

Coming to Christ

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: John 6:44-48

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One of the old hymn writers wrote these words. “Come, come ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore. Jesus ready stands to save you, full of pity love and power. Let not conscience make you linger nor of fitness fondly dream, all the fitness Christ requireth is to feel your need of him. Come ye weary, heavy laden, bruised and mangled by the fall, if you tarry till you’re better, you’ll never come at all. True belief and true repentance, every grace that brings you nigh, without money, without money, come to Jesus, come to Jesus and buy. I’ll go to Jesus though my sin is like a mountain raised. And I will say to him, ‘I’m a wretch undone without your sovereign grace.’ I can but perish if I go, but I am resolved to try for if I stay away from Christ I must forever die. I’ll to the gracious king approach whose sceptre mercy gives, perhaps he will receive my touch and then the sinner lives. But if I die with mercy sought when I the king have tried, if that were to die, what a thought, as a sinner can never die.”

Charlotte Elliot put it this way, “Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me and that thou bidst me come to thee oh, Lamb of God, I come. Just as I am, and waiting not To rid my soul of one dark blot, To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come. Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind: Sight, riches, healing of the mind, Yea, all I need in Thee to find, O Lamb of God, I come.”

“We are coming to Christ” is a very common term in the Word of God. Our Lord Jesus one day lifted his eyes to heaven and he said, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth that you have hid these things from the wise and prudent, but you have revealed them to babes. You have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, it seemed good in thy sight. Come unto me all ye that are labor and are heavy laden. Come unto me and I will give you rest.”

And, again, on that great day of the feast, the last day of the feast, our Lord stood on the porch of the temple and as he watched the people departing from the ceremonies and departing from all of the tradition and going back home he said, “Hey, if any man thirst, let him come to me, let him come to me. And out of his belly will flow rivers of living water.” In this he spake of the Spirit which all that believe on him, all that believe on him should receive.

And John, before he closed the book of Revelation he said, “The Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come.’ The Holy Spirit and the bride of Christ say, ‘Come.’ And let him that heareth say,

‘Come.’ And let him who is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life of freely.”

Coming to Christ. Coming to Christ. Coming to Christ. What is it to come to Christ? Well, it is the same as believing on Christ. Coming to Christ is to believe on Christ. The word says, “They will never call on him in whom they have not believed. They will never come to him in whom they have not believed.” Coming to Christ is to believe on him. Coming to Christ is to receive it. Coming to Christ is to trust him. You will never trust Christ until you come to him. You will never come to him until you trust him. And if you come to him you will come because you do trust him.

Coming to Christ is to leave our idols like Paul said to the Thessalonians, he said, “You have left your idols and come to serve the living God.”

Coming to Christ is to turn away from my works, to turn away from my works of righteousness to his perfect righteousness. Because it is not by works of righteousness which I have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. Coming to Christ is to turn away from my religious tradition. The apostle Paul said, “I count it all but dung. I was born a Hebrew of Hebrews. I was a Pharisee. Concerning the law I was blameless. I served God after the tradition of my Fathers.” And he said, “I count these things but lost. I turn away from them. I lay them down. Yea, I count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him. Coming to Christ is turning away from our ceremonies. Ceremonies can’t save. All the blood on Jewish altars down through the centuries cannot put away one sin or one stain. It is coming to his perfect sacrifice by which he perfected forever them that are sanctified.

Coming to Christ is turning away from my feelings and my emotions to the unchanging covenant so that I can lie down with David, that sweet psalmist of Israel, the son of Jesse, the man after God’s own heart and be able to say, “Although it be not so with my house, God had made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure and this is my salvation and all my desire.”

Coming to Christ is to turn away from all these things and to turn to him alone because coming to Christ is to come to Christ personally, personally. He said, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden.” That is where we make a mistake. Coming to Christ is not coming to the Church. I believe folks who have come to Christ will come to church. But coming to Christ is not coming to church. Many have come to church who have never come to Christ. And some have come to Christ who have never had the opportunity to go to Church. The thief on the cross was one.

Christ said, “Come to me and I will give you rest. If any man thirst let him come to me. Let him come to me. Seek the Lord while he may be found. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.” That’s it, Bob. Me. Don’t miss him. It’s not coming to the things of Christ. It’s coming to Christ. It’s not even coming to the law of Christ. It is coming to Christ. It is not coming to the preacher. How many have shaken the preacher’s hand who have never seen Christ the Lord.

What a sad, sad experience to come to the front of a church and make a loud boast or profession of what I have when I don't have any thing because coming to Christ is not to come to the altar. It is to come to him who is the altar. We have an altar. Coming to Christ is not coming to the ordinances. It is not coming to baptism or even to the sacraments of the Lord's Table or communion. Coming to Christ is to come to Christ.

Coming to Christ is not coming to the doctrines of grace. It is coming to Christ. You can learn all the doctrines and never know him who gave them. You can know the teachings and not know the teacher. But if you know the teacher, you'll know the teachings.

Let me show you a verse that may help you in Psalm 130. Psalm 130. Listen to this. I am going to read most of this psalm, but it says here in Psalm 130. "Out of the depths have I cried unto thee. Out of the depths have I cried unto thee." Coming to Christ is coming to him, to cry unto him, to look unto him, to lay hold upon him. "Out of the depths have I cried," Psalm 130, "unto thee, oh Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication. If thou, Lord shouldest mark iniquities, oh Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord."

I am not waiting for the preacher to come to see me. I am waiting for the Lord. I am not waiting for someone to pat me on the head and say, "You have got it now." I am waiting for the Lord. I wait for the Lord.

"My soul doth wait. In his Word, his Word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning." Oh, how long the night gets when you are sick and can't sleep, pain wracking your body and you just wait for the morning. "Oh, I wish the sun would come up." Some of you experience that, I know. "I wish the morning would come."

He said, "I wait for the Lord more than they that wait for the morning, more than they that wait for the morning. I say more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord. For with the Lord there is mercy."

Do you see what he is saying? He didn't say let Israel hope for mercy. He says, "Let Israel hope in the Lord." That is where mercy is. It is in a person. Don't seek mercy. Seek the Lord. Let Israel hope in the Lord. With the Lord there is mercy. Let Israel hope in the Lord. With the Lord there is plenteous redemption. If you can lay hold on him you have got mercy. If you can lay hold on him you have got redemption. He didn't say let Israel hope for redemption. I am not seeking redemption. I am seeking the Redeemer. I am not seeking mercy. I am seeking him.

Oh, somebody says, "If I just had assurance."

I don't want assurance. I want Christ. It didn't matter whether those folks down in the house were walking the floor or lying there or sitting in a chair. God said, "When I see

the blood I will pass over you. It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul. Let Israel hope in the Lord. With the Lord there is mercy. With the Lord is plenteous redemption and he, he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

He said, “I am a just God and a Savior. You look to me and be ye saved. Look to me and be ye saved.” In the Lord I have righteousness. In the Lord shall we be justified.

What is it to come to Christ? It is to come to Christ, not to a substitute, to him who is our substitute? What is it to come to Christ? It is to come to him as he is. Don’t make a mistake.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11, “They come preaching another Jesus.” He says, “If you believe another gospel or if you hear another gospel preached, don’t you have any patience with that.”

He said, “Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel let him be accursed.”

Coming to Christ is to come to him as he is. Our Lord said to the man who was blind, he said, “Do you believe on the Son of God?” He said, “Who is he that I might believe?”

I wish somebody had grabbed me at the bottom of hell sometimes and said, “Who is he? Tell me who he is? I know there is redemption. Who is he? I know there is mercy. Where is he? I know there is grace for the guilty. Where is he?”

I’ll tell you. I’ll tell you. It is in him who is Lord. It is in him who is Lord. “Unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given and his name shall be called wonderful, counselor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

He is not only Lord and God, he is the Christ. He is the Christ. “These things are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the Christ. Jesus is the Christ and that believing you might have life through his name. He is that prophet.”

Moses said, “God will raise up a prophet like unto me from among the brethren. Listen to him.”

When our Lord stood on the Mount of Transfiguration the Father said, “This is my Son. Hear him. He’s a prophet. He is that priest after the order of Melchizedek. He is that King. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He is our righteousness. He is our sin offering. He is our risen justifier. He is the only mediator between God and men. There is one God, one God only one God and one mediator between that God and man and that is the man.”

Oh, Pilate said, “There is the man. Behold the man.”

Have you ever beheld the man? The man Christ Jesus, his is a name which is above every name, a name above every name, that name of which the Father declared, “Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess in heaven, earth and hell that he is Lord.”

His name is his attribute. His name is his power and person. His name is his glory. Find out who he is and come to him. Don’t come to the front. Come to Christ. Don’t come to a religious Messiah. Come to Christ. Don’t come to a fellow who sounds logical, come to Christ. Find out who he is. Who is he? That I might believe. I don’t want to miss Christ.

And I will tell you the best place to miss him is in religion because there will be many Christ’s arise. False Christ’s shall arise. Antichrist shall arise. Many Christ’s shall arise and they will say, “Here is Christ. Lo, there is Christ. Yea, here is Christ.”

He said, “Don’t listen to them. Don’t listen to them.” He said, “They will come. They will come doing signs and wonders. And they will deceive, if it were possible, God’s elect. But don’t listen to them.” Find out who he is and you will find out who he is in the Word. He is revealed in his Word is to come to Christ. It is to come to Christ as he is, as he is, not as you think he is, not as you think he ought to be, not as the preacher says he is. He is Christ as he says he is even if it makes you mad.

“I don’t believe in that kind of God.”

I know. By nature no man does, but he is still God. He is still God.

“I just won’t have a sovereign God.”

If you have a God you will have a sovereign God.

“I just won’t have a discriminating Christ.”

If you have a Christ you will because he took not on himself the nature of angels, but he seed of Abraham. Yes he did. And he said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful.”

Find out who he is, Mervin. Find out who he is. Who is he? And come to him as he is no matter whether you agree with it or not. Just come to him and bow down and say, “Lord, if you will you can make me whole.”

The thief had more sense than we have with all our theology. He just looked over there and said, “You are not going to stay dead. You are coming into a kingdom. Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom. Think on me. Think on me.”

And I am coming to Christ wherever he is. I am coming to Christ as he is revealed in his Word. And what is it to come to Christ? It is to keep on coming to Christ. It is to keep on. Repentance is not an isolated act. The man who says, “I once repented,” never repented. I have repented, I am repenting, by God’s grace, I will repent. Faith is not an isolated act.

Faith is not a one time experience. Faith is not a decision alone. Faith is a state of being. Faith is a new nature. Faith looks to Christ, clings to Christ, comes to Christ and is obsessed with Christ from now on.

I have been saved, "For by grace have you been saved." But I am being saved. By God's grace I am being saved and now is my salvation nearer than when I first believed. I am coming to Christ. Real faith never ceases to look to Christ, never ceases to come to Christ, never ceases to call on Christ, never ceases to rest in Christ. Faith never finds any place to put its foot except on the rock of ages. Faith finds no place to build a living temple except on the chief cornerstone. No place is ever any good or to be trusted, but Christ.

1 Peter two verse one through five. Listen to this, 1 Peter chapter two verse one through five he said, "Wherefore laying aside malice and guile and hypocrisies and envies and evil speaking as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word that you may grow thereby, of so be that you have tasted that the Lord is gracious to whom coming, to whom coming."

That is present tense. I am not an English professor by any stretch of the imagination, but I just know that means he is keeping on coming. When our Lord said, "Ask and it shall be given." He said, "You keep on asking. Keep on asking." When he says, "Knock and it shall be open," he doesn't mean to knock and then to go about your business. He said, "Knock till the door is open. Keep on knocking. Keep on knocking. Keep on seeking. Keep on asking. Keep on asking."

Coming to Christ is to come to Christ continually. It is to never quit coming to Christ. Oh, we have a hope. We have a sure hope. We have a certain hope. Our hope is as sure as the throne of God. But I will tell you we keep on coming, keep on coming.

And then to come to Christ is to come to him to find all I need, all I need. There is no buts, there is no ands, there is no ifs about it. Christ of God is made unto me wisdom. All the wisdom I need is in Christ. Christ is made unto me righteousness. All the righteousness I need. Christ is made unto me sanctification, all that I need. Christ is made unto me redemption, all I need. Jesus Christ is made to me all I need: wisdom, righteousness, holiness and power. I find in him all that God requires, all that the law demands, all that justice requires, all that heaven demands. He has made me sufficient in him right now to inherit the saints, all that the saints have in glory. Sufficient. It is all in Christ.

In him dwelleth all the fullness of the godhead bodily and you are complete, and you are complete. Oh, my soul, we think if anybody here is not complete it is me. I know that. In your nature, in yourself, in your flesh, in your desires, in your happiness, but I tell you, in God's sight you are complete. And that is all that counts. In his sight I am complete. I am complete in Christ.

All right. Here is a second question. Why do men not come to Christ? Turn to John

chapter five, verse 40. All these things are true. All these things are true. When you think of the grace to be found in Christ, when you think of the treasures of the riches of the blessings of the mercies of the life to be found in Christ which is so evident to those who come, so evident to those who found those riches, so evident to those who found that bread from heaven to be such bread that you never hunger again, that water of life to be such that you never thirst again.

You say, "Well, why don't others come? Why don't others come?"

Our Lord said in John 5:40, "You will not come. You will not come that you might have life. You will not. You will not."

Turn to Matthew chapter 19. Listen to this. I hear preachers say this, Matthew 19. Listen to this. I hear preachers say, "Well, coming to Christ is the easiest thing you have ever done. Coming to Christ is the most simple thing in the world." And yet my Lord said in my text, "No man can come to me except my Father which sent me draw him. No man can. No man can come to me."

And here in Matthew chapter 19 verse 24, listen. And Christ said, "Again, I say unto you, 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.'"

And don't you get to thinking here just about those who are filthy rich. We are rich men, too. Yes, sir. We have more than kings used to have. We are laden and loaded. I wish we was heavy laden.

Read on. When his disciples heard it they were exceeding amazed and they said, "Well, who can be saved? Who can be saved? Who can come to Christ?"

And our Lord looked at them and said, "With men it is impossible. With men it is impossible. With men it is impossible."

But let me tell you this. Why? Why? Will you listen for a moment? There is not a physical disability that keeps me from coming to Christ. It is not a physical disability at all. I can walk to the house of God as well as I can walk to a bar without any more effort. I can walk to a bar or I can walk to the house of God. There are no physical disabilities in that sense of the Word. I can come to the house of God as well as anybody else can, any man can. I can walk down an aisle as well as I can walk down the stairs. No physical disability. Get up and come down this aisle. That is what the preacher said, "Get up and come down this aisle." Well here I come. Ain't no problem, no problem.

Man is not hindered physically from coming to Christ. I can kneel at an altar as well as I can kneel for an [?]. Ain't no problem to kneel. Any man can kneel. I can be baptized as easy as I can take a shower. So it's not physical disability that keeps me from coming to Christ. It is not it at all. It is not mental inability that keeps me from coming to Christ. No, it's not.

Christ said, "You will not come to me that you might have life." It is not mental inability that keeps him from coming. I can study the Bible as well as I can study Mark Twain. I can read the Bible. Any man in Ashland can read the Bible as well as he can read William Shakespeare or as well as he can read a book of poetry. Pick up the Bible and read it. Nothing to it.

And he can find out words. He can read words like, "No man can come to me except my Father who sent me draw him." He can read that just like you can read it, Bob, just like I can and anybody else.

I can say prayers as well as I can curse. I can say, "Blessed Lord Jesus or I can say Jesus Christ." See?

So there is no mental inability. I can believe Jesus Christ died on a cross as well as I can believe Columbus discovered America. And people, mentally, all over this world give assent to the fact. The devil believes Jesus Christ died on the cross.

There is no problem with mental acceptance of facts. So it is not physical inability that keeps a man from coming to Christ. It is not mental inability that keeps a man from coming to Christ. Man's inability come to Christ savingly is not either in his body or in his mind, but in his will. That is where it is, his nature, nature. He will not come to Christ.

It doesn't say he can't come to Christ. It says he will not come to Christ. It doesn't say he can't call on the Lord, it says he won't call on the Lord. You will not. Through the fall of Adam and because of our fallen natures and our corrupted wills we have become so depraved and so debased and so corrupt that we love and enjoy everything that's contrary to God. That is what we love.

This is condemnation. Light has come into this world, but men loved darkness, darkness. That's what men love, darkness. They love darkness rather than light. The light came. They love darkness. They don't love light. They don't love light.

Listen to John five. Listen to our Lord tell about our condition by nature. This...what a solemn charge. And I am telling you the truth. I know it is offensive to natural minds because the natural mind is enmity against God. Men think, but they don't think on God. Yes, sir, they do. Men love, but they love themselves. They don't love God. And our Lord said in John 5:40, listen. "You will not come to me that you might have life. I receive not honor from men. I know you. You have not the love of God in you. You will not come to me and you have not the love of God in you." He said, "I am come in my Father's name and you receive me not. If another come in his own name we're so twisted and perverted and warped, him you will receive. How can you believe which receive honor one of another and you seek not, you will not come to me. You have not the love of God in you. You receive me not and you seek not the honor that comes from God only. Oh, don't think that I'll accuse you to the Father. There is one that accuseth you,

even Moses. That is, the writings, the Word in which you trust. You search the Scriptures," he says, "in them you think you have life. They are the which testify of me. I am not going to condemn you. The very words in which you trust are going to condemn you."

But he says, "If you believe not his writings how shall you believe my words?"

You see that sheep? There is a sheep. There is a sheep and you can walk over and pet that sheep and that sheep will let the shepherd pet him. The shepherd can walk right over to the sheep, call him by name and the sheep will stand still and the shepherd will pet the sheep on the head, run his hand down the back of the sheep. And that sheep will eat grass. He won't eat meat. He eats grass. And that shepherd, if he wanders off down the lane there and the shepherd says, "Queener, come here." And that sheep will come right to him.

Well, there is a wolf. Now he could be petted, but he won't. He won't let you pet him. Now he could be petted. There is nothing physically to keep me from petting that wolf. But he won't let me pet him. And that pet could eat grass, but he won't. It is not his nature. And that wolf hears the shepherd call. "Hey, wolf," and he won't come. He won't come, Charlie. His nature is not to come. He grits his teeth and he growls and he heads the other way. And I am telling you, "Man's inability is not in his body." His inability is not in his mind. His inability and his refusal to hear the Word, to hear the voice of the shepherd who says, "Come unto me. Come unto me and I will give you rest."

He growls.

What does a sheep do? "My sheep hear my voice and they come. They come."

It's not man's mental inability, it is his nature. His inability is in his nature and he must be born again. He must receive a new nature. Someone says, "But men can certainly be saved if they will."

Would you repeat that?

Men can certainly be saved if they will.

Well, that's not the question at all. Of course they can. Of course they can. That wolf can eat grass if he wills, but he won't. And that wolf could come if he will, but he won't. And that wolf could be petted and tamed if he would, John, but he won't. And something has got to be done to his will. Something has got to be done to his won't to change it to I will. And that is my trouble and your trouble.

The word is the same. God is the same. The problem is not with God, it is with me. The problem is in my will. It's in my nature. I will not bow to Christ.

Any man can be saved if he will. But who will? You want to tell me?

You want me to tell you who will?

Turn to Psalm 110. I'll tell you who will. In Psalm 110 it says here in Psalm 110 verse three, listen to it, it says in Psalm 110 verse three, "Thy people shall be willing." Thy people shall be willing, willing to bow down, willing to submit, willing to believe, willing to confess, willing to be conformed, willing. Thy people shall be willing. When? In the day of thy power, convicting power, converting power, regenerating power, quickening power, awakening power, Pentecostal power. When God comes down in the power of his Spirit, when God almighty is pleased to speak through his Word.

Oh, we read the Bible, quote the Bible, argue the Bible, but once in a while somebody hears the Word in the power of the Holy Ghost, once in a while.

We see the Scriptures written on sign boards. We hear it over radio, television. We hear people memorize it and quote it. One fellow calls himself the walking Bible.

Oh, but God said, "My Word will not return unto me void and that Word which is spoken, if it can be spoken in the power and unction of the Holy Spirit and men hear not just with these ears but the ears of the heart and they hear not with these mental concepts, but they hear with a spiritual understanding, they hear with an enlightened, illuminated heart and they hear with power and with the Holy Ghost and they will come in the day of thy power. They will come. They will come."

The will come in the beauty of holiness just like they was born from the womb of the morning. They will come. Yeah, they will because he says over here in Philippians chapter two. Listen to this, Philippians chapter two verse 13, because he says in Philippians 2:13, listen. Listen, "For it is God...for it is God which worketh in you...it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

Do you have the will to do his pleasure? It is God that worked it in you. Do you have the will? Do you have the ability? Can you come to Christ? He made you willing. Will you come to Christ? He gave you the strength.

How does God teach men? By his Spirit, through his Word. "Of his own will begat he us with the Word of truth."

Oh, my friend, do you see?

You say, "Yes, I see."

Then give God the glory.

Do you hear?

"Yes, I hear."

Then praise his name forever.

Will you come?

“Yes, yes, I’ll come. Yes, I’ll come. I’ll come to Christ.”

Then praise the Lord. He gave you the ability.

“No, I will not come. I will not come.”

Yonder amazing sight I see the incarnate Son of God dying on a cursed tree, shedding his own precious blood. Behold that purple torrent run down from his hands and his head, that crimson flood blots out the sun and his groans awake the dead. The trembling earth, the darkened sky proclaim the truth aloud and with the amazed Centurion I say, “This is the Son of God.

Do you see that? So great so vast a sacrifice may well my hope revive. If God’s own Son bleeds and dies then this sinner need never die. Oh, that those cords of love divine would draw me, Lord, to thee and let me say, “Thou hast my heart. It shall be thine, thine forever my heart shall be.”

I am coming.

There is nowhere else to go. There is no one else to whom we can turn except to Christ.

But I will tell you. He is a perfect Savior. He is a gracious Savior. He is a kind Savior. He is a loving Savior. He is a willing Savior. He is an able Savior because of who he is and what he did and where he is now.

I cast my lot with Christ. I say it over again after 34 years. I say it over again. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and his righteousness. I renew my vows, lay my heart again at the feet of Christ. I come to thee. I found in him all I need.

Let's sing number 340, 340.