

# THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION

## And Other Evangelistic Sermons

by

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### SERMON SEVENTEEN

#### THE SAVIOUR'S INVITATION

**“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”** (Matthew 11:28).

**“Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out”** (John 6:37b).

In one of D. L. Moody's sermons there is a moving story. A man, steeped in sin and convicted of the evil of his soul, came to the great evangelist seeking the way of salvation. Moody opened his Bible to John 6:37 and pointed to these words: **“Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”**

The man raised the objection: “Brother Moody, I am a drunkard.” “It does not say,” replied Moody, “Him that cometh unto Me who is not a drunkard I will in nowise cast out.”

The man said, ““Brother Moody, I have abandoned my wife and my children,”

“That is a dreadful sin, man,” replied Moody, “but it does not say, ‘Him that cometh unto Me who has not abandoned wife and children I will in nowise cast out.’”

The man presented a third objection: “Brother Moody, I have stolen; I have been in jail.”

“Still, brother,” softly countered Moody, “it does not say, ‘Him that cometh unto me who has never stolen, who has never been in jail, I will in nowise cast out.’ It merely says, **Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.** That covers you without argument or exception.”

The man was convicted, believed, gave his poor sinful heart to Christ and went on his way rejoicing.

Beloved, Christ stands ready to receive you just as you are. You need not hesitate. You need not delay. You need not wait for more faith, for more feeling. Come with your doubts. Come with your questions. Come with your little faith. If you have enough faith to make you realize your need of Christ and His ability to help you, that is all He asks.

Let not conscience make yon linger  
Nor of fitness fondly dream.  
All the fitness He requireth  
Is to feel your need of Him.

There are no reservations in it. There are no conditions to be met. It means just what it says: **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest . . . Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”**

It is beyond doubt, beyond comparison, beyond question the greatest invitation in the entire Bible, the Saviour’s supreme invitation. It is all-inclusive in its blanket broadness. Every man, woman and child in all the world is included in it. It is so simple that the wayfarer, though a fool, may not err therein, so clear that a child can easily understand its meaning. There is nothing for us to do except to believe, to receive, to claim. Its terms are so definite that there is no room for doubt or difficulty.

The invitation is not only simple, not only inclusive, not only definite, not only positive, but it is pressingly present. Just as John the Baptist came when he cried, **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;”** just as Peter came when he said, **“Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God;”** just as Bartimaeus came when he prayed, **“Thou Son of David have mercy on me;”** just as the Ethiopian eunuch came when he confessed, **“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God,”** even so you may come and welcome.

There are three tremendous thoughts in this mighty text. They are very clear and appropriate.

First, the text speaks of man’s part, the need: “. . . **all ye that labour and are heavy laden.**”

Second, it tells us of God’s part, the invitation: **“Come unto me.”**

Third, it speaks of Christ’s part, the promise: **“I will give you rest . . . Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”**

You and I are the invited. God issues the invitation. Christ fulfills the promise.

*Man’s part is the load, the sin, the corruption, the need. We all labor and are heavy-laden. We all have our burdens. Some of us have many burdens, some of us have few, but there are none of us without them, without difficulties, without trials, without heartaches.*

I am a Jew. I used to be a lawyer. I have known rich Jews, poor Jews, educated Jews, ignorant Jews. I have known rich Gentiles, poor Gentiles, educated Gentiles, ignorant Gentiles. I have met all sorts of people under all sorts of circumstances and conditions. I have come to the very definite conclusion that all men alike, Jews and Gentiles, are hungrily, anxiously, searching for two things. They are looking for security. They are looking for peace. We all want to know that we will have enough to eat, that we will have a roof over our heads, clothing on our backs, a bed in which to sleep. We want to be sure that we will have enough money to pay our debts, to clothe, feed, educate and provide a home for our children. We want to know that our health will permit us to work and earn our daily bread. We want security. We are troubled without it.

We also want peace—peace with God, peace with ourselves, peace with each other. This is the primal need of every human soul. Nothing can take its place. You will find this hunger for peace in the most unlikely places, in the most unlikely people. I have known men powerful in the affairs of the world whose lives were filled with the fury of turmoil. I have known women with the world at their feet troubled and tormented in their souls. Peace is the cry of the human heart.

Where shall we find security? Will money obtain it? Will a good job, a comfortable or even luxurious home, social position, political preferment, economic prestige obtain them for us? We all know better than that. During recent years those things we have held most stable have crashed at our feet. Institutions, organizations, practices, programs seemingly built on secure foundations have been smashed by the onslaught of world-twisting forces. Money has failed. Education has been found to be but a will-o'-the-wisp.

Great leaders of every nation under the sun—honest, sincere, anxious, hardworking leaders—have stood helplessly by to see their countries bleeding, torn, wasted, unhappy, uncertain, depressed, distressed, degraded, diseased, discouraged, destroyed. Surely these times have proved that there is nothing secure in this world.

Where shall we find peace? Will property insure it? Will pleasures provide it? Did Lindbergh's millions help him when his son was kidnapped and slain? Did President Calvin Coolidge's powerful position help him when his boy died in Walter Reed Hospital? What peace, and for what duration, can this world and all the things in it give to us? When sickness comes, when sorrow attacks, when suffering is the rule of the day, when loved ones pass on to the great beyond, when our own time comes to face the Grim Reaper, what then?

Shall we gather about us our pleasures, our money, our degrees, our stocks, our bonds, our honors, our emoluments and find peace in them? Beloved, it cannot be done. It has been tried many times. God give me the grace to tell you this, and may He grant you the grace to receive it. When your time comes to die, when my time comes to die, we will begrudge every minute, every penny, every effort we spent in any other way except in the service and in the fellowship of Christ.

Dr. Truett relates this incident in one of his great sermons.

A wealthy young cotton broker was an active member of his church. The man had a wife and a little girl. I do not know why God did it, but when the child was about seven years of age she died of diphtheria. Because of sanitary laws, her funeral was held in the cemetery, and numerous friends and relatives gathered about the little grave. Dr. Truett preached one of his inimitable sermons, opening the very gates of heaven to show Christ's warm reception and welcome of that precious soul. When the benediction was pronounced, the undertaker prepared to lower the coffin into the grave. The father stopped him. Kneeling down, he pressed a little silver key into the lock of the coffin and opened it. Some minutes he knelt looking down into the still white face of his child. Bending, he gently pressed his lips to the cold baby lips. Closing the coffin, locking it, putting the little silver key back into his pocket, he rose to his feet and, linking his arm in Dr. Truett's arm, walked to the car where the grief-stricken mother was waiting.

As the two came along, the man leaned heavily on Dr. Truett's arm and, in a voice heavy, weary, grief-stricken, said, "'Brother Truett, she was all I had.'" This statement was not entirely true. He had his wife. He had his business. He had his home. But, beloved, his peace was buried with that darling of his heart. All else was of no avail.

That may not be your problem. Our needs vary. Peace and security may come to us in different ways. Our trials are of various sorts. Some of us are tired physically. Some of us are burdened mentally. Some of us have financial difficulties. No matter what we may face, what afflictions may affect us, the greatest problem of every one of us, the greatest labor, the greatest burden, is spiritual.

- We need God.
- We need Christ.
- We need the forgiveness of our sins.
- We need the regeneration of our souls.
- We need the Holy Spirit.
- We need our names written in the Book of Life.
- We need the assurance of immortality, of the resurrection from the dead, of the hope of a home in heaven.

You recall that when the disciples came back after their first evangelistic tour of Palestine to report to Christ they said, "**Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. The Lord answered and said unto them, Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the demons are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.**"

*The second part of the text speaks of an invitation: Come unto me is God's invitation.* It is not the Church, not the Christian, not the Bible, not a preacher that extends this invitation to you. God gives you this invitation. I am merely a messenger, a representative, an ambassador. My poor voice is echoing the mighty voice of God, calling unto you. My only concern, my deep concern, my passionate concern is that I may give you God's invitation.

Think with me of the many ways in which God appeals to your hearts. Look into the sky. The sun, the moon, the twinkling, glittering stars, the fleecy clouds—all are the messengers of God. Nature in every one of its mighty wonders, in all of its magnificent beauty, is the hand of God beckoning to your soul. There is not a work of God in time or in space that has not as its definite primary purpose to bring you to the great beating Overheart.

God has also written His invitation on the tablets of your conscience. By day and by night, at home and abroad, in sin and out of sin, in the most unlikely places, the most unlikely circumstances, under the inspiration of some song or sermon, some word, some providential occurrence, the still small voice within us pleads the Lord's cause. Not until we have committed the unpardonable sin, not until by indifference and unbelief or even by overt rejection we have driven the Holy Spirit from us does that voice stop striving, does that voice lose its patient power. Conscience is the word of eternity implanted in our souls to remind us that we are bound for death and judgment, and must make our peace, our calling, our election sure.

God has written His invitation on almost every page of the Bible. There is no story, there is no promise, there is no doctrine, there is no type, there is no proclamation that does not contain somewhere within it God's hand and heart reaching out for us. Some one has found that the word "**Come**" is mentioned 642 times in the Book. Just think of it, beloved! So anxious is God about our welfare that 642 times He asks us to come, invites us to share in His bounty.

This invitation is pressed upon us through the prayers, the tears and the testimonies of our loved ones, of our friends, of our Christian neighbors. Thank God, they will not leave us alone. They keep after us. We refuse them. We abuse them. We break their hearts and crush their souls, but these dear children of God keep on praying, keep on begging, keep on wooing. Thank God a thousand times for those who persistently sought us out and as persistently pressed the claims of the Redeemer upon us.

But clearer than the voice of nature, more definite than the word of conscience, superior even to the testimonies of the Bible, exceeding in force the prayers, the tears, the efforts of preachers and Christian friends is the blood-red invitation God wrote in the shame, the loneliness, the heartache, the heartbreak, the death of Jesus Christ. On the Cross of Calvary the Almighty exhausted all His plans, all His purposes, all His programs, all His powers to assure us of His love, to invite us to His grace, to welcome us to His mercy. Christ is a portrait of the longing heart of God. It is by His bloodstained Cross that I invite you to come to God.

A young girl living in a Western town quarreled with her mother. She left home in a rage and went to New York City. Tired of working, or perhaps unable to find work, she descended into deep sin. She drank. She caroused. Her life was steeped in iniquity. The mother continued to weep and pray over her prodigal daughter. She tried every means to locate the young woman and bring her home. Finally, at the suggestion of her pastor, she had a number of photographs made of herself and scattered them from one end of the country to the other. She sent them to hotels, to mission halls, to Y.W.C.A.'s, with the hope and prayer that the girl would see one of them and be moved to return. Across the front of every picture she wrote two words: "Come home." She signed the message "Mother."

One night the girl returned home half drunk from a wild orgy. As she staggered along she passed the lighted window of a mission. Glancing at it, she saw a photograph across the page of an open Bible. The girl walked past but something pulled her back. The face on the picture was strangely familiar. It was late and the mission was locked. The next day she came back and the mission director told her that it was her mother. He had recognized the girl from the description on the back of the photograph. The pathetic expression on the mother's face broke the heart of the daughter, and in the mission she wept out her repentance and remorse. The superintendent somehow raised enough money to pay the girl's fare to her home. Buying her ticket, he put her on the homeward-bound train. Arriving at her destination, the girl stepped off the train and walked down the street to her home. Her heart was heavy. Her soul was torn. She did not know what to expect. Hesitantly she knocked on the door. The mother threw open the door, recognized the daughter, and with passionate tears and kisses gave the girl her love and forgiveness. There was no criticism, no abuse.

The aching, longing, yearning heart of the mother was filled with grace and compassion for the daughter, and the pain and bitterness of the terrible months spent in sin were forgotten.

Beloved, this story portrays the love of God. He wants us home. If you accept His invitation, He will not talk about your sins, but about your salvation. He will not discover your shortcomings, but speak of your sanctification. There will be no abuse; there will be no remonstrance. The patient heart of God will press you to itself. He will kiss away the stains of your soul. He will strip you of the rags of evil and clothe you in the robes of righteousness. He will put the ring of adoption upon your finger and the shoes of satisfaction on your feet. He will call the angels together to rejoice over a sinner who has come home.

There is a third part to this text, the promise of Christ: **“I will give you rest . . . Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”** This is the sweetest portion of the entire story. The ages have proved that it is true. It is inspiration to the longing soul, comfort to the burdened heart, calm to the troubled mind. Let us rejoice as we think upon this glorious promise.

Remember Christ’s accessibility. He is always ready to receive you. When you go to visit some public official you must first see his secretary. You cannot visit the governor of the state unless you have an introduction. If need were to drive you to the President of the United States you would have to answer many questions and contact many people before you could have an audience with him. It is not so with Christ. He is always accessible. You can go to Him at any time and know that He is eager to receive you. The record of the New Testament proves that by day and by night, to the young, to the old, to the good, to the bad, to the rabbi, to the rabble, Jesus was ever available. There is no need of an intermediary. There is no need of a recommendation or an introduction. Just as you are, Jesus is waiting to help you, to welcome you.

Consider also Christ’s longing for your response. Some years ago a young couple lost their seven-year-old daughter. The wife was disconsolate, brooding, and grieving over the death of her baby. The doctor and the young husband decided it might help the mother if the couple adopted a little child. It took the husband some time to persuade her to take that step. Finally she consented, but with the understanding that the child would have to resemble their departed darling. They went to an orphanage and discussed the matter with the superintendent, and showed him the picture of their deceased child. The superintendent brought out ten or twelve little girls between the ages of six and eight, each of them blond, curly-haired, blue-eyed, each of them resembling somewhat the departed one.

The mother selected a little girl and asked the husband and the superintendent to lead the others away. She wanted to be alone with the child which she had chosen. When the others had gone she picked up the little orphan and placed her on the piano bench. Gently, tenderly she talked to the somewhat frightened child, told her about her own dear loved one, and asked her if she would like to come home with her and be her little girl.

“If you come to our house, darling,” she said, “we are rich, and you can have everything you want. You will have a nursery, a governess, a pony, many dolls, pretty dresses, toys, as many as you can use.”

The girl stood with her little head bowed, her hands hanging down at her sides. She said not a word. The woman continued to plead, promise, love, beg. The little girl remained mute. The mother talked about a trip to Europe, which the family was planning, about all the playmates she would have, about all the good times that would be hers. The child remained silent. Finally the mother dropped her arms to her sides and stepped back, defeated.

Then the little girl raised her head, her eyes were filled with unshed tears as she asked, "If I come and be your little girl, and you give me all these things, what do you want me to do, lady?"

The mother sprang forward. Pressing her arms around the little girl, she hugged her close to her heart, and sobbed as she said, "'Darling, all we want you to do is just to love us, just to love us.'

Beloved, I have searched the Bible through and through. I have prayed over it. I have wept over it. I have rejoiced over it. I have tried to find in its pages God's will for my life. Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New have I located anything that God asks me to do more than just to love Him.

Brethren, every line of its thousands of pages is an echo of the great beating heart of Christ saying, Lovest thou me? How can anyone refuse such a cry? How can anyone reject such a Christ? Think of all that He has done for us. Think of the price that He paid for our salvation. Think of the little that He asks in return. Today respond to His yearning love by accepting Him as your personal Saviour. That is what He wants. That is what He asks. That is what He seeks. He does not want your money. He does not want your possessions. He does not want your toil. He wants your heart. He wants you. He does not want to take aught from you. He wants you to give all, of your own loving will. Respond to his love. Tell Him that you love Him. Look up into His face and say, "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for Calvary, for the Cross, for the nails, for the blood. Thank You for the thousands of other blessings you have bestowed on me."

Some years ago there lived an old widowed mother, past eighty, in a small town in Iowa. She had several great-grandchildren. Her oldest son was sixty-seven years of age, and a grandfather. Her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren decided to surprise her with a reunion to be held on Christmas Day. From all over the state they came that day. They hid in the warm barn until all had arrived. At last in a group they rushed into her room, shouting, "Surprise! Surprise!" The aged saint's heart was full of joy. What talk, what laughter, what rejoicing, what singing they had that holiday!

The hours sped along, and evening shadows began to creep. The children started to scatter to their homes. One by one they came into the grandmother's room to kiss her good-bye. The last one to come was her oldest son. As he walked into the room and stepped over the threshold, he noticed her sitting looking out of the window, her hands quietly folded in her lap. She did not hear him. He stood there watching her. Those old wrinkled hands that had worked so hard, that had taken such tender care of him, that dear wrinkled face that had bent over him so many sleepless nights, broke his heart. He tiptoed over to his mother, and knelt beside her. Putting his head in her lap as he had done long ago when he was a small boy, he remained there for several minutes.

Running her fingers through his sparse gray hair, the mother patted him tenderly, gently. After a time he raised his head and, looking into the dear mother's dimmed eyes, said, "Mother, I sure do love you!" The old lady pressed her boy's face between her two hands, kissed him on the lips, and said, "Son, I have been waiting sixty-seven years for you to tell me that."

This desire is also in the soul of God. It is the longing of any earthly father, of any earthly mother. I have two tiny children, a boy and a girl. I want them to have all that I can give them. They can have my strength, my blood, my time, my thought, my money. All I want in return from both of them is some day to hear them say, "Daddy, I sure do love you!" That is pay enough. I want nothing else.

I believe that this yearning for response is in the heart of Christ. He is anxious about you. He wants to give you the choicest, the best of all that He has. He wants you to draw unstintingly on His bounty. He wants to forgive your sins, to fill you with the Spirit, to answer your prayers, to keep you, to comfort you, to sustain you, to supply your needs in this life, to take you to Himself in heaven when your work on earth is finished.

He will give you an unqualified and assured welcome. He wants you to come just as you are, without waiting for anything or anybody. He has all that you need in superabundance. He can do exceedingly, abundantly above all that you ask or think in every problem of your life. You need not hesitate. He knows your need. He knows your condition. His invitation is directed to you. His promise is yours for the taking. He has never broken any promise He has spoken, and He will not break this promise to you.

This moment say and act upon the words of that matchless invitation hymn:

Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!

~ end of sermon 17 ~

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