

THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION

And Other Evangelistic Sermons

by

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SERMON TWELVE

A GREAT RECOMMENDATION

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (I Timothy 1:15).

If a man has received special benefit from a medicine, he will urgently recommend it to others. Paul had experienced the mighty healing, saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Master Physician of souls. Paul therefore spent his life magnifying this miraculous cure and renewal of his life. Jesus had healed him of guilt and condemnation, of wretchedness and ruin, of narrow bigotry, of bitter zeal without knowledge, giving him in exchange moral and spiritual health, divine communion, Christian usefulness, heavenly hope. Paul was eager for others to know this same Healer, to enjoy this same Balm of Gilead.

Consider with me this great recommendation of the Apostle Paul, which speaks clearly of the Person who came, the purpose for which He came, and the people for whom He came.

The Person who came was Jesus, the only begotten Son of God. The Lord might have sent an angel into the world to save us sinners. He sent angels to Abraham, to rescue Lot, to give Jacob his comforting vision, to outline Joshua's great campaign, to apprise Samson's mother and father of the forthcoming birth of their strong son. The Lord might have sent a man, a great leader, as He sent Moses to deliver the Jews from Egypt, as He delegated Gideon to rescue the Israelites from Midian, as He chose David to discomfit the Philistines.

But the Lord caused His own Son to come in the flesh of the virgin's child.

Think of what that meant to God. Think of what He was sending His Son to do; not to build an empire, not to erect a mighty throne, not to govern the populace of some vast province, receiving the worshipful service of teeming multitudes. He sent him to poverty, to loneliness, to sleepless nights, to tormenting days, to self-denial, to suffering, to death. We speak with bated breath of the agony of Jesus Christ, and well we may. We can never overemphasize it. What took place in the Father's soul as He saw heaven emptied of its brightest jewel, as He saw His Son encased in the limitations of a man's garb? Only eternity will reveal what occurred in the heart of God when He saw His Son cruelly lashed, sinfully mocked, rudely crowned, bitterly crucified.

Oh, the very mention of the Father's surrender of His Son for our needs, for our sins, is amply, abundantly, eternally sufficient to give assurance to each one of us of God's unalterable concern and compassion for the souls of men. Here, in this transaction, as in nothing else God has ever done, is the unmistakable demonstration of His love for each of us.

Yes, it was the Son of God who came. In Isaiah 9:2, 6 and 7 we read: **"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."**

Jesus was God—God made manifest in the flesh. From before the foundations of the world He was in His Father's bosom. The worlds were created by Him. Angels made constant obeisance to Him. His throne was from everlasting, His goings forth from of old. In His hands He held the destinies of creation. The universe breathed, lived, moved at His will.

He was also the Son of Man. In Hebrews 2:9-18 we read: **"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."**

Do you realize the full import of this tremendous assertion? Does it stir your hearts with its fervent truths? Does it kindle a fire of grace and gratitude in your souls? God became flesh and dwelt among us, taking upon Himself all our infirmities. Here is what this glorious fact means to me. If Jesus Christ had been a thousand times the Son of God, if in Him were vested even greater love, mightier authority, weightier glory, had He not, abandoning it all, come to live upon the earth the life of a circumscribed man, He would have been too far above me, too far beyond me. His Person, His power, His heavenly purity would have been merely a source of awe, of fear, even of despair, hardly of love.

How could I, a worm, no man, the dust of the earth, look up unafraid into the face of Deity? When I see Jesus, a man, living the life of a man, thinking the thoughts of a man, enduring the temptations of a man, sorrowing the sorrows of a man, undergoing the pains of a man, weeping the tears of a man, dying the death of a man, when I hear Him say, “**He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,**” my heart grows strangely light within me, my soul is buoyed up, the miasmatic fogs of doubt and misgiving are dispelled from my mind.

It is a wonderful source of inspiration and encouragement to know that He understands me by personal experience, that He was tempted in all points like as I am, yet without sin. He is not some far-off God on some lofty throne aloof from the fretful cares of mankind. On the other hand, He is personally concerned because of personal experience with the mundane activities of those who live upon the earth.

Consider next the purpose for which He came: to save sinners. He is still in the same business; He still has the same power, the same willingness. Paul’s contention, in Hebrews 7:25—“**Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them**”—abundantly proves that. Sin is a burden of guilt, a barrier of obstruction, a bondage of slavery of the direst, bitterest sort. Sin carries with it a dreadful penalty. Sin has an appalling power. Sin pollutes by its very presence.

The Lord Jesus Christ saves sinners by assuming their burden, by enduring all the punishment for their sins. This is the purpose of Calvary. Galatians 3:13 says, “**Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.**” II Corinthians 5:14 declares, “**For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.**” I Peter 2:24 continues, “**Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.**”

This is the finished story of Golgotha. The judgment and the justice of God have found their victims. The wrath of God has sheathed its sword in the heart of the Son of God. The law has been satisfied. The execution has been levied. The awful fine has been paid. Redemption has been procured for all guilty sinners. Nowhere in all the world is there a sin-laden soul whose burden of guilt has not been borne on that tree. Without the slightest sort of hesitation, men may come from everywhere to claim their part in this eternal atonement.

God does not save us and then immediately take us to Himself in glory. We must continue to live; we must continue to strive; we must continue to resist sin and Satan. They are all about us, besetting us on every hand. We have no inherent power to overcome them.

The Lord Jesus Christ therefore saves sinners not only by bearing the penalty for sin but by overcoming its indwelling power. This is what Jude meant when he said: “**Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever.**”

This is what Peter meant when he said (I Peter 1:3-5), **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”**

That is what Paul meant when he said, **“Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”**

Note carefully—very carefully—the words stressed by all three of these writers. Jude says, **“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling.”** Peter says, **“Who are kept by the power of God.”** Paul says, **“For it is God which worketh in you.”** It is, therefore, God through Christ in the Holy Spirit abiding in our hearts, illuminating our minds, enlightening our souls, empowering our lives, who bestows upon us the grace to resist sin and Satan.

There are many who say, “I should like to be a Christian but I am afraid I cannot hold out.” That is undoubtedly the truth. Not one of us in his own strength can resist the evil one. But God can. God is stronger than Satan. Christ is mightier than sin. The Holy Spirit has abundant power for the weakest. You need not hesitate, therefore. Commit your soul unto the Lord in the surrender of faith. Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, receiving His precious blood for your eternal salvation. Know by personal definite experience the might of the enduring presence of the Holy Spirit. This is the heritage of all God’s children.

Were God to save us from our sins then let us live forever, nothing more would be necessary. But even we Christians have a death to die, a judgment to face, an eternity to spend somewhere. The Lord Jesus Christ saves sinners, then, not only by His blood on the Cross, not only by His Holy Spirit in our lives, but also by removing us from the presence of sin, and finally, when He comes again, by perpetually banishing sin from the world.

He raises us from the dead. In John 11:25-26 we read: **“Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.”**

He represents us at the judgment bar (I John 2:1-2): **“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”**

He takes us to Himself in glory (John 14:1-2-3): **“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.”**

What a wonderful description the Word gives us of the redeemed hosts in glory! How the heart of the Apostle John must have thrilled when he had the glorious experience recorded in Revelation 7:9-17: **“After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever, Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”**

Thus you see the wondrous finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ for and in every one of us contained in the blessed words of our text: “. . . **that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.**” Provision is made for both the past and the present. The future is as bright as the promises and the compassion of God. There is nothing omitted. There is nothing wanting. Every problem, every exigency has been anticipated. God’s plan of redemption is perfect.

Consider last of all the people for whom Jesus came: sinners. The word is specific. It is “sinners.” Jesus said, **“They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick . . . I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”**

There is a marvelous story told concerning an experience in the life of that great saint Lady Huntington. On one of her visits to an English penitentiary she came to the cell of a deeply despondent man. She did not know it, but he happened to be the brother of George Whitefield, the great preacher. Mrs. Huntington could not cheer him. She asked the cause of his discouragement.

“Lady,” he said, ““I am in dreadful sin.”

“Thank God,” she said.

“I am the worst sinner in the world,” the man groaned.

“Thank God,” she replied once more. The man looked at her, startled.

“I thought you were a Christian,” he said. “How can you mock me by thanking God when I tell you that I am the worst sinner in all the world?”

Lady Huntington opened her Bible to the text we are considering and quietly read, **“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”**

“That is why I am thanking God. Jesus came to save the chief of sinners. There is abundant hope for you.”

Right then and there, in that miserable jail cell, the guilty man made his surrender to the Lord Jesus Christ, receiving in exchange for his bitter sins the eternal salvation which was his in Christ.

- You also may have the same salvation.
- You also may know that your sins are forgiven.
- You also may feel the coursing power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- You also may have the assurance of life everlasting, the home eternal in the heavens.

If you know yourself to be a sinner, if you know that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, if this very hour you are willing to submit to His power by entrusting your soul and yourself to His eternal mercies, the arms of grace are wide open. Come and welcome. Step out on this glorious assurance. You also will thereafter and forever be able to say,

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”

~ end of sermon 12 ~

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