

Three Invitations

Introduction; Most enjoy getting imitations.

- A. Most folks get many invitations.
 - 1. We get invited to weddings, birthday parties, farewell parties, social get-to-gathers and so forth.
 - 2. Most of these are common and ordinary. Almost everyone gets invited to things like these.
- B. However some invitations are special.
 - 1. They are special in that very few get invited to them. They are usually for the rich, the famous and the powerful.
 - 2. They are for politicians, world leaders, movie stars, sports stars and business leaders.
 - 3. These are special events. It may be a great movie premier, the coronation of royalty or a meeting to decide the fate of nations. It is a great honor to be invited to certain meetings.
- C. All of us have an even greater invitation though.
 - 1. It is an invitation by the Lord. The Lord of lords and King of kings has sent all women and men an invitation. Will we accept or not?
 - 2. There are actually **three** invitations He sends us. We must accept all of these. We should want to accept all of these. They are;
 - a. **“Come unto Me”**,
 - b. **“Come after Me”** and
 - c. **“Come all ye blessed”**.
- D. Today we will talk about these **‘Three Great Invitations’** we are all sent.

I. “Come Unto Me”

- A. This invitation is found in **Matthew 11:25-30**.
 - 1. This is early in Jesus’ ministry. In verses 1-7 we see that John the immerser is still alive. He is in prison.
 - 2. **Vs 20-24**; He has been preaching mostly in Galilee. While many follow Him, most do not. Jesus pronounces a strong condemnation against several of the cities of Galilee.
 - 3. The people in these cities have seen many powerful miracles. Yet they reject them and what they mean. The ones who follow Jesus are few. They are the poor and common people. Yet they are wise enough to recognize Jesus as a man from God.
 - 4. *John 3:2 This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”*
- B. In Matthew 11:25-27 we see the power behind the invitation.
 - 1. **Vs 25-26**; Jesus begins with a prayer of thankfulness. This seems strange to us. He thanks the Father that the things He has been saying are hidden from the wise and prudent.
 - 2. Most of his followers were poor and unlearned and simple. Some were highly intelligent (Paul, Apollos, Sergius Paulus, etc). However most were common working people.
 - 3. *1 Cor 1:26-29 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.*
 - 4. This does not teach ‘pre-destination’ nor does it suggest God does not want the rich and powerful and wise in this world.
 - 5. It recognizes that the appeal of the Gospel is to those who are like babes. They are humble and submissive and teachable. The wise and mighty of this world are not like this. They trust in their own riches and wisdom and not God’s.

6. An example of the Lord wanting a rich man to obey the Gospel is the 'rich, young ruler of Mark 10:17-22. Jesus loved him and told him what he could do to inherit eternal life. Yet the man had riches and loved them more.
7. **Vs 27;** The Father is with Jesus and helping Him. Jesus is the only one who has true knowledge of the Father. Jesus reveals the Father to us. If we do not listen to Jesus we cannot know God.
8. *John 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*
9. Jesus' claim to know the Father and to show the Father to men is a claim of deity. He came from the Father and is Himself God —John 1:1-14. Jesus can therefore offer this invitation.

C. Matthew 11:28-30 tell us to come to Christ.

1. **Vs 28;** Jesus appeals to the ones who are weary and heavily burdened. He promises to give them rest.
2. **Vs 29-30;** If we come to Him we must take His yoke. We subject ourselves to Him. We are His oxen bearing His yoke.
3. This means we learn from Him and not the world. We become His followers. He is gentle and humble. He is not overly demanding. He provides rest for our souls.
4. *1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.*
5. We see we should forsake the world and the wisdom of men and follow Jesus Christ. He will show us the Father and the way to the Father. He has a yoke for us to bear but He does not demand more than we can bear.

D. How do we come to Jesus Christ?

1. To come to Jesus Christ is to accept Him as the Lord and ruler in our lives. We learn from Him and His word. We accept who He is and follow Him.
2. *Matt 28:18-20 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*
3. *Mark 16:15-16 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."*
4. *Acts 18:8 Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.*
5. *Acts 2:38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*
6. We see that we must believe in Jesus Christ as the divine Son of God and determine to follow Him. We repent of our sins and turn to Him in baptism.
7. We are buried with Him in baptism to share His death, burial and resurrection —Rom 6:3-7. Our sins are washed away and we find rest for our souls. This is the spiritual rest in knowing our sins have been taken away.

E. We see that we should come to Jesus Christ and become a Christian.

II. "Come After Me"

A. This invitation is found in **Luke 9:23-26.**

1. Luke 9 is about the same time in Jesus' ministry. It is perhaps a little later. However Jesus is still working in Galilee.
2. **Luke 9:18-20;** Peter has, by this time figured out that Jesus is the promised Messiah of God. This says a lot about Peter. He has paid attention to much of Jesus' deeds and teaching.
3. **Luke 9:21-22;** Jesus warns His disciples that it is not yet time to tell this to others. He begins to prepare His disciples for His coming death.

B. In Luke 9:23 to 26 Jesus invites us to come after Him.

1. **Vs 23;** We must deny ourselves. We must not do what we want to do but follow Jesus Christ. We must take up our cross **daily** and follow Him. We do not get week-ends and holidays off.

2. **Vs 24;** Jesus contrasts two kinds of lives. One is physical and one is spiritual. If we want to save our lives physically and enjoy all the world has to offer we will lose our lives spiritually. If we give up things in this life for Jesus Christ, we will save our lives eternally in heaven.
3. **Vs 25;** We must make a choice. We can have the world or heaven. We cannot have both. We must make a choice. The choice must be made today. Tomorrow is not promised.
4. *2 Cor 6:2 For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*
5. **Vs 26;** We will reap what we sow. If we are ashamed to be called a Christian we will be lost. We must decide what side we are on and take a stand there.
6. *Matt 10:32-33 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."*
7. In verse 23 Jesus said that if we want to, 'Come after Him', we need to deny ourselves and bear our cross for Him daily. This is more than just becoming a Christian.

C. How do we come after Jesus?

1. We must deny ourselves many of the things the world has to offer. We must not live like the world but live as a follower of Jesus Christ.
2. This means we make sacrifices. The world sacrifices to have what the world offers. They sacrifice their spirituality to enjoy the pleasures of the world. We must not do this.
3. *Luke 14:25-27 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."*
4. We see the degree of sacrifice we must make at times. Other passages tell us to honor our parents and love our families. Hate often means to 'love less'. We must put Jesus Christ above everything, even our families.
5. *1 Pet 4:12 Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you;*
6. *Heb 11:24-27 By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.*
7. We endure to the end and to death —Matt 24:13, 10:22, Rev 2:10. We must accept the fiery trials and persecutions that come with rejecting the world and condemning it.
8. We must make choices. As Moses rejected the power and pleasures of Egypt we also must take a stand for the Lord and even suffer with the people of God.
9. *John 8:31-32 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."*
10. We come after Jesus when we deny ourselves and follow Him. We come to Him and become a Christian. We then come after Him and live as a child of God.

D. We see that we should come after Jesus Christ and live as a Christian.

III. "Come All Ye Blessed"

A. Matthew 25:31-46 records this invitation.

1. We have come to the end of Jesus' ministry. He will be killed in just a few days after saying these things.
2. He left the temple for the last time in Matthew 24:1. In Matthew 23:37-39 He had cried over their rejection of Him and predicted their coming destruction.
3. Matthew 24 is an extended description of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem. It will be a terrible time —vs 21. The disciples needed to understand these things.
4. In Matthew 25 Jesus teaches two parables. The **Ten Virgins** teaches the need to be ready and watching for the Lord's return.
5. Matthew 25:14-30 is the **Parable of the Talents**. We need to be doing what the Lord commands before He returns. We need to be following after Jesus.

B. Matthew 25:31-40 invites us to, **“Come ye blessed of my Father.”**

1. **Vs 31-33;** This story is a picture of judgment. All peoples will stand before the Lord. He will divide them into two groups on His right and left hands.
2. Shepherds often do this to their flocks because the sheep and goats have different needs at different time. Jesus divides them for judgment.
3. **Vs 34-36;** The ones on the right hand are the ones who have done good. They are invited to come into the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world. They are the blessed ones.
4. **Vs 37-40;** Jesus explains to them that when they helped others, they helped Him. We can do nothing for God. He has no needs and we could not help Him if He did need help. Yet when we help others we are helping the Lord.
5. *Heb 13:1-2 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.*

C. How can we be invited into the kingdom of the Lord?

1. We must realize there will be a day of judgment. We must live in such a way that we are ready for it.
2. *2 Cor 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.*
3. *Heb 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,*
4. We must not fool ourselves. There is a day of judgment coming and we will all stand before the Lord. Our lives have a part in our judgment.
5. *John 5:28-29 "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."*
6. Many do not believe in the resurrection and judgment. They had better be sure because their eternal destiny is depending on it. The Bible affirms a resurrection and judgment. We should believe that and be prepared.
7. *Rev 21:8 "But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."*
8. *Matt 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"*
9. Many believe God will save everyone. However scripture clearly denies this. We need to be careful how we live so we will be pleasing to the Lord in the last day.
10. *Rev 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying to me, "Write: 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' " "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow them."*
11. Those who die in the Lord are the blessed ones who will be invited into the everlasting kingdom. We die in the Lord by living in Him.

D. We see that we must be prepared for judgment to come as the blessed one of the Lord.

Conclusion; How do we answer the Lord's invitation?

A. We see three invitations. How do we answer them?

1. **“Come unto me.”** Have we come to the Lord in faith repentance and baptism?
2. **“Come after me.”** Have we come after the Lord by living for Him in this life?
3. **“Come all you blessed.”** Are we the blessed ones who answered the first two invitations and will be asked to enter heaven?
4. Matthew 25:41-46 shows the eternal destiny of the ones who did not answer the first two invitations. They will depart from the Lord and follow Satan and his angels into hell.

B. Have you come to the Lord in faith, repentance and baptism?

1. *Gal 3:26-27 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*
2. If you have, do you then strive to serve Him with all your heart and follow His word and example as set

forth in the N.T.?

3. *Luke 6:46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"*

C. If we can help anyone answer the Lord's invitation today, please let us.