

## Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

### Jesus' Personal Invitation, Part 2

Scripture: Matthew 11:27-30

Code: 2289

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For those of you who are visiting with us, it is our custom at Grace Church to worship the Lord in the instruction of His Word. Sometimes I'm asked if I feel that teaching is a part of worship. And I guess I constantly answer that I think teaching is the most important part of worship because you can only worship a person that you know and you can only know Him as you understand His Word. And if we are to truly worship God, we are to worship Him as He is understood and as He is known and according to the worship which He demands which, of course, is revealed to us in His holy Word. So, as we come to worship this morning as always we open the Word of God to be instructed by the One we worship and I guess the essence of worship itself would be to listen to the One who is, in fact, the object of our praise.

Matthew chapter 11 verses 25 to 30 ... in our ongoing study of Matthew... chapter 11 verses 25 to 30.

The key to this section is found in verse 28, Jesus says: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Now that is one of many invitations given by our Lord. Christ came into the world to save sinners. He came to call men to come to Him. He came to save men. And He was constantly giving invitations. Whether you look at the beginning of the New Testament or the end of the New Testament, it is always the same; the Lord is inviting people to come to Him.

Going from Matthew, the beginning of the New Testament, to Revelation, which is the last book in the New Testament, we see there a very familiar invitation in Revelation chapter 3 **and verse 20, Jesus says:** "Behold, I **stand at the** door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door I will come into him and will sup with him and he with Me." There you see the Lord pictured knocking on the door of a man's heart. And that really speaks, I think, of the whole approach of Christ. He came into the world to reach men and to draw men into fellowship with Himself. He wants to enter your life, my life and so He knocks. He knocks through a sermon. He knocks through a book, through a tape, through a tract. He knocks through the Scripture, through a godly example, through a Christian friend, through a marital problem, through the death of a loved one, through poverty, through loneliness, through pain. He knocks through suffering, or through guilt. But He knocks, and He wants to come in and sup.

The word for sup is deipnon and it refers to the evening meal, the last meal before dawn of the next day. And at this point in the invitations of our Lord in Revelation it is though He is asking at the very end, there is an apocalyptic perspective here and He is inviting men to the last meal before the dawn. He is calling men to join Him for fellowship before night falls and it's too late, for the dawn will only break for those who had their last meal with Christ. For others, the night is eternal. And so, He knocks.

There's another invitation that I would like to call to your attention in Luke 14, just to give you a little more understanding of the spirit of our Lord in inviting men to come. In Luke chapter 14 it is a most interesting one. Beginning at verse 15, "When one of them had been sitting there eating with Him and heard these things he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God."

And in the statement "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God" He sets up a parable. "And then He said unto him, A certain man gave a great supper and bade many and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come for all things are now ready."

The picture is of a man who gives a great feast. Apparently a great man, perhaps a king. But a great man, he gives a great feast and he sends out many invitations. The people apparently responded and said we'll come. When the feast is ready, we'll come. And apparently it was rather indefinite because of the greatness of the feast and because of the many that were invited that he did not know how long the preparation would take and so he could not tell them exactly when it would be begin but they knew it was to come. And then in verse 17 when everything was finally ready he sent the servant to say now is the time for you to come. You've already responded and said you'd come and now is the time.

And then verse 18: "And they all," all of them, "with one consent began to make ... what? ... excuse. The first said, I have bought a piece of ground and I must needs go see it, I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them, I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come." Now, I don't know about you, but I never heard such phony, feeble alibis in my life as those three.

The first said, I bought a field, or a piece of ground, and I have to go see it? Nobody buys a piece of ground that he never saw. And even if this was ... one was foolish enough to do that, did he have to go see it at the time of the banquet? That's a feeble excuse, there's no pressing to see that piece of ground.

And the second says, I have five yoke of oxen and I'm going to go out and test them. Nobody buys oxen that aren't proven either. How could you determine the price if you didn't know how good they were? And who proves oxen necessarily at a certain time?

The third one is even more feeble than the others. Just because you're married doesn't mean you can't come, bring your wife. She might enjoy it.

The whole point is they were feeble alibis. And they are emblematic of Israel. Throughout history Israel had been extended the invitation and Israel had said, "Oh, we'll come. You tell us when it's ready and we'll come." And when the Messiah came and said all right, it's ready, they all began to give their excuses.

Was the banquet canceled? No. Verse 21, "The servant came and showed his lord these things and then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind."

Now, wait a minute. What is this saying to us? First of all, it says bring in here. These people couldn't come on their own. The poor people wouldn't come because they'd be intimidated by the wealth of the man to whose home they were coming. The maimed and the lame couldn't get there unless they were brought. And the blind couldn't find it. This was a group that had to be dragged in, they had to be ushered in, they had to be carried in. They had to be led in. And they were the nobodies of society. They were the destitute and the outcasts and the hurting. And those are just exactly the ones the Lord turned to ... to the poor and the blind and the maimed. You see, the quote/unquote "wise and prudent" wouldn't have anything to do with him...they had excuses. They were too busy with their oxen and their marriages and their property.

And the servant said in verse 22: "It is done as thou hast commanded and yet there is room." We have a lot more room, we've got all those folks and we have more room. "And the lord said, Go out into the highways and the hedges and compel them to come in that my house may be filled." He wanted a full house, a full banquet and so they were to call on anybody that would come. And the ones who were originally invited, verse 24 says, will never taste of the supper.

All who refuse the Lord's invitation for salvation will be excluded from the Kingdom. Now this is a marvelous picture because what it shows us is that first the Lord came to reach His people Israel, the ones who had originally been the invited guests who were supposed to come to the feast. But when the time was ready they were not ready and they had all these excuses so He turned to the outcasts, the hurting people, the humble, the deprived, the desperate, who knew they had no resources, and they came.

F.W. Faber put it this way in the hymn, "There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea. There's a kindness in His justice that's more than liberty. For the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind and the heart of the eternal is most wonderfully kind."

And the point of the parable is that God will call whoever will come. And those who come will be those who have no resources. Those who are brought because they can't even get there on their own. And the Lord gives an invitation and now is the time to respond.

Now, let's go back to Matthew chapter 11. In Revelation chapter 3 the Lord says, I want to come in, I want to have fellowship with you; I want to have the evening meal with you. In Luke 14 the Lord says, I want to call you to a banquet. But those of you who have everything going for you in life, you've got a lot of oxen and you've got a wife and you've got a lot of land and you don't have any needs, you turned Me down. But those of you who are hurting, you came. And that's typical of our Lord's invitation. It's only the desperate people who have a need who respond. And so, in verse 28 He says, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." The hurting people. The people with burdens who want to get rid of those burdens.

So, our Lord offers an invitation to come into the heart, to invite us to a feast and in this particular passage in Matthew to invite us to rest.

Now, the key word, as we saw last time, is the word rest. It appears in verse 28 and 29. And the word rest means salvation. We learned that last time as we compared it with Hebrews 3 and 4. And this is, then, an invitation to salvation. An invitation to salvation rest, to immediate present-tense salvation as well as its Kingdom rest and its heavenly rest fulfillment. The Lord is calling men to salvation.

Now, there are five elements in His call. The first two are foundational to the latter three. But nonetheless there are five.

The first is humility...humility. And we saw that last time. Verse 25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."

Now wise and prudent refers to the Jewish intellectual religious leaders. And it is a statement of pure sarcasm... the wise and the prudent. It's sarcasm. They were really stupid in their human wisdom. They had intellectual pride. They thought they were smart enough so they didn't need Jesus and they didn't need His revelation and they didn't know... need to know the things of the Kingdom which He taught. They had no recognized need. And because they had no need they were too smart and too wise already they had no revelation. Where there was no need, there could be no revelation. Where there was no revelation there could be no salvation. And so, this was hidden from them, but it was revealed unto babes. And the Lord says, I thank Thee, Father, that Thou hast revealed this unto babes.

What are babes? Nepion, infants, that represents people with total need. An infant has no capacity to care for itself whatsoever. These are people who are utterly helpless, utterly dependent. They are empty. They have nothing. They have no resources. They know they can't understand anything. They know they can't save themselves. They know they desperately are dependent on God's grace and those are the kind to whom God reveals the gospel.

This was graphically illustrated to me on Monday night as we were in a radio rally up in Oxnard. And we were having question and answers as I do at the radio rallies and a little girl, I guess she was about 9 or 10 came up the microphone and she said, "I want to ask you a question about babies and retarded children." And I said, "Well, you go ahead then." She said, "Well, what happens to babies and retarded children when they die, do they go to heaven?" And I said, "Well, that's an important question, honey, I'm glad you asked that." And I went into an explanation of how in the Old Testament in II Samuel when David's little infant son died, David said, "He cannot come to me, but I shall go to him." And he therefore expressed the confidence that that little life was in the presence of God. Then I pointed out how Jesus in the New Testament said, "Allow the little children to come unto Me for of such is the Kingdom of heaven." That there's a place in the Kingdom for little ones. And I pointed out to this young girl that...that God would redeem the life of a little one. And I said the same is true of retarded children. God would redeem that life out of His grace because there's no ability to make a decision there, there's no ability to understand. There's no capacity for a decision. There's no way to comprehend anything.

And so, she said, "Thank you." And went back to her seat. And afterwards I was standing in the back of the church where we had the meeting and just a lot of people talking and this little girl came up pulling her mother behind her and the mother kind of smiled and said, "I ... I just thought we ought to kind of tell you why she asked that question." And I said, "Well, of course." She said, "You see, she has a little baby brother that's retarded and this little boy is the particular concern of her heart. And she's always concerned that that little brother of hers is going to be able to enter the Kingdom of God." And the mother says, "You know, we take him to the Sunday school." And apparently he's three-years-old, or whatever. "And we take him to the Sunday school but we know he doesn't understand anything because he's retarded. And she's so worried that somehow he'll miss the Kingdom."

And at that point I said to her, I said, "Honey, let me tell you something." I said, "There is not a better example in the world of the kind of person that enters the Kingdom than your little brother." She said, "What do you mean?" I said, "Listen, your little brother's helpless, your little brother is defenseless. Your little brother can't understand anything, can't know anything, has no resources at all and that is just the kind of person you have to be to enter God's Kingdom. Your little brother is a living illustration of the kind of people God saves." Jesus said: "Unless you become as an infant, you will never enter My Kingdom." So, I believe that God redeems those kinds of infants and retarded folks who can't ever come to God on their own as a living illustration of the fact that that's the way everyone who comes

must come, as if they had no resources at all.

So, I said, "You just look at your little brother and thank God, not only that God will take care of him, that God has made him a great lesson to everybody of the kind of person you have to be to enter God's Kingdom." Oh, and she got a little smile on her face and her mother grabbed my hand with tears in her eyes. I said, "Does that help, Honey?" And she says, "That really helps. Now I understand ." And her mother was rejoicing because the burden was lifted, the burden of anxiety over whether her little brother would ever enter the Kingdom. He is a perfect illustration of the kind of people that do, and that's what it means in verse 25 when it says, "God's revealed it unto babes." People who have no hope or faith in their own resources.

And that's why, you see, when you go over to I Corinthians 1 it says, "When you look at the church there are not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, God has chosen the foolish and the weak and the base things." Because it's the destitute that come. That's why humility is this first element in an invitation. Pride is a barrier. Pride says - I can do it on my own, I have my own resources. The wise and the prudent who take that position are shut out from the Kingdom. It is for babes who are utterly, totally dependent.

This is monumentally illustrated in the case of Nicodemus. Nicodemus was, according to John 3, the teacher in Israel, definite article. The most important teacher, perhaps, in all of Israel, certainly one of the most important. A man who had studied life long the Old Testament. A man who had mastered the traditions and the legislations of Judaism. A man who was highly respected. And he came to Jesus at night, perhaps because that was the only time Jesus was available or perhaps because he did not want to be seen. And the question in his heart was, what do I need to do to enter Your Kingdom? And I imagine the answer that he had on his mind was, well, I've come so far already, all I need is two more steps this way or two more deals this way. And Jesus says to him - "Unless you are ... what?...born again." You have to go all the way back and start all over again like a baby ... you'll never enter My Kingdom. What a jolt to an educated erudite religious Jew. You're too smart for your own good. You've got to go back to ground zero ... and be a baby.

Humility is where it begins. There is no salvation for proud people who think they have any resource in themselves.

Now the second word, let's go on and see the remaining four elements of our Lord's invitation. The second word is revelation. A genuine invitation must consider the reality of revelation. Verse 27: "All things are delivered unto Me by My Father and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father except the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him?"

Now, that is a marvelous verse. That is a verse that is profound and deep. Now what it is, basically, is a commentary on the word "revealed" in verse 25. You see in verse 25 it says that God has revealed

the things of the Kingdom unto babes. What do You mean revealed unto babes? Well, all things are delivered unto Me, and He goes on. And what He's saying there is...what? ... all the truth is bound up in the Father and the Son. And the only people who know it are the people to whom the Son does ... what? ... reveals it. So that salvation comes, yes, to one who is humble, but on the basis of sovereign revelation from God. The idea here is that no man may know anything about Kingdom salvation unless God's Son reveals it to him. It is not available to the human mind. Yes, verse 25 talks about man's attitude, there needs to be a brokenness and a humility, but verse 27 talks about God's part. There has to be a sovereign revelation.

Let's look at the verse even though it is profound beyond understanding and just take it phrase by phrase and see if you can't get a grasp on what our Lord is saying. The first statement is simple: "All things are delivered unto Me by My Father." There are two things in that statement that indicate what that statement is meant to say. It is meant to say that Jesus is God. It is a statement of His deity. It is a statement of the essence of the heart of the Kingdom gospel, that Jesus is God and that is the heart of our faith. That is why if any man denies that Christ is God in the flesh, he's accursed. He has violated the basis of the gospel. The gospel begins with the fact that Jesus is God, and that is said two ways in that phrase. The first way is by the phrase, "My Father," that is the first time in the New Testament that Jesus has ever said that. He has said, "Father," and He has said, "Our Father," He has never before said, "My Father." And He is saying it in a way of uniqueness as God's only begotten Son. And, by the way, He...when He said that and He said the something, or similar things, on other occasions, the people clearly understood what He meant even though some cults today seem to deny that.

For example, in John 10 He said: "I and My Father are one." Now I know the Jehovah's Witnesses come along and say, "Well, that means one in attitude and one in purpose and one in goal and one in direction, and all of that," but that doesn't make any sense when you take the next verse. "Then the Jews took up stones to stone Him." They didn't stone Him for saying He had one purpose with God, they stoned Him, or attempted to, for saying He was equal with God. That's what He was saying.

Down in verse 38 He says, "You should believe that the Father is in Me and I am in Him, therefore they sought again to take Him." What He was calling on was their belief in His absolute, equality with the Father. And verse 33 says, "We stone Thee for blasphemy because Thou being a man makest Thyself God." There was no question in their minds what He was saying. And here, I believe, is the same thing .... My Father brings to us a new intimacy, a new intimacy, a new development of the uniqueness of Christ's relationship to God insofar as the revelation of Matthew is concerned.

So, the first statement about His deity is that intimacy of My Father. The second one is the statement, "All things are delivered unto Me." What does "all things" mean? Just that. All things ... all things are delivered, aorist tense, at one point we're handed over to Him and we're probably, then, taken back into a preexisting time that is back into eternity sometime when all sovereignty was committed to the

Son and only God knows when and how that ever happened. And whatever that happens ... however that happens in eternity is beyond us. But the fact stands that all things are delivered to Christ.

What do you mean "all things?" All things. I think Matthew 28:8 sums it up this way, "All authority is given unto Me in heaven and earth." All things...we've already learned in Matthew that He had authority over Satan, that He had authority over demons, authority over illness, authority over the elements, over the body, the soul, life, death, over His disciples, He had authority to save, He had authority to forgive sin, He had authority to judge...all authority, all things ... earth, heaven, hell, men, angels and devils, time, death, eternity, salvation, damnation, grace, judgment, life, death, all things, truth, righteousness, glory, peace, joy, consolation, refreshing rest, hope, deliverance from sin, victory in temptation, overcoming the world, communion with God, the love of God, the life of God, everything. Everything pertaining to divine life was committed to Christ. Everything pertaining to the universe is under His sovereignty.

So, He says, I have an intimate union with the Father and I possess all of the sovereignty which God possesses. It's a statement of His deity.

Now, having said that He goes on, "And no man knows the Son but the Father." Now, if the Son is God then no one can truly know the Son but the Father because only God can know God. Do you understand that? We cannot understand God. Our little puny brains can't handle it. He says - I'm God. I possess all the unlimited sovereignty of God. Therefore only the Father really knows Me. That's a tremendous statement. No man knows Me, and that just was a smack in the face of the religionists of that day because they thought they knew God. They thought they had it all figured out. And Jesus says no, only the Father knows Me.

And then look what He says, "Neither knoweth any the Father except the Son." Not only does only the Father know Me, but only I know the Father.

Now, you say, what is this saying? It's saying this, that all the knowledge of divine truth is bound up in the trinity, it is a mutual perception by the Father and the Son and, of course, the Holy Spirit. It is locked into the trinity, and no man with his limited finite resources can ever perceive that knowledge, it is unavailable. That is why philosophy is a fruitless, vain effort. That is why man-made religion is equally fruitless and vain because all revelation, all content, all truth about God and His Kingdom is locked up in the trinity.

How do we ever get it? The end of verse 27, not only does the Father only know the Son and the Son only know the Father, but "He to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." In other words, the only way we'll ever know is by a revelation by the Son...a revelation from God Himself.



It's a very simple verse in one sense, and yet it's so profound we can't even fathom it in another sense. But what it is simply saying is here you have a babe, and this is amazing, here you have a babe who knows nothing, understands nothing, has no resources and he is the only one who can truly perceive what only God can know of eternal truth locked up in the infinite mind of the trinity. How? Because God chooses to reveal it to him, so that salvation, then, becomes in its foundation that combination of the humble heart and an infinite God revealing Himself to that humble heart. And there you have the two elements that are always balanced in any proper perspective in salvation; you have man's part, a prepared and ready and open heart of humility and God's sovereign, gracious revelation.

Ultimately, then, truth is locked right in the trinity and never can it be known except the Son reveal it. And here were these Jewish people as people all throughout history who never, ever will open their minds to let the Son reveal the truth.

I drove in ... my wife and I ... last week down in the Wilshire area on Monday, or Tuesday, I guess, and we didn't know it but it was Rosh Hashana and there were Jewish people everywhere, all over the place with the yamalka on the back of their heads, everybody was dressed. And I couldn't help but think to myself, all these people busily celebrating the Jewish holiday, every place going everywhere, had their little prayer books and cloths and none of them...none of them ... know the Son who alone can reveal the truth of God... none of them. It's all emptiness, all those big temples, synagogues, it's fruitless because only the Son can reveal it. And He can't reveal it to anyone whose heart is not humble and who does not recognize that they have no resources and no answers. So, you have humility and revelation.

And, Martin Luther said, "Here the bottom falls out of all merit, all powers and abilities of reason or the free will men dream of and it all counts nothing before God, Christ must do and must give everything." end quote.

That's why John wrote in John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at anytime, the only begotten who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," We can't see God. God is locked up with Christ in that marvelous relationship and if we are to know it is because God reveals, not because we perceive. God has to break in to the blackness of our stupidity and can only do that into the heart that is humble and broken before Him.

So, salvation, then, in its foundation is a meeting of the humble, dependent, open and helpless heart with a revelation given by a gracious, sovereign God. That's the basis.

Let's go to the third term and here we find the word repentance as a key, verse 28. And lest you be threatened by the fact that God's sovereign electing grace must reveal salvation, note that that statement is immediately followed in verse 28 by a very all inclusive statement, "Come unto Me all ye

that are elect,” is that what it says? No, it says: “Come unto Me all ye that ... what?...labor and are heavy laden.”

You know, in John 6 the Lord said, “All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me.” And then turn right around and said, “But him that cometh unto Me I’ll in no wise cast out.” Yes, there’s a sovereignty of God, but then there’s that open invitation, how God harmonizes that is His problem, not mine. But we come to the next of our words in verse 28 and that’s the word repentance.

And I want you to look at the phrase, first of all, that makes men come and that is the phrase, “all ye that labor and are heavy laden.” I believe that is what brings men to Christ, the fact that they are working hard and bearing a terrible burden and they cannot get relief. The word labor is kopiao, it means to work to the point of sweat and exhaustion, to work until you are absolutely fatigued. It’s used that way in John 4:6. To work to the point where you are totally out of gas, I mean, you’ve done it to yourself. And it is a present active participle, those of you who are in the process of totally wearing yourselves out with toil. It refers to the weary search for the truth, the weary search for relief from the crushing load of a sin-laden, guilt-ridden conscience, the crushing effort of a trying-to-earn-your-own-salvation, pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, reform yourself. Those of you who are frantically and tirelessly wearing yourselves out trying to earn your own salvation and find some peace of mind. Those of you who are working hard to rest.

And then He adds, “heavy laden.” That is a perfect passive participle which means at some point in time somebody dumped a load on you and you’re carrying it. And you’re enduring some incredible load. It’s not bad enough that you’re working hard but you’re doing it with 400 pounds on your back and people keep stacking more on top of that. I mean, it would be like a guy running down the middle of the road absolutely at the end of his strength, totally exhausted, sweating profusely, staggering in his steps, carrying 400 pounds of stuff on his back and you pull along in your car and say, “What are you doing?” And he says, “I’m trying to rest.” That isn’t rest. But the Rabbis, you said, told them that if you keep the minutiae of the law you shall find rest. That’s what they said. They used the word rest. All the vain, fruitless, striving after peace, contentment, joy and happiness and rest finally becomes such an intolerable burden that when you get to the place where you just can’t take another step Come to Me. Now, that’s repentance. When you’ve run out of gas, turn from that to Me...metaneo, turn 180 degrees, that’s what repentance means, turn around and come toward Me. The Jewish Rabbis just piled burdens on their people.

Peter said they gave a yoke which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear, Acts 15:10. And in Matthew 23 verse 4 our Lord had some very strong words, “For they bind,” this is speaking of the scribes and Pharisees, “they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be born and lay them on men’s shoulders but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.” And so He says - You, who are trying to earn your own salvation and you’ve had somebody dump a load of rules on you and it just piles up and piles up and the guilt and the sin and the unforgiveness and the lack of peace and

the lack of contentment and joy has finally driven you to total exhaustion...Come to Me and find rest.

Now, this is a call to repentance to the dissatisfied, the people who have not found the answer and they're tired of looking for it in that area. They know they don't have the answer. They know they can't pull themselves into the Kingdom with self-exertion. They have failed. They've done it all and it hasn't done it. They are overpowered and overburdened by sin. And they know they're lost. He says turn around, turn from the futile despair of self-effort to the provision of God's grace. I think this is a part of true salvation. A person comes to the end of their resources, to the desperate point of being willing to turn from self and from sin to God and to that person, I believe, the doors of the Kingdom are opened. See, I believe that desperation is part of true salvation. You don't just run along with all your load and grab Jesus and stick Him on top. That isn't it. Repent ... turn around... stop doing that...stop trying to earn your own salvation ... stop trying that work-righteousness system... stop all that sinning...stop that intolerable burden you're carrying... turn around...Come to Me. That is the message that the early church preached. That is the apostolic message.

In Acts 2:38 Peter says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins." Turn around ... turn away from that. He preached again in chapter 3 and had the same message. Verse 19: "Repent therefore and be converted." That is, turn around that your sins may be blotted out when the times of rest shall come.

In chapter 8 he confronted Simon who thought he could buy salvation with money and he said, "Repent of this thy wickedness and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven." Turn around, Simon, repent.

This was the message of Paul. In the 17th chapter of Acts in that masterful sermon on Mars Hill, he says: "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent." In chapter 20 as he decided to leave, of course, the...to leave the elders at Miletus there from the church at Ephesus, he wanted to refresh in their minds what the ministry was and he said, "It is this, testifying to the Jews and the Greeks repentance toward God." Turning around and turning toward God.

In I Thessalonians he wrote: "We thank God that you have turned from idols to serve the living and true God." In II Timothy 2:25 Paul says, "Timothy, we are to instruct men so that God would give them repentance."

And that's the way it goes. In Acts 5:31 it says: "The Lord has come to offer repentance." In Luke 15 twice it says, "The angels of God rejoice over one sinner that repenteth."

See, repentance is all bound up in salvation. And when Jesus blasted in fury at the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum back in verse 20, He did it because they repented not. What does it mean to turn from sin? To realize the crushing load and turn away. So, the humble heart will see the futility

of self-effort, it will know the unbearable weight of sin, the oppressive burden and anxiety of self-effort and it will finally cry out with a hunger and a thirst for God and the sovereign revelation of God's grace is there to receive that one who turns from sin.

The fourth element in a true invitation is faith. And this tells us where we turn. Verse 28, Jesus says: When you turn, "Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I'll give you rest." That's the object. You turn from sin to Christ. You preach repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 20:21 says. The object of our faith is not a creed, it is not a church, it is not a pastor or a preacher, it is not a set of rituals or a bunch of ceremonies, the object of our faith is Jesus Christ...Come unto Me. What does that mean? Believe in Me. Come is the equivalent of believe. And I showed you that last week in many Scriptures. I will just give you one illustration, there's so many. But in John 6:35 Jesus said: "I am the bread of life, he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." If you come and don't hunger, you believe and don't thirst, then coming and believing are the same thing. Come means to believe. Believe in Me. Sometimes the Bible says it receive Me. Sometimes it says - Eat Me, or Drink Me, or Confess Me, or Hear Me, but it all means to believe. Salvation is believing that Jesus is God, that He entered the world, that He died a substitutionary death, that He rose from the grave on the third day for our justification, that He ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, intercedes for us and is coming again and can save us from our sins. That's belief ... believing in Christ. Salvation is coming to Christ in faith, believing. And you know.? At the point at which you genuinely come, your faith is spurred on because you have no other resources anyway because you come in desperation.

In Acts 10:43 it says: "To Him," that is to Christ, "give all the prophets witness that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive forgiveness of sins."

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever ... what? ... believeth in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Believing in Christ. What is salvation? It is a humble heart met by a sovereign God who reveals His truth, it is then a desperation that says - I can't carry the load of my sin anymore - it turns away from sin, puts its faith in Christ. That's it. That's it.

You say, "Does it end there?" No. No, most people would like to end it there but it doesn't. That's just the four.

There's a fifth step. And this is critical. And the word is submission, the fifth element ... submission. The text does not end at verse 28. Follow quickly in verse 29: "Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest for your souls for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

In verse 29 Jesus said, "Take My yoke upon you." What does that mean? That means there is a submission involved in salvation. There is a responsibility to submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and that is part and parcel of His invitation here. Salvation is taking on a yoke, there is responsibility involved. The Jews used the phrase "the yoke" to refer to entering into submission to something. That's why Peter used it in Acts as I read earlier about the yoke that the Pharisees put on people that they can't bear. The yoke is that which causes submission. And Jesus says When you come to Me you must come with a submissive heart. You must come to take a yoke.

Now, in Palestine yokes were made out of wood. The oxen would be brought in and the carpenter and, very likely Jesus made yokes as a boy in his carpenter's shop in Nazareth, and so He knew about this. The oxen would come in and they would measure the oxen, they would carefully mark out the wood and they would carve it and then the ox would be brought back later for a final fitting because it was important that the yoke fit perfectly so that it didn't chafe and harm the animal. And it was the token of the submission of the animal to pull a load, to carry about a responsibility, to take orders, to be directed by someone, to plow a field, or to pull whatever they were to pull. And the same thing was transferred over into the Jewish thinking so that a pupil who submitted himself to a teacher was said to take the yoke of the teacher. In fact, in extrabiblical writings, for example, Sirach records this statement, "Put your neck under the yoke and let your soul receive instruction." And that pretty well typifies how the Jews saw the yoke. It was a yoke of instruction. They talked about the yoke of the torah...the yoke of the law, the yoke of the commandments, the yoke of God. And that is what our Lord is asking them to do, He is saying, take My yoke upon you. And then He adds this phrase: "And learn from Me," it is a yoke of submission to His Lordship, to His teaching, to His instruction. It is a yoke that implies obedience. And I believe true salvation occurs when you in your desperation turn from sin to Christ with a willingness to have Him take control of your life. I don't think, therefore, that you can take Jesus as Savior and not as Lord.

The phrase "learn of Me" is basically the word from which we get the word mathetes which is the word translated in the New Testament disciples, be My disciple. This involves acknowledging His Lordship, being committed unto those good works that we're created unto in Ephesians 2:10.

Now, you say, "Wait a minute. I mean, isn't salvation all of grace?" Of course, because you're a babe what would you know if God wasn't gracious to you? Isn't salvation not at all of works? Of course it's not at all of works, how could you do any work that could bring you the revelation of God hidden in the trinity? It's all of grace and it's all of God's mercy, but in order for you to truly respond to His grace there has to be a brokenness and a humility in your heart which causes you to turn from your old life to Christ and the legitimacy of your turning is indicated by your willingness to submit and obey.

You say, "Well, how is it then to be under the yoke of Christ?" Well, I'll tell you one thing, if I was going to have a yoke made for my oxen I think I'd probably go to the carpenter's shop where Jesus

made yokes because I imagine He made the best one. And I think that's true in the spiritual dimension. The yoke that He makes is easy and the burden He gives is light.

Why? Because He's meek and lowly. He, unlike the Pharisees and the scribes, does not desire to oppress us. He does not desire to pile burdens on us that we cannot bear. He is not interested in trying to show how tough it is. He is gentle. He is tender. And He gives us something we can carry. It's easy and it's light.

As one writer said: "My...my yoke is my song." And I think that's true for the Christian. There is a yoke of obedience. There is a yoke of submission to Christ, but it is not grievous, is it? It is joyous. It is the greatest liberation in my life. There is the greatest lightness and the greatest ease in my life when I obey. Is that true? It is when I disobey that the yoke chafes my neck. But in obedience and submission to the Lordship of Christ there is an ease and there is a lightness.

He is meek and lowly, Paul loved that phrase. And he besought the Corinthians on one occasion by saying, "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ," II Corinthians 10:1. Yes, He's meek and gentle. He'll not oppress us. He'll not give us something we can't carry. And I can promise you that when you take on the yoke of Christ and you walk in obedience, His yoke is easy and His burden is light. But the yoke of the law, the yoke of human effort, the yoke of works, the yoke of sin is a heavy chafing, galling yoke, it is a large, unbearable burden carried in the flesh that will lead you to despair, frustration and anxiety. And Jesus offers you a yoke you can carry, because He gives you the strength.

So, instead of the heavy burden of pride and self is the lightness of humility and lowliness. Instead of feeding ourselves till we become so overweight that we can't even carry the load, we release all to Christ and the burden is light.

Now, we come full circle back to humility, the meek Christ gives us His easy burden. What have we learned? A humble heart broken over despair of life and the weight of sin is touched by the sovereign grace of God as He reveals Christ. That individual repents of sin, turns in faith to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and his faith is shown to be genuine because he willingly submits his life in obedience to Christ's Lordship. And the result is "I will give you ... what? ... rest." Rest!

You know, this ... this must have rung in the ears of those Jews. Because this is exactly what Jeremiah said in chapter 6, listen to this. "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way and walk in it and you shall rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk in it."

Same here. Jesus says, "Walk in this way and there's rest for your souls. And they said, we will not walk in it. And as you proceed into chapter 12, the hatred of Christ is intensified.

And so, the Lord offers salvation, then and now. And I trust we are more ready to receive it than they were, and to enter into the rest of His eternal grace. Let's pray.

Thy precious rest, O conquering Savior, doth now embrace and compass me, all discords hushed, my peace a river, my soul a prisoned bird set free. Sweet love of God still fold me closer till I am wholly lost in Thee.

Thank You, blessed Lord, for Your rest. Thank You that You've stopped my toiling, unloaded my burden and given me a yoke which is easy and a burden which is light, which is never more than I can bear and which You always carry for me. Thank You, Father, for the salvation rest offered then and now. We pray for any in our midst today who do not know that rest that they might enter it before this hour is ended, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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