

2 - THE INVITATION OF CHRIST

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Jesus extends His invitation to you. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). God desires that all men have the opportunity to be saved. He gave His Son as a ransom for all. Now He invites all. Man must respond to the invitation which involves positive action on the sinner's part. None can give the promised rest but the Lord. He promises rest to the conscience by removing the guilt.

EACH INDIVIDUAL MUST RESPOND TO THE INVITATION.

Christ says, "Come unto me." Man must come to Him because He is the only way to the Father. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). He has the authority, the ability, and the prerogative to save. Everything He said and did is testimony to this fact.

To accept His invitation we must deny ourselves. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). We must accept His invitation and not seek just what we want. Is this your problem? Do you find it hard to give up selfish things? Nearly all of us do. Jesus demands that you accept His burdens, but He promises that it will be light. Here is where repentance plays the significant part, and it is hard. "And he that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me" (Mt. 10:38). To be unworthy of Christ is to be everlastingly lost in your sins.

We have seen the invitation given by Christ because it is needed by men. If you will accept it, you will have peace with God and with yourself. He doesn't promise rest in sin, but rest from sin. He doesn't promise rest from earthly troubles, but rest in earthly trouble. He is willing to save all who will come to Him, even you. We have the power to accept through faith. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). If men are lost, it will not be because God would not save them, but because they would not be saved.

There is no other invitation that will save you. Today is the day (II Cor. 6:2).

If you are in sin, you are on the road to eternal destruction, even if you have good intentions, even if there are good things true about you. Sin alone separates from God. Few would turn down an invitation of a king with all expenses paid. We would find a way. Jesus gave His life. How can you refuse the invitation of the King of kings and Lord of lords who promises heaven? How can you refuse and resist any longer? Responding to His invitation is a movement of heart and mind. Here is the greatest invitation. Here is how you must respond.

Believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). You must believe in your heart that God wants you, and that He sent His Son to die for you.

Repent of your sins. Sin is the consequence of living your own way (Luke 13:1-5). "The Lord is...longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). A life of sin offers nothing lasting.

Be immersed into Christ. Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). This is how you get "dressed up" to go to heaven. "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Will you accept this invitation?

"To feel the heat of the sun, we must place ourselves under its rays; to enjoy the comforts of a fire in a cold winter evening, we must approach it; and just as certain it is, that to feel like a Christian, we must first become a Christian, we must come to Christ and take His yoke upon us before we can find rest and peace to our souls." (Alexander Campbell)

Let us consider some who accepted the invitation. "And many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). They heard the gospel and hearing led to faith (Rom. 10:17). Because of the Lord's promise, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," they did not hesitate to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. Being then made free from sin, they became servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:18). BGE