

# Ye Are Come to Zion - Part 2

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of faith in possessing Christ and exploiting our inheritance in Him, which is the key to finding rest, pleasure, and service in Christ.*

**Duration:** 54:01

**Scripture:** Genesis 2:7, Exodus 3:14, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:17, Ephesians 1:3, Hebrews 2:6-8, Hebrews 12:22

**Topics:** "Zion"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of believers receiving and possessing the life of Christ. He highlights that our existence is justified by the fact that many have received life through us, which vindicates God's decision to give us life. The speaker then focuses on the next word in Hebrews 12, which is 'Zion.' He explains that believers have come to Zion, which represents our inheritance in Christ and the need to truly possess and take hold of all that God has provided for us. The speaker encourages Christians to exercise their faith and actively lay hold of the promises and gifts of God in order to fully experience the salvation and glorification that God has already accomplished for us.

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## Transcript

We return to our key fragment of Scripture in the twelfth chapter, the letter to the Hebrews, and verse 22. For a little while longer, we continue with the simple and imperfect fragment of the whole statement, ye are come, whether we shall get beyond that will remain to be seen. Ye are come.

And we have been seeing that that is a very comprehensive fragment, gathering up everything that God has ever intended by way of making provision for the realization of man's glorious destiny. We began by pointing out that this wonderful document, the letter to the Hebrews, takes up the Old Testament in its three great phases. The first relating to the creation, the second from the book of Genesis into Exodus, where the nation of Israel comes into the counsels of God.

The third great section which covers the prophets. And all those phases of the movement of God are collected and transferred to Christ and his church in a spiritual way in this letter. So far, we have been occupied with the first, noting that as Genesis begins with, in the beginning, God, so this letter to the Hebrews begins with God having of old times spoken.

Everything beginning with and proceeding from God. God alone acting, designing, projecting, working until he has everything completed to his own satisfaction. And then in the second chapter of Genesis and the

second chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, man is brought on that seat.

You will remember how that was so in the second chapter of Genesis and you will recall that in the second chapter of the letter to the Hebrews, the matter of man's position and the design of God for him is introduced. What is man? Thou art mindful of him. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands.

We spent most of our time upon that most glorious of all truths and facts. That God has everything completed for man before he brings man in. That is that man comes into something that God has perfected.

We have not to make anything for our salvation, our perfecting or our glorification. God has done it all and then brings us into what he has done. It is the heritage of faith in the great divine benefactor.

We went on to see man placed in his heritage and what placing in the garden represented and typified spiritually. I am not going to go over the detail again. I just remind you because there are one or two additional points to be considered.

But in the first place it did define man's existence. It brought the whole creation down to something very practical and immediate so far as man was concerned. And the garden was the microcosm of the whole God satisfying creation and was given to man.

And in effect God said with the garden this is your man. This belongs to you. This has a very practical relationship to you and you to it.

You are not just turned loose on the earth but the whole thing is focused here to become something that you have got to apprehend. You have to really lay hold of by faith and make it good. So the garden meant that in the beginning and it is perfectly clear when we come to the New Testament and to this letter to the Hebrews in particular that the whole of God's wonderful new creation through redemption in Christ is presented to faith as a practical proposition.

It becomes something not of general teaching, doctrine and belief but something that you and I have really to apprehend, to take hold of and to really believe what God says this is all for you. This is all yours. Now then, what are you going to do about it? That was the upshot of the garden for Adam.

This is yours. Now then what are you going to do about it? And so the great work that God has perfected in Christ and through Christ is presented as a finished and completed and altogether God satisfying work. And it is presented to us for us to accept, to make ours.

It is very practical. Then we went on to see that the garden was intended to be man's home which means that it is his place of rest, of pleasure, of interest and his abiding place. And these are the things into which we are brought in Christ where God's new creation is.

That a right apprehension of Christ by faith does mean, is intended to mean that you and I come into rest of heart. Rest of heart. Rest is not inaction, doing nothing.

Rest is not just sitting in an armchair if that is your idea of home. Well, sometimes it might be included but it doesn't, the armchair doesn't comprehend the whole idea of home does it? Only some of you, like some of us, find rest more in satisfying work than in doing nothing. We are very restless in doing nothing.

The thing that really does bring real satisfaction is to have something creative on hand, something worthwhile. And in Christ we have that kind of rest. It is interesting and significant that when the Lord Jesus was saying that coming to him rest would be found, he combined with it, take my yoke.

Take my yoke. And yoke is the symbol of service. And if we are going to find rest in service it must be very heart satisfying.

Well, that is home. It's the place of rest. It's the place of abiding.

These are the things, many other features of what home means which we are supposed to find in Christ. We are supposed to be, and I'm very careful now because of my American friend, very homey people. Some of you don't know the significance of this.

Now man's vocation is represented and signified by the garden. It became his life work or was intended to be his life work. The sphere of the expression of the deepest things in himself, the place of his active interest, and the way of the development of his own life, that was the garden.

These things are true in Christ. Christ becomes the very life work of the believer. We are introduced by Christ and in Christ into a great vocation.

A great vocation. Into the realm where that which is deepest in our being, through the grace of God, finds its expression. Love for God.

The answer of our own hearts to God's goodness. Going out, expressing itself, pouring itself out in vocation, in service. Let's be very careful what we mean when we use that word service.

Far better to speak of ministering to the Lord. It covers every form of service. And if what we do is not ministering to the Lord, then it's not service to the Lord.

And in Christ, by exercise, by exercise in Christ as Adam in the garden, so our own lives are developed. There's an increase. We grow up in him, into all things.

Finally, so far as the afternoon was concerned, we saw the garden as the place of man's probation. Where he was on test to be approved or disapproved. The element of responsibility coming in, in relation to all that God has done for us and has offered to us in Christ.

But responsibility is summed up in one word, faith. Without faith it is impossible to please him. Faith is our answer and will cover everything.

Will cover everything. We leave that and go on to just these one or two other things in relation to the first phase of interpretation. We said that man had to possess, exploit and realize all that God had given to him.

This letter to the Hebrews bears down very strongly upon that. It tells us early what has been done for us by him and in him and through him. And then it calls upon us to answer.

In the first place, there is the apprehending or the possessing. Making ours of what God has offered. There can be a gap, you see.

There can be a gap or there can come about a gap. Between God's presented pacts and fullnesses and our deliberate and positive faith apprehension of them. Many of the warnings and exhortations in this letter have to do with that.

I am not going to turn aside to remind you of the occasion of this letter, why it was written. But you will see that again and again the writer comes back on this kind of exhortation, even warning. Here is the pact presented.

Here is everything offered. Here is that to which you have come. Now one little phrase is constantly reiterated, let us, let us, let us, let us hear, let the promise having been left us.

Any one of you should seem to come short. Let us fear lest we drift away from them. Much in that strain, just that gap between God's great presentation.

All that is our heritage in Christ and our laying hold of it. And definitely and positively possessing all that, possessing Christ. Now the New Testament has a lot that bears on that matter of really possessing Christ by faith.

Really taking hold of Christ. There is an exercise here for the man in the garden. He has got to lay hold of this.

It is very nice for the Lord to have said now look at all this. It is very lovely, very beautiful, very wonderful. There are great possibilities in this.

Now you just sit down and have a look at it. Think about it. Be very pleased with it.

But know the Lord says do something. Get hold of this whole situation. Possess it.

Get it into your hands. Make it yours. Turn it to real account.

Dear friends, there is, I fear, a weakness here in many, many Christians. They know the truth, the truths and all the promises and all the gifts and all the wonderful things that God has done and has said in Christ. But they do not get down to this thing and by faith lay right hold of it and appropriate and say that is for me and I make it mine.

And because there is not this kind of reaction to God, there is a loss. We drift away. We come short.

That is what the letter is about. To be possessed in the first place. To be exploited.

That is, it's got to be taken up and made to yield its inherent and its intrinsic values. That is general language. But you see, here is life for instance.

Right at the heart of this garden is life. Is life. And everything in this garden is living.

Now then, for us, in this letter to the Hebrews, the Lord Jesus has tasted death. And has overcome him, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And this letter throbs with life, doesn't it? In many connections this whole matter of life arises, Melchizedek and so on.

Life is here. Well of course you and I all believe, all believe that Jesus is the life. That life and incorruption were brought to life through the gospel.

That our heritage is eternal life. It's the gift of God. We believe all these things.

As you know, very often, very often that thing is only doctrine. It's only objective. But it might become a very practical matter.

We, after all now, are in a realm of death. Death is all about. And it really does become a necessity for us to lay hold on life.

Any day, any day we may be conscious of this blanketing of death. And what do we do about it? It comes in any way, it comes into a prayer gathering. And we are gathered together for prayer.

And sometimes there spreads over a woolly blanket over the whole thing. And we perhaps struggle through and come out the other end and go home and say, Death, it's all death. What have we done about it? Immediately we sense that there ought to be a collective and corporate reaction.

We are not going to have this. This is not our heritage. Life, life is God's gift.

Why tolerate this? We can do that as to our own individual life, physically. Physically, if we don't resist the encroachment of spiritual death upon our bodies, we'll die. We'll live a living death.

It's a contradiction, I know, but it'll be just like that. Like that, wrapped around. You see, in so many ways, individually, physically, mentally, spiritually, collectively.

In the world, it's this battle. This battle for the asserting of life. We've got to lay hold, that's Paul's phrase, isn't it? Lay hold on eternal life.

Now then, exploit, exploit all he's given you. All that God would get this into us. We'd see changes in our gatherings.

We're sensitive enough to register the encroachment of death. And know then that's the time for us to do something. Not to accept it, but to do something.

Exploit life. What is true of life is true of everything else that constitutes this inheritance in Christ. It's given.

But it does not become effective. It does not become fruitful until we do something about it. Remarkable thing that God has given us all this in its perfection and gift, and yet it does not become fruitful enough, in our experience, until we exploit it.

And all the purpose that is here, inherently and intrinsically, has got to be realized. And it will only be, strangely enough, realized as we come into fake action about it. It's a great heritage, but somehow or other we just do not realize all that it means without doing something in relation to it.

The works of faith. The works of faith. Works do not justify, but a justified person works.

Putting their faith into action. Proving that they have faith by doing something about it. Well, that does not need enlarging.

We have found from that, that's really additional or an additional emphasis to what we were saying this afternoon. Christ to be possessed, exploited, realized. The person and the work of Christ in entirety are presented to faith for our inclusive apprehension.

Remarkable phrase. A remarkable phrase here. Receiving the end of your faith.

Even the salvation of your soul. The archive. Receiving the end.

Faith leaps over time and takes hold of the ultimate. The end. And faith arrives there now.

Receiving the end of your faith. Even the salvation of your soul. Inclusively apprehended by faith.

Oh, that we could make that clear. I was sure you were grasping it. It just amounts to this, dear friends, that you and I, gain after gain, under pressure, in trial, in spiritual difficulties, have to stand up and say, yes, this is a bad patch.

This is a difficult phase. Today everything is black, dark, and apparently hopeless. But it will be all right at the end.

This is not what it will be at the end. In the end I shall be out and up and through on top in victory. Receiving the end and laying hold by faith of that end today.

Not giving away everything because of the present. But laying hold of God's end. That's very practical.

Try it. That is exploiting. Your inclusive inheritance.

Not a bit of it, but the whole. Presented to faith for progressive development. Progressive development of what is given to us in Christ.

That does not mean to make it more, because you cannot make it more. But it does mean to draw out what is in it. Far, far more possibility, potentiality, value in that garden than is just apparent.

Far more in Christ than we have ever yet seen. We shall discover that he is an inexhaustible fullness only as by faith we get to work upon him. And upon what is given to us in him.

Development in that sense. When we speak of a man developing a piece of property. Something that he has inherited or bought.

We do not mean that he is enlarging it. We mean that he is getting out of it all that is there. And that is what I mean when I speak of developing Christ.

Getting out what is in him. Now we can pass on to the next thing which has not been mentioned. Which is a correspondence between this letter and the beginning of Genesis.

In that garden man was given a trust and a commandment combined with the trust. The trust was life. And the commandment was be fruitful and multiply.

So that the garden was intended by God to be the place and scene of the constituting of a family. And a growing family corresponding to the garden. Suitable to the garden.

That is a very important point. Suitable. When man was no longer suitable to the garden he was turned out of it.

And God was not going to have in that garden a family that was not suited to it. Did not correspond to it. That would have been something that was inherently contradictory.

That could be easily illustrated. Easily illustrated by putting different kinds of people into different kinds of environment. They are not suited to it.

It doesn't suit them. They don't suit it. They are a misfit.

They are unhappy. The whole thing is a contradiction. A contradiction.

They must have things which are like themselves. Like themselves. That is the whole secret of slum life, isn't it? Take people out of those environments and put them into a lovely place and they are miserable and unhappy.

And they will very soon turn it into a slum. That suits them. Quite content in there.

Sometimes they don't think they are but there it is. And the same is true the other way round. Put somebody into something that is altogether inferior.

They are not happy in it. They are going to make a difference. To come up to their standard.

See? Must answer to what they are. And that's a principle we've got. And everything in that, every person that was to be in that garden was to be perfectly in sympathy, in harmony with the garden itself.

Now that is better understood when you transfer to Christ and let Christ represent that garden, our paradise. You know quite well how unsaved people are miserable amongst Christians. And so they ought to be.

There is something wrong with the Christianity if they are not. And you know how miserable Christians are in the world. There is a difference, isn't it? Now here was to be a family wholly corresponding to the setting.

Transferred to Christ. This letter to the Hebrews brings this matter out so much, perhaps you haven't looked at it like this. What is all this about? We're for holy brethren.

He is not ashamed to call them brethren. Saying, I and the children. Bringing many sons to glory.

To the general assembly and church of the first born ones. See the language? It's the language of the family, isn't it? That's distributed through this letter from beginning to the end. What does it mean? Well, this family is an object of God.

A family of those conformed to the image of His Son. And a family of those who take their character from Christ. A family of those who correspond to the great heritage that God has given them in Christ.

If in Christ He has given the great inheritance of rest and a family enjoying rest. Whatever it may be, a family that has these features. The features of Christ and of the work which God has perfected in Christ.

To have such a family. Now man was put in the garden, first of all with the responsibility of life. And I in and through Christ and His work have been given that divine life.

It's a different order of life we live. Altogether different kind of life. This life which we have in Christ and through Christ.

It's another life, but it's a tremendous responsibility. We just cannot have it and stop it with ourselves. There goes alongside of it the command, be fruitful.

Be multiple. Repenish the earth. See, the justification of life is in the measure of Christ in others through us.

The justification of our being called Christians. The justification of our standing upon the finished work of Christ. The justification of our very existence as new creation people.

It's to be found, not just in our having life and being saved, but in the measure of Christ that is found in others through us. That is the justification of our existence and the vindication of God in giving life. Oh it's a challenge isn't it? A test, but here it is.

The family is in view. Paul spoke of having begotten the Corinthians through the gospel. He said that he had begotten them through the gospel.

Of Onesimus he said, whom I have begotten in my bonds. See the point? Yes, the great prophecy concerning the Lord Jesus, by way of his suffering and his cross he shall see his seed. But how? Through the church.

Through the church. Here is Paul, one member of that church saying, whom I have begotten through the gospel. Whom I have begotten in my bonds.

See the point? Spiritual birth being brought about by the transmission of life from one member to others. It requires a living church to bring about an adequate foundation of souls. It requires a living member of the church to bring another into life.

It's always the way. Always the way. It's the repetition of what happened with the prophet.

The child is dead and he stretches himself upon that child. Hands to his hands, feet to his feet, lips to his lips. And transmits life from Christ to that corpse and drags it out of there.

That is the responsibility of life. How solemn and serious are the scriptures on this matter. That no person is supposed to be a dead end.

Any kind of dead end by carelessness or willfulness receives the most serious tribute from the Lord. That can be taken naturally. It brings its nemesis.

If by our likes and dislikes and fancies and fads and wills and preferences or by willfulness we stop life with ourselves. I'm speaking now in the realm of volition where we have a will about this. Then we shall meet a nemesis sooner or later in the natural.

What we sow there we'll reap in the spiritual. In the spiritual. Where there is no life that can be spared.

Life that can be given. Then we shall meet a nemesis sooner or later in the natural. What we sow there we'll reap in the spiritual.

In the spiritual. Where there is no life that can be spared. Life that can be given.

Life that is more than we need for ourselves. Where there is no such life that can be transmitted. Then that thing or that individual is an end in themselves.

And they are not standing up to their obligations and to their responsibilities and they will bring the disfavor of the Lord upon them. They become an end in themselves. Be fruitful and multiply which postulates the fact that you've got something, something of a deposit to make that possible.

So the family is here very much in view in this letter. And it is a proving God has done all this and given all this in Christ. And a proving that we have entered in by faith to really apprehend all that God has done.

The proof is by how many other people are getting life through us. Oh dear friends, cover it above all things. That you shall not be an end in yourself but there will be many who by the grace of God can attribute their spiritual life to you as a channel.

You make it your real business in life to see that there are many who have received life through you. That is the justification of our existence. That is the vindication of God in giving us life at all.

Indeed it's the vindication of the cross of Christ. He shall see the travail of his soul. He shall see his sin.

The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. Ye are come. Ye are come.

Ye are come to all the provision for a life like that. For a vocation like that. For a multiplication like that.

It's all there. It's all there. It can be because God has already made the full provision.

It's so largely a matter of our exercise. Now if you can bear it I'd like to go on for a little while with the next word. I'd like to say that it is not my thought at all in this conference unless the Lord so leads to go beyond the next word in this great statement in Hebrews 12.

But this is very much on my heart. Ye are come. Ye are come to reside.

You notice the turn of the argument is upon that little word. It has been Sinai. The palpable mount that could be touched.

Burning with fire. Earthquakes and lightnings. Windings.

Fire. Voids. Terrors.

We are not come to that as the writer here does. Ye are come to Zion. What I want to point out is that while it is quite true that Zion is the antithesis of Sinai.

And is mentioned here in contrast with Sinai. Not that but this. That is not all that is meant.

What is meant here is in keeping with the whole letter. That is you have come to the end of the road. Sinai was at the beginning.

At the beginning of the road. Not only do you not now come to Sinai but you've left that long behind. That lies a long way back there in the course of things.

Has its own significance and implications but it lies right back there. You have journeyed a long way from Sinai and you are now come not to an advanced point on the journey but to the end of the journey. You remember when you see we've moved from Genesis now into Israel.

When they were on the salvation and life side of the Red Sea. A psalm. And in that psalm you have this.

Thou shalt bring them in and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance. The place O Lord which thou hast made for them to dwell in. A sanctuary O Lord which thy hands have established.

Right there at the beginning of the journey the end is in full view. And the end is said to be the mountain of their inheritance. And if you look through the Old Testament you know quite well what mountain that is.

It's always Zion. Always Zion. The mountain of thine inheritance.

The place O Lord which thou hast made for them to dwell in. A sanctuary O Lord which thy hands have established. That's Zion.

From the beginning of the journey the end is pre-visual. And the end is Zion. The archive.

Not only to a contrast with Sinai but you come to the end of the road which Sinai was at the beginning. See this whole letter is a letter of things that are left behind isn't it. Oh how many things that are here left behind.

They belong to back there. We have come to something that's right on here. Back there it was all partial, imperfect.

Now we've come to the complete and the final. And Zion is there. So Zion is an inclusive and comprehensive term.

If Zion came into view at the beginning of the journey on the shores of the Red Sea then as the end of the journey it means that all that the journey represented is summed up in Zion. The whole thing is comprehended in Zion. It's all covered in Zion.

It's all included in Zion. There's no more after that. It's so inclusive and comprehensive is this term Zion.

It is the sum, that is symbolically it is the sum of all God's work in Christ. Now you've only got to look at the whole section, scripture from Sinai to Christ and see everything speaking of Christ, pointing to Christ, moving on toward Christ isn't it. Everything from Sinai.

All Christ in view. Now gather it all up in Christ and call it Zion if you will. Zion becomes the sum total of all God's work in Christ.

Ye are come. Ye are come to the consummate, comprehensive, all inclusive work of God in Christ. Another emphasis upon the same thing.

But Zion, while it means that inclusively and comprehensively, has a lot of other meanings in it. And in the light of the Old Testament, all that it has to say about Zion, find that Zion comes to be a people, a people. It's the people of Zion.

It passes from a thing, an object, comes to mean a people. The children of Zion shall be joyful. The virgin daughter, that's a people.

And Zion therefore is not only all that God has accomplished in Christ and all that Christ means in himself of God. Now, Zion comes in the next place to mean a people in the good of it. Ye are come to Zion, which means we have come to be a people in the good of all that God has provided and accomplished in his Son.

It is the sum of God's salvation enjoyed by a people. Ye are come. You read about Zion in the Psalms.

The predominant note in that particular connection there is always one of glory. Rejoicing, praising. Yes, it's the note of psalm.

Note of delight. Walk around Zion. Count her stone.

Mark her wall. Zion, the joy of the whole earth. You get into the prophets.

Another story. Not the glory, but the sorrow. Not the song, but the song.

People who have lost their inheritance. Let us keep to the bright side for a little while. Zion then means a people really in the enjoyment and in the glory in Christ.

Really, really having a good time. That's what it amounts to in Zion. Having a good time because of all that the Lord has done.

Oh, that we were more living on that side. Corresponding to that picture of Zion that were more true of us. Yes, we had good times.

But we're not always in the enjoyment and good. Having a really good time because of what Christ has done and what Christ is to us. I don't mean about because things are all going well.

But simply because of what the Lord has and is. There's a difference. I feel to be a good deal more of the good time about us, don't you? In that sense.

Well, in the Psalms people are having a good time and it's all connected with Zion. And that means because of what the Lord has done and what the Lord is. Very simple.

But that's the meaning of Zion. Well, are you? We're supposed to have children. God has made all the provision for us to have children.

Then you see Zion is the symbol of His inclusive transcendent victory. You remember the beginning of Zion, don't you? The stronghold in the hands of the Jebusites. Thought to be so strong, so impregnable.

When David came, they just fortified it with the blind and the maimed. An impossible thing for anybody to overcome. Well, David did overcome it and made it his seat and his stronghold.

The point is this. Zion symbolizes transcendent victory. Transcendent victory over all the enemies of God.

Over all the enemies of Christ. And over all the enemies of man. God's people.

That's Zion. I could gather so much into that from scripture. How much we could cope, couldn't we, about that.

It's a song of victory that is the song of Zion. Come to your letter to the Hebrews and what have you. You have sin.

Is sin an enemy? You have Satan. He's here mentioned. He that had the hold on death.

That is the devil. Sin, Satan, death. Are they enemies? Are they like impregnable strongholds? And what of the next thing? Man.

I don't mean man who is deliberately and consciously opposed to God. But man in his own state. In his own state.

He's here. These are all here in this letter to the Hebrews. And everything that God has done in Christ has to do with those enemies.

Sin. What's all this about the blood? And the atonement. Man.

Far from God. What's all this about the mediator between God and man? This great mediator, this high priest. Death.

What is all this about death bringing an end to everything in the Aaronic priesthood that they could not continue because they died? What is all this about death? Satan. Who is behind all these things? Sin, man and death. What is it all about? Well, all the context is that what God has done in Christ has been to destroy all that.

To put it out of court. The sin that keeps us away from God has been dealt with. Let us come with boldness to the throne of grace.

The devil using death to bring an end to everything. Nullified. Death.

What a mighty victory. God has wrought in Christ. And that's all gathered up at the end of the letter into Zion.

Ye are come to Zion. What's that mean? That which seemed to be the impregnable fortress of Satan, sin, man's fallen condition and death has been overcome and taken by Christ through his cross. That victory is given to you.

Zion is the symbol of a comprehensive victory in every realm. And ye are come to that. What a heritage it is now.

This is not fiction, this is not theory. This is something, as I have said, to be put to the truth. Ye are come to Zion.

I think I'd better finish somewhere. Perhaps that's a good note on which to finish. There are other things of tremendous value related to Zion.

But they can wait for later consideration. We just finish on this note of the perfect tense. For so it is written here in the perfect tense.

Ye are come. It does not say ye are coming. Ye are going to come.

Ye may come. Ye will come one day. It says ye are come.

How can that be possible? Well it is again just that God has done it all and handed it out to us. That's for you. If you will believe it, if you will accept it in faith, all that is yours.

Now take it. Get to work. Go on in the good.

Let us. Brings out the note. Let us.

Let us go on.

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