

A Lord's Day Snippet!

Biblical And Southern Studies

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1. Approach, my soul, the mercy seat
Where Jesus answers pray'r;
There humbly fall before his feet,
For none can perish there.
2. My only plea, your promise true;
With this I venture nigh;
You beckon burdened souls to you,
And such, O Lord, am I.
3. Bowed down beneath a load of sin,
By Satan sorely pressed;
By war without and fears within,
I come to you for rest.
4. Thus be my shield and hiding place!
That sheltered near your side,
I may my fierce accuser face,
And say the Lamb has died.
5. Oh, wondrous love! To bleed and die,
To bear the cross and shame,
That guilty sinners, such as I,
Might plead your gracious name.
6. "Poor tempest-ravaged soul, be still,
My promised grace receive,"
'Tis Jesus speaks—I must, I will,
I can, I do believe.

John Newton (1725-1807)

THE GREATEST OF INVITATIONS

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Matthew 11:28

The Lord Jesus had just been speaking with His heavenly Father and giving Him thanks because of those things He has hidden to the wise and prudent but revealed to babes. He

says of that “Even so, Father.” Then He reflects upon the fact that no one knows Him but the Father, and no one knows the Father but Him and whoever “the Son will reveal Him.” Then the remarkable invitation is given. There are some questions related to our text here: What is the invitation? Who made the invitation? Who may receive the invitation? What is the promise of the invitation?

What is the invitation? “*Come* unto me,” said the incarnate Son of God. These are words from Him who came to seek and save that which was lost; who is the Light to those walking in darkness; who is the Life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins. So, this is a personal invitation from the only One who can actually help and keep! Will He turn anyone away who *comes* to Him? Never!

Who made the invitation? Jesus did, for He said, “Come *unto Me*.” Thus, the importance of this invitation is exponentially great. Why? Jesus had revealed, “And ye will not *come* to *me*, that ye might have life” (John 5:40), but Jesus also said, “All that the Father giveth *me* shall *come* to *me*; and him that *cometh* to *me* I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37). Even though men do not have a will to come to Him in their spiritual deadness He says to them, “*Come!*” He who invites also invigorates with life eternal. This is one of His favorite words, “*come*.” He welcomes those who *come*. Who will *come*? All those the Father gives Him *come*. What is the result of *coming*? All that the Father gives Him shall *come* and He keeps them and not one of them is lost (John 17:12).

Who may receive the invitation? “All ye that labour and are heavy laden.” Yes, these may come who see their need for it. Jesus is calling you burdened one to “come.” Literally, He is saying, “Come here to Me, with all your heavy burdens.” “The Spirit saith, Come; and the bride saith, Come; let him that is athirst come; Whoever will, let him come.”

What is the promise of the invitation? “I will give you rest,” said Jesus. Matthew Henry noted, “Jesus Christ will give assured rest to those weary souls, that by a lively faith come to him for it; *rest* from the terror of sin, in a well-grounded peace of conscience; *rest* from the power of sin, in a regular order of the soul, and its due government of itself; a *rest* in God, and a complacency of soul, in his love. Ps. 11:6; 11:7. This is that *rest which remains for the people of God* (Heb. 4:9), begun in grace, and perfected in glory.”

When you have found rest then take His yoke and learn of Him (v. 29). “First, we *rest* by faith in Jesus, and next we *rest* through obedience to Him. Rest from fear is followed by rest from the turbulence of inward passion, and the drudgery of self. We are not only to bear a yoke, but *His* yoke; and we are not only to submit to it when it is laid upon us, but we are to *take it upon us*. We are to be workers, and *take* His yoke; and at the same time we are to be scholars, and *learn* from Him as our Teacher. We are to learn *of* Christ and also to learn Christ. He is both teacher and lesson. His gentleness of heart fits Him to

teach, to be the illustration of His own teaching, and to work in us His great design. If we can become as He is, we shall rest as He does. We shall not only rest from the guilt of sin—this He gives us; but we shall rest in the peace of holiness, which we find through obedience to Him” [C. H. Spurgeon].

John Bunyan in *Pilgrim's Progress* described Christian and how he lost the burden of sin at Christ's cross. “Now I saw in my dream, that the highway up which Christian was to go, was fenced on either side with a wall, and that wall was called Salvation. Up this way, therefore, did burdened Christian run, but not without great difficulty, because of the load on his back.

He ran thus till he came at a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a Cross, and a little below, in the bottom, a sepulchre. So I saw in my dream, that just as Christian came up with the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more.

Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, He hath given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death. Then he stood still a while, to look and wonder, for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus ease him of his burden. He looked, therefore, and looked again, even till ... his head sent the waters down his cheeks. Now as he stood looking and weeping, behold, three shining ones came to him, and saluted him with, ‘Peace be to thee:’ so the first said to him, ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee;’ the second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him with change of raiment; the third also set a mark on his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he bid him look on as he ran, and that he should give it in at the celestial gate: so they went their way. The Christian gave three leaps for joy, and went on singing,

‘Thus far did I come laden with my sin,
Nor could aught ease the grief that I was in,
Till I came hither: What a place is this!
Must here be the beginning of my bliss?
Must here the burden fall from off my back?
Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?
Blest cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that there was put to shame for me!’”