

COME UNTO ME

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE POOR MAN'S MARKET

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread: and your labour for that which satisfieth not. Hearken diligently unto me, and eat that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David (Isaiah 55:1-3).

This is by far the greatest, the choicest, the clearest invitation from God to the hearts of men in the entire Old Testament. It is parallel to that other great invitation in the New Testament, **“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”**

God is so anxious for the children of men to understand His will for their welfare, to appreciate His compassion for their desperate condition, that He exhausts, and I speak reverently, even His own great ability in the use of language to press upon our souls the burning pleadings of His own passionate heart that we might turn, repent, and find rest, eternal rest.

In this invitation, there are four tremendous truths.

First, there is *an Invitation*.

Second, there is *an Expostulation*.

Third, there is *a Solicitation*.

Fourth, there is *a Compensation*.

This outline is borrowed from a book I read, or from some preacher that I heard, I cannot remember which. I pretend to no originality. It is not my purpose to hold myself up as a preacher. My only concern is that the Word of God be proclaimed, be presented for your attention.

Let us consider therefore, first of all the invitation

Who are the invited? Search the Scriptures. Go through the Old Testament. Cover the New Testament. Listen to the appeals of the prophets. Hear the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. Pay attention to the message of the apostles.

You will find that they are all unanimous in their pleading appeals to the needy, the thirsty, the hungry, the guilty, the poor, the diseased, the lame, the halt, and the blind. There is very little in the Bible directed to the affluent, the powerful, the prosperous, the positionized, the prominent.

To these last, it seems that God preaches most of His warnings, while it is to the oppressed, the repressed, the depressed, the suppressed that God has most to say in the way of pleading, passionate benediction. The world doesn't invite folks like that. The world doesn't want the outcasts, the outlaws, the down-and-outs, the people who are born on the wrong side of the tracks.

The world has a price for everything it gives.

- You pay a hundred times, aye, a thousand times over for the tiniest bauble you get here upon earth.
- You pay for every second of happiness with minutes of toil.
- You pay for every minute of joy with days of pain.
- You pay for every hour of laughter with years of travail.

But this is not the way of God. God's bounties are free to all who will accept this invitation through the Lord Jesus Christ. God's bounties are for those upon whom the world turns its self-righteous back. This invitation should evoke an echo in every feeling heart, in every thinking mind, in every crying, longing soul. God offers infinite, superlative satisfaction for the taking.

Next, let us consider to what we are invited

It says here, **“Come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come buy, yea come buy and eat, wine and milk without money and without price.”**

That is the invitation.

- We are invited to drink the water of life.
- We are invited to partake of the wine of God's joy.
- We are invited to quaff deeply of the milk of God's benisons.

These terms unquestionably include all the temporal and spiritual blessings that any of us may need in time or eternity.

Just remember what God has for us. There is nothing else that can satisfy the guilty conscience, the longing heart, the yearning soul. You will find only too soon that this world cannot content you. It may for awhile. It may for hours, for days, or even for a few years. But there comes a reckoning, and you pay in bitter repentance, in ceaseless remorse, for everything you have partaken of at the spread-out table of the world's banqueting. The best that you get here upon this earth carries with it a string, a joker. It is not what it pretends to be. There is too much tinsel, too much false fire too much fool's gold about it. You may dance to the tune. You will have to pay the piper. The price is too high for the little joy that you get out of it.

But when you come to God, there is the ambrosia and nectar, there is the bread and the water of life, there is the fullness of the abundance of God's grace. None of God's mercies carry with them any sort of a bite or blight. They are not polished up to represent themselves to be what they are not. They are just exactly what they appear to be, only more so. God always gives good measure, pressed down, running over. You need not hesitate for one single second to pay the highest price God asks you. You will find in the end that you have obtained a bargain, a great bargain. The values of God will not only suffice you for the moment, or for the passing fashion, but for eternity. You will never regret that with which you parted in order to obtain that which God so abundantly bestows upon you.

Consider, further, the manner of the invitation

First, *it is earnest*. Listen to the cry of God. It seems to be torn out of His very heart. It seems to me that He bends down from the heavens and says, "Ho! Stop! Wait! Look! Listen!" The very fact of its oft repetition is a definite sign of the earnestness, of the anxious desire of God that we pay attention to His admonition, to His appeal. Were you a hundredth part, aye, a thousandth part as eager as God is for your welfare, everyone of you within the sound of my voice, would flee from the wrath of God, to the love of God, and His sure, blood-written, cross-offered mercy.

The invitation is not only earnest, *it is also serious*. Someone has counted the word "**come**" as it appears in the Bible, to report that it is there six hundred and forty-two times. Six hundred and forty-two times God uses that invitation "**come**." Surely it could not be more serious. God knows our condition, our position, our peril, our condemnation. He is eager for us to turn about face. Could we see ourselves as God sees us, the horrors of our situation would be the greatest invitation that could possibly be presented. There would be no question then of agonizing to get people to come to church, let alone to get them to accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Saviour. There cannot be any over-exaggeration of the necessity for the plan of redemption, for the provisions of God's grace, for the work of the Holy Spirit.

The invitation is not only earnest, it is not only serious, *but it is also general*. Thank God for that! Everyone is invited.

- There is no such thing as race difference or racial hatred with God. God is not class-minded.
- There is no capital and labor in the courts of glory. All mankind are inclusively, exclusively, conclusively urged to come to the fountain flowing from the throne of God's grace.
- There are no such things as national restrictions.
- There are no material barriers.
- There are no mental qualifications.
- There are no moral degrees.

The king in his throne room, the convict in his jail cell, the queen in her dainty dressing room, the harlot in her den of assignation, all others in between, are included in the words of this text. You need not hesitate! You need not question! You need not doubt! The words mean you, every single solitary one of you, without exception.

The invitation is not only earnest; it is not only serious; it is not only general; *it is further absolutely, totally, unqualifiedly, free*. The things of God in Christ, the things of salvation, the things of eternal life, are above price, beyond price, without price. The very thought of paying for them, either before accepting them, or after you have come into their estate, would make a cheap huckster out of God, would minimize the matchless value of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Not by penance, nor by prayers, nor by toil, nor by blood, nor by tear, nor by any sort of personal effort, is it expected of us to attain, to obtain, or even retain the grace of God. It is all the free gift of God's love available to us on the simple terms of the gospel—repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is hard to understand, harder to believe! Our own devilish pride stands in the way. Our own hellish stubbornness bedims our minds. We want to do something for God. We are loath to become beggars on God's bounty.

Remember this for as long as eternity shall stand. You cannot buy anything from God. You cannot earn anything of God's. All of His blessings are free for the asking, for the taking.

Now let us think of the expostulation. **“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, your labour for that which satisfieth not?”**

Sin is laborious, spending of self and hard-earned substance for the things that will perish with the using. When we get them what do we have? We have to leave them all behind. They turn to ashes, to gall, to bitter wormwood. There is no need of elaborating on that. We have all learned it only too bitterly, alas, too well.

Go out into the highways and byways of life. Watch the faces of the devotees of Satan. See how strained they are. See what efforts they put forth in order to obtain the things of this world, when in their sober moments they know that everything they do get will result in their harm, in their loss, in their spiritual death. The way of the transgressor is hard. The wicked are like the troubled sea. The devil has no bargains. You pay a thousand, aye, ten thousand times over for every bit of shoddy that you obtain in his market place. He cannot even give you a deed in simple fee. He has no control over life, over death, over eternity. Only God can do that. Only God has that.

Sin is costly, more costly than any and every other pursuit, more expensive than any and every other engagement of life. It costs everything, character, influence, reputation, time, health, love, home, money.

Finally it costs the soul and heaven itself. **“For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”**

On top of that you must remember, oh, I beseech you to remember, that the devil cannot, that the devil does not, that the devil will not, ever, give anyone the whole world in exchange for his soul. He bought Judas for thirty pieces of silver. Before that time and since that time, he has been buying the eternal welfare of men oftentimes for even less than that.

Examine what the devil has to offer you and you will find that it is trash, that there is nothing to it, that it is not even worth one millionth of the price the devil asks for it, that it is painted up, perfumed over to make it attractive, that there is nothing solid, nothing worthwhile about it.

Sin is extremely unsatisfying. There is nothing in sin that makes us content for any length of time. It is bitter, biting, blighting.

- It blights like the burning open-doored furnace, like the blazing noontide heat.
- It brings pain to the body, pangs to the heart, punishment to the soul.
- It is a whip of scorpions by day, a nightmare by night, the shadow of an inevitable doom hanging like the sword of Damocles over the head of the sinner.

You lose yourself for awhile in its hectic preoccupation, but as soon as the moments of enchantment are over, there comes the bitter sting of repentance, of remorse, of burning memories.

The most horrible thing about sin, perhaps, is that it is so universally deadly. It kills, without regard of person or position. It kills the young. It destroys the old. There is nothing holy to it. There is nothing sacred to it. Satan and sin encroach into every sanctity of life, staining them with, their slimy trails.

That the wages of sin is death is recognized throughout the world. That the soul that sinneth must face punishment and eternal condemnation is written in the warp and woof of all mankind, civilized and uncivilized, Christian and unbeliever. Eternal punishment and the flaming torments of hell, were originally, according to God's word, prepared for the devil and his angels.

Since then they have, however, become peopled, and are still being filled with the gainsayers, the unbelievers, the transgressors of God's laws. Remember, oh, sinner friend, as you go on thwarting the will of God that a day of reckoning is coming, that there is a judgment to face, that there is an accounting to render, that the flames of the lake of fire and brimstone are reserved for those who turn their backs on this mighty invitation of Grace.

We now come to the solicitation

It is the sole concern of God that we accept this wonderful, blood-written invitation. "**Hearken diligently unto me.**"

It is an urgent appeal to men and women in imminent danger. You are on the road to destruction. You are heading for perdition. Here is the way out. "**Incline your ear and come unto me.**" The voices of the world are so clamorous, so fascinating, so inviting, that one is in constant danger of missing the heavenly call. That is why God pleads with us so often, here and elsewhere. "**Hear and your soul shall live.**"

Scan the pages of the Bible. See how many times in it you are commanded to hear. Jesus himself said, "**Take heed, that ye hear.**"

- If you hear, you will heed.
- If you heed, you will receive.
- If you receive, you will live.

There can be no doubt in anyone's mind about the anxiety of God for the welfare of His creatures. Too many times, and in too many different ways, has God shown His passionate-hearted desire for the souls of men. Nature is dotted with the invitations of God.

The Bible is just one long cry from the Lord. Every drop of the blood of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross is an echoing amen and amen to the invitations of nature, of providence, of Scripture, to turn to God and live.

It seems to me that when a sinner does go to hell it is only because he knocks God out of the way. It is only because he crucifies Christ afresh. It is only because he stamps in the very face of the Holy Spirit. There is no one in the entire world who knows more about your plight than does God. It is because of His certain knowledge that He is so solicitous for your welfare. With all my soul, by your immortal souls, I beseech you, hear God and live.

The last thing in this wonderful text is the compensation

“Incline your ear and come unto me, and your soul shall live.” The compensation is life, eternal life. You may have it. You will have it if you accept this wondrous invitation of God, if you will step out on the mercies, on the promises of the Almighty outlined in these brief verses of Scripture.

- Here is life for the asking.
- Here is life for the taking.
- Here is life for the enjoying.
- Here is life right here on earth, the fullness of God's grace, life that is everlasting.
- Here is life, through-out an endless eternity of reigning and rejoicing with the Lord Jesus Christ.

I plead with you, close with it.

In this matchless superlative life, this life that neither the world, nor the flesh, nor the devil can give, *there is first of all the forgiveness of your sins*. You cannot really be said to enjoy life as long as the thoughts of your sins beset you on every hand, as long as they trouble you during the day and torment you through the night. In this offer is included the blotting out of every transgression, the removing of every iniquity, the washing away in the shower of Calvary's blood of every blot from your soul and record, from now on, and forever. It is God's prerogative to forgive sin. God alone forgives sin. He does it gladly, eagerly, fully through Jesus Christ. You may confess your sins to each other. You may make restitution. You may do all that is in your power to amend in the future. But you will never have the peace of God that passes all understanding; you will never have the fullness and abundance of scriptural, spiritual life, until you repent of your sins before God, confessing them to him, claiming the shed blood of the Saviour for their remission.

There is further in the life contemplated in this text not only the forgiveness of your sins, *but also the constant and abiding fellowship of the Holy Spirit*. He is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. He will never lead you astray. He will comfort you, sustain you, support you, supply your needs, teach you, encourage you, inspire you, lead you in the way of righteousness for God's sake.

He is one friend you need never be troubled about. He is one friend for whom you need never apologize. You can introduce Him into the chiefest, into the highest, the richest, the most cultured circles. He who finds aught of fault in this Friend of yours is merely branding himself, placing himself, classifying himself, with those who are in the devil's toils.

You need the friendship and fellowship of this Holy Spirit.

- There are so many vicissitudes in life.
- There are so many uncertainties.
- There are so many hills to climb, so many rivers to cross, so many oceans to traverse.
- There are so many crosses to bear.
- There are so many dark places full of traps, mysteries, doubts, fears.

Here is a guide who never falters. God offers Him to you in this invitation.

We have also in this compensation not only the forgiveness of our sins, not only the fellowship of the blessed third person of the Holy Trinity, the vice-regent of God and Christ here upon this earth, *but also future glory*. In no other way, in no other place, under no other condition, can you escape the torments of hell, can you enjoy the bliss of heaven. Heaven is God's realm. Christ has the keys to it. Read Revelation 1:18 to understand what I am talking about.

Jesus said, "**I have the keys of heaven and hell.**"

- His cross is the bridge across the flaming pit of Tophet.
- His name is the title deed to the mansions of glory.
- His blood is the purchase price for a home in bliss.

Even were God to exact of you a thousand times greater sacrifices than He has asked you to make, even if you were required to give up everything else in this world beside, still that would be a small price to pay for an eternity in glory. Yet here God proffers it to you without money and without price.

The question then becomes: What will you do with this invitation?

God writes it across the horizon of your lives. You cannot turn to the left hand or to the right. You cannot walk out of this auditorium without making a decision for or against it. It is not this humble preacher, not this poor preacher's appeal, but the very impact of the Holy Spirit that insists, that demands, aye, commands you to choose between God and Satan, between life and death. The choice is yours.

- God has chosen for you a long time ago when He sent His Holy Spirit into the world.
- God has chosen for you a long time ago when He caused men of old to write the Bible containing this and multiplied other invitations.
- God has been choosing for you by favoring you with every blessing, with every benison, with every benediction, with every benefit, of His mighty bounties.
- God has chosen for you when He spared your life instead of killing you the very first time you transgressed.
- God has chosen for you by giving you the opportunity to read this message.

What will you do? You cannot avoid it. Decide you will.

My prayer is, my plea is, first to God for you, then to you for God, that you accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour right now, that you say "Yes" to God this minute.

May the Lord in His compassionate grace give you the power, and He will, if you but ask Him, to say "No" to Satan, and "Yes" to the Saviour.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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