lot easier than the yoke of sin.

Isn't it? And my burden is light. Glory, hallelujah. Bible teachers talk to us about the law of first mention.

And I believe they lead us rightly when they tell us that if you, in this day, when every creed and every doctrine and every position is fortified by Scripture, that if you would come out of the confusion of this hour in pretty good shape in the matter of studying God's Word, and not to be smart, but to practice it, for the only way to study God's Word is on your knees, not to learn something, but to learn something so that you can obey it, and that you pay strict attention to the law of first mention. The first time a truth is found in the Word of God, there the key is given. And that truth, wherever it shows up throughout the rest of the Bible, will mean what it did in the first instance.

And this law of first mention comes with particular power and emphasis and importance when we remember that the verses that I have just read to you are the first constitute, the first invitation the Lord Jesus gave to individual men and women to come to Him. This is the first gospel invitation. And we must face very squarely every child of God must, for you are called to be a preacher, and you are a witness, and you are a yoke-feller of the Holy Ghost here, and you must see to it that two things do not happen as you minister wherever God leads you to somebody to speak to it.

You dare not add to this invitation, but please, God, wouldn't it be wonderful if we quit giving a lesser invitation than the dear Lord gave. Any gospel invitation that adds to this is unscriptural. Any gospel invitation that gives a sinner a part of this invitation, and not all of it, will not honor God and will further butcher up this religious confused generation that are going to hell with their names on church rolls, who have accepted a part and have not yet been confronted with and bowed to, not a divided Christ, but the Son of God as He is presented.

This scripture also, this invitation, will have no special meaning for anybody unless it is read and received from the background from which it is given. We say up and down the land, quoting the scripture, that they that are not sick don't need a physician. You have to interpret a little bit there.

In other words, they that are not sick. There's nobody, as the Lord looks at that, that's not sick. The whole head, we're sick.

But it means that a fellow doesn't believe he's sick. He's not likely to be dangling the telephone and running around trying to find the doctor. They that are not sick have no need of a physician.

In that same wise, the Lord Jesus will say, I came not to call the righteous to repentance, and there he's not saying that some of you nice people are righteous and you don't need me, but what he's saying is, I didn't come to call people who think they're righteous, but I did come to call sinners to repentance. And if you read this invitation in its background, as we're going to do just now, and you don't balk at the scriptures and the setting of it, and you face the fact, it might be that the Holy Spirit will find somebody here this morning who'd be anxious to hear the Savior's invitation. So let us read this text again, in the light of its awful setting.

It's a setting twofold, of the awful wrath and judgment of God, and of the awful sovereignty of the redeeming Lord. Let's look at this context and see the awful judgment of God. The Lord Jesus, as metaphor, presented himself to the elect Jewish nation as the God-sent Messiah.

He's come with all the credentials of which the Old Testament said he would wear when he came. And he has presented himself to a nation, the Jewish nation as such, received Jesus Christ as Messiah, King. They would have found in him salvation.

Now it is true that if an individual will submit to Jesus Christ as his absolute Lord, he'll find in the Lord a Savior. He'll find salvation. Salvation.

But the Jewish nation, through its leaders, what people usually haven't got time to think for themselves. If they're in legal trouble, they'll hire a lawyer. If they're sick, they'll go to a doctor.

If they're in trouble, they'll go to a preacher. But this generation plunges on its road to hell, not knowing anything for certain about things spiritual, believing the last preacher they heard. And through the leaders, the Jewish nation has looked the one who claimed to be God's anointed.

They've looked him over, and they've said, this one will not do. And so in verse 20, the Lord Jesus, for the first time, turns to the bitterest, most blistering words, perhaps in the entire Bible, and pronounces woe upon the nation as such. There, not till then, when the cup was full, when the die had been cast, when morally responsible men had been left without excuse and had made their decision about the claims of the anointed one, then, not till then, but then began he to upbraid the cities.

Strangely, the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, and he upbraided them, not upbraided them, not as people to be pitied, but he upbraided them because, and he pronounced these terrible woes, and says that if the mighty works are in his greatest works, the first message of the Christ, and always and eternally the first, is the message of Jesus Christ in somebody's stead. This generation has been offered a Savior of which it feels absolutely no need, and that's true because we get people to move. And if I speak to somebody this morning who's not a victim, I would be glad to hear that any human being ever hears the gospel as gospel, he'll be saved just like that.

And if God's good news ever comes to you, and you say that's good news, and if you're in trouble, if you're feeling the sting of the whole immoral character and demands of a holy God, and your utter inability to produce what he requires, I have to come along with God's remedy for people, and that you might be glad to hear him invite you to come to him. You say, that's for me, boy. And then look at the sovereignty of God.

Oh, against this background, what does the sovereignty of God mean? It simply means that God's God. That he's very God. Doesn't mean he's a monster, just means he's God.

You can trust him, brother. You can get into his hands. That bank's not going to go broke.

Look at the sovereignty of God. In connection, laying the setting for it, and the people who go around the country trying to get people to accept Jesus, the awful judgment of God, hard doing, sinner wrong. And the people who go around this country trying to get people to take it, who ignore the fact that God, are doing sinners an injustice.

Let me read, scriptures, that if I could undertake to encompass them. But oh, they bring a hush on me. And the ease of familiarity of what they call Christianity, is a common we have, with a majestic.

I want you to hear me. I hope a holy hush, might come on, to give this first gospel. He speaks to the father, verse 25.

At that time, Jesus answered, and said, I thank thee, oh father, Lord of heaven and earth, because, thou, hast hid, these, things, from, the wise, and prudent, and hast revealed, them, unto thee. Smart aleck, goodbye, go on to hell. I tell you the reason this is smart aleck, the sovereign God, has hidden the truth.

For a little week, somebody in desperate help, be of good cheer my friend, the sovereign God will reveal, these things, from people who are wise in their own estimation. If I speak to somebody to whom he has revealed it, this little old babe, not so smart, amen? But God does that. Do you believe it? You better.

You are in the hands of a God, who not only can, but does, hide, things, from some. That's the only place for you Mr. Germain, like a little old baby, at the foot of a sovereign God, saying, Lord, if you will, you can. That's about the only safe place I know for this copy.

Or, I take that place, the only safe place for a subject, not demanding, but in subjection, at the good pleasure of the sovereign. You are God's subject. I read the next verse.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good, in thy sight. I don't expect you to take that Mr. Germain, but God says it's alright. That's what you want to do with that.

Do you know what I mean? What? To hide these things from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them to babes. Even so, Father. I wouldn't want you to think I'm blasphemous, but it looks like in this humanity.

Even so, I'd give a darn hag, a cow and a cat, if we could have a revival of preaching today, that would take some of the cockiness out of this generation, the church people. You know, it took your grandpa about 30 minutes to get ready to address the Deity. And when they go to England to be presented before the Queen, they go by invitation, and they spend months, the ladies do, getting a dress and learning how to curtsy and all of that bit.

So they won't be embarrassed in the presence of a sovereign. For so it seemed good, in thy sight. And it just gets worse.

Look at the next part. To prepare somebody to go against the very atmosphere that uses God as a milk cow and has lost all conception of this goal. The Lord Jesus utters these words there.

For so it seemed good, in thy sight. And it just gets worse. Look at the next part.

To prepare somebody to go against the very atmosphere that uses God as a milk cow and has lost all conception of this glory. The Lord Jesus utters these words. They are the most challenging verses I've ever... This is the most challenging verse I've ever faced.

I do not begin to pretend to be able to take it. It kills everything about the flesh. Listen.

Read it one more time. Even. All things.

I mean things. All things are delivered unto me of my Father. I mean things.

Oh boy. You know, when that one who says all things have been delivered unto me, who gave unto the Lord the Father. If he ever gives you an invitation to come to him, I think that'd be my nice one.

You'll pay attention to that. Oh yes. This one.

Into whose hands all things have been delivered. As all things are delivered unto me of my Father. And no man doeth the son but the Father.

Save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Oh, how solemn those scriptures are. It's in the Bible, beloved.

I mean, I can understand it, but there it is. My heart bleeds. I'm not being pious.

I've got to face people with the judgment to whom I've preached and had an opportunity to preach and you have too. The cockiness of what they call Christianity. They break the heart of the devil, there was one.

This blasphemous stuff of putting God down in the dust and ascending man upon the throne, putting God in the hands of prostitutes of men and women, tell you when they're saved, but wouldn't know Jesus Christ and the Holy Walk with them if they met Him in the road. How I wish that as far as my little responsibility to get men and women in this day when we use God instead of bow to Him to seriously face the fact that the only one who can issue an invitation to anybody to be saved by coming to Him is the one who alone can reveal God to man. Nobody knows the Son except the Father.

And nobody knows the Father except the Son and Him. To whosoever the Son doth be high remember Him. If we could have a revival in Sunday school, in all the radio, and in pulpits, and in printed page, facing this generation with the fact that you're in the hands of a sovereign Redeemer who alone can make God real to you, and He reserves the right to reveal the Father to whosoever He will.

If we could have a revival of that instead of fighting it, you'd see things happen all over this country. You'd see men get in their clubs and try to get rid of God. That'd be good.

You'd see some others bowing down and say, Oh God, if Thou wilt have mercy on me, whichever You do, I'm in Your hands. I'll never know God unless the Son reveals Him to me. Isn't that what you say? And I'm going to quit telling Jesus Christ how to run His business.

I'm going to get in their club with shotguns and try to get rid of Him. I'm going to take my place as a subject with no demands, pleading mercy. Out of a background like this, we're a sovereign Redeemer who alone can reveal God to men.

What condescension, what power back of it, what responsibility placed on those to whom it's given, if the invitation comes from a futile Christ who needs help, that's one thing. But if it comes from a sovereign Lord into whose hands all has been delivered and who alone can make God real to men and women. He said, the only way to God's condemnation, He said, I know the one that can reveal the Father to you.

How gracious, if that grace appear. Come unto me who says it. Come unto me who says it.

Be one who alone can make God real to men. Reject that invitation. You've rejected the invitation of the sovereign Lord of glory and won't be able to make hell hot enough to fit your awful blasphemous sin.

It is interesting that the cross is to be preached to all the law and the gospel. And that in mighty grace and condescension the messengers of the cross are bitten to go and plead with men to be reconciled to God. What grace that is.

It is a blessed truth that there is one sense in which all men are invited to come to Him. But it is also true that in a deeper sense most men are not invited to come to Him. It is true that men do the limiting.

But nowhere in the entire Old Testament or in the New Testament is what I'm going to say now violated. Always those who are invited to come into the presence of the eternal Son of God. That invitation is qualified just like it is here.

It doesn't say, Come unto me all the members of Adam's low end and fallen race. It doesn't say that. It doesn't say, Come unto me all who have to have a nice little no-show salvation to make you see without having to walk with Christ.

No, it doesn't say that. It does say here, Come unto me all you red and a heavy leg. Do you see it? Come unto me blessed God.

There's bread for hungry people. There's water for thirsty people. There's rest for weary people.

There's salvation for lost people. And there's nothing but judgment and damnation for self-sufficient people who get along fine, thank you. Don't go away and say the preacher said Christ doesn't invite everybody.

There is a sense where he invites everybody and that none are excluded. But all the invitations come right back to this. You make this decision now, young man.

Are you laboring under the burden of your failure in sin? Are you scared of dying and tired of living under God or are you crushed under the burden of your lonesomeness? You say, no, I'm getting along just fine. Well, we're not talking to you. You don't want Christ to rest you.

You and the Master for sin is personified in the Bible and is called a sovereign. There are just two sovereigns, sin and Christ. And you and your Master get along fine for their pleasure in sin-pursuit.

And we invite you to come to the Lord Jesus till we're blue in the face. We'll have just as much success with you as the fact that you can lead a horse to water. There's no way on God's earth you can get him to drink unless he's thirsty.

Come unto me. Ye get it. You're well-minded.

You're people with every kind of a God. And you can have me in them too. No, no.

Come unto me, all you weary and heavy laden. And I'll rescue how you do it, Lord. You'll get a new Master.

Amen. You see, if you're a member of Adam's race, I know right smart about you just by looking at myself. You were born to be ruled.

The government shall be on his shoulder. And you are under the rule now of personified sin. We hear a lot about the freedom of the will now.

And if you mean the fact that a man's not a robot and that he's responsible and so forth, all right. But the Scriptures talk a great deal about the bondage of man. They're not free to do lots of things.

And my Lord said he that committed sin is the bond slave. And ruled you will be by a sign of sin personified in the hands of Satan or by the Lord Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 55 and 1, the picture there is a caravan of camels and their drivers coming from a long journey through the desert.

And some kind-hearted man has gone to the spring and loaded up some barrels full of fresh spring water. And just as the camel drivers were coming off their hot journey, he camped out there by the side of the road. And as they come into hearing, he puts his hands to his mouth and he says, Ho! Hey! Hey! Everyone that thirsty, come to the water! And the camel driver says, Thank you! I'm not thirsty! But he said, I didn't address you.

I said, Ho! Everyone that's thirsty. In John's Gospel of chapter 7, just a little while before the crucifixion, where the Lord Jesus is in the midst of the people who hated him more, right in the temple, he turns after they've turned thumbs down on him and has parted for his death. Lifts his hands, I think, to his mouth and stands in the temple.

He says, If any man, if any man, the leaders have turned them down, the temple crowd have been killed. If any man, he's the one out, If any man, T-H-I-R-S-T, Flesh! Let him come unto me! For I'll have to wade through all the religious leaders that are going to kill you! But if any man, Flesh! Let him roll up his sleeves and spit on his hands and plow through the satanic atmosphere all about him and the opposition of all hell itself, if he must. If any man, Flesh! Let him come to me! And D-R-I-N-K drank.

Drank. In the last chapter of the book of the Revelation, watch it very carefully, it is blessedly true that whosoever will may come to Christ. But having said that, the scriptures don't use that kind of language.

Now, that power and feature in the Bible says whosoever will may come! But the Bible don't. The Bible just don't do it. It's so! And by air this morning, willing to take the yoke of the Lord Jesus only.

Nobody hindering it. And what sometimes may be in dealing with souls, which is very important, we ought not try to improve on the word of God. Let me quote it like it's written, or like how we've used it.

What is it? The seventeenth version. And the spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth say come.

And whosoever will may come. No, I didn't watch that. Whoso is what? A search! Whoso is a search! Isn't that what it says? Whoso is a search! What are the next three words? Somebody read it.

Huh? Whoso is a search! Let him come. And now, whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Who will? First the people.

Amen. Who won't? People who don't feel any need in their life. Give up your life! Who will? Sure.

Nobody will. Unless they say, stick in their right. First the souls are invited to take the only thing they can do, they can't buy it, can't deserve it, but bless God, they can take it.

The water of life freely. May I close this morning by asking you if you'd be so kind as to turn to the Gospel of John. I'm long-winded this morning, but I want you to see here in the Gospel according to John at verse 40.

I want to read you the most pessimistic, the most pessimistic verse in the entire Bible, I think. It's John 6, John 5. I'll get right here directly. John 5 and 40.

John chapter 5 and verse 40. There is an awful verse of Scripture because it tells the truth. The Lord Jesus said in verse 39, and I think the reading of it is this, you're constantly searching the Scripture.

He told a bunch of Bible readers and Bible students and Bible teachers here, Old Testament. He said you're constantly searching the Scripture. That's fine.

But then he puts the finger on a terrible thing. He said the reason you're constantly searching the Scripture is in them ye think ye have eternal life, but eternal life is not in the Scripture. He says they'll be which point to the one where life is.

He said you never, the next verse, and the literal Greek of it, ye desire not to desire, come to me. Why don't you desire to come to Christ? They found life somewhere else. They found it in the Scripture.

You've got life you don't need anymore, do you? If you're ill you don't need a doctor, do you? You just had a great big drink of cool water, you don't need a drink, do you? You just had a great big T-bone steak, you're not tickly hungry. That's you! People, ye people, the leaders who finally led to the crucifixion of Christ, they studied the Bible and put their trust in the Word, and therefore had no desire to get into vital union with and contact with Him that the Word talks about. And that is said, I think of B. B. Warfield, a great Presbyterian theologian, the folly of preaching the gospel of whosoever will, in a world of whosoever won't.

Mr. Ernie Riesinger, leave it up to man. Who will come to Christ? And the answer is what? Nobody. Nobody.

Nobody. Now I close with reading you the most optimistic passage in the Word of God to this preacher. The verse paints a picture of every human being.

Why haven't you come to Christ? You've already dug out a cistern. You're drinking water from it. Getting along fine, thank you.

See? You don't need for anybody to give you water out of the real well. See what I mean? Why didn't these Jews come to Christ? They didn't need Him. They'd already got what they wanted in the Scriptures.

See what I mean? And they had no need to come to Him upon the Scriptures. No man will. But thank God, here's a note of optimism.

Verse 44, John 6, No man can come to Me. This isn't pessimistic. This isn't telling people they can't get to Christ.

It's just shutting the door and showing them where it is. No man can come to Me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him. But bless God, He does that.

There's where the optimism is. Left alone. Who's coming to Christ? Nobody.

Who can get to Christ? Nobody. Except the Father drawing what the Father does draw. But see how He draws Him.

Verse 45, Here's how the Father draws men to the Son. It is written in the Prophets, They shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, What does he do? Cometh unto Me.

There's our hope. Why do we keep preaching? Because the Youth for Christ director, I believe, was recognized. Why do we have Youth for Christ? Why do we get on the radio? Why do we have the evangelist campaign? Why do we preach? Why do we teach Sunday school? Why do we get out of track? Why do we do everything? Faith cometh by hearing.

Just start listening to what God says. Huh? Hearing by the Word of God. How does God draw men to come to Christ? Sit down and go to school until someday this book will become the testimony of a living God.

You see, that's what God said. I act on what God said. Amen? I won't take your word for it.

I'll take what God says about it. Faith cometh by hearing. Hearing by the Word of God.

Amen? There's hope there for everybody's got time to go to school to Almighty God. In the textbooks right here, folks, no man can come except the Father draw men. But the prophets told us they shall be all taught of God.

And every man that hath heard Huh? Heard from whom? The testimony of God. And hath learned cometh unto me.

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