

Come to Jesus

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[0 : 00] Let's share our prayer together. Heavenly Father, we humbly bow in your presence.! May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher,! and your great glory our supreme concern.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Lots of companies nowadays have mission statements. I'm sure you've noticed them. Some of those that caught my eye. Costa Coffee declare that their mission is to save the world from mediocre coffee.

Wow. The BBC tell us that their mission is to enrich people's lives with programs and services that inform, educate and entertain.

Some of the time, maybe. Médecins Sans Frontières, Medics Without Borders, to help people worldwide where the need is greatest, delivering emergency medical aid to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters or exclusion from healthcare.

[1 : 21] Well, let's pray for folks who have that as their mission. What a gift that is to the most needy and impoverished peoples in the world.

All strength to them and aid in achieving their mission. But to go back to the cup of coffee, they do seem a bit self-important, some of these mission statements.

God is a mission God. God is on mission. The purpose of the church is to serve the mission of God. God's mission is not characterized by self-importance, but by grace. God's mission will not be imposed upon anyone.

God's mission is achieved in and through Jesus. The gift of grace whom God gives to us and to all creation.

[2 : 30] Remember there used to be a program. I think it started on the radio, but it ended up on the TV. Name that tune. Remember name that tune.

I'll name that tune in three. Dun, dun, dun. Could be Beethoven's fifth. Who knows? I'll name God's mission in one word.

God's mission is entirely summed up, entirely directed towards us in Jesus, who is God's gift of grace to us.

Next Sunday is the first Sunday in Lent. Lent begins on Wednesday. Our annual focused following of Jesus on the way of the cross.

This then, for just now, is our final Sunday on mission with Matthew. But following Jesus on the way of the cross is also mission. Following Jesus on the way of the cross is also Jesus.

[3 : 37] It really is all about Jesus. Because it really is all about grace. So let's settle down here.

At the end of Matthew 11. And hear God's gracious word, which is Jesus. Spoken to us and over us and for us.

The content of God's mission is revealed to all creation. Through whom? Through Jesus.

At that time, Jesus declared, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. You have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children. For such was your gracious will.

God has always been at work in creation. God has always had a purpose to achieve in his work in creation. And what God seeks to achieve in everything he says, in everything he does, is to complete his mission of grace.

[4 : 47] For long ages, this was hidden. It was at best unclear. But in the coming of Jesus, God's mission and his purposes of grace are more clearly revealed than they ever were before the coming of Jesus.

These things, which were hidden but are now disclosed, are the words and deeds of God's mission in Jesus. In Jesus alone, the presence of God's kingdom is made known to us.

Jesus said, Jesus said, the kingdom of God is at hand. The first thing, we have a record of Jesus saying. And after that, every other thing Jesus did or said was making the presence of the kingdom clear.

Displaying God's grace and love to all of us. In Jesus, God's mission, God's presence, has come close even to us.

Jesus said, all things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son, except the Father, and no one knows the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

[6 : 12] It really is all about Jesus. The only reason we love the Bible is that it tells us about Jesus.

We are not Bible people. We are Jesus people. And because we are Jesus people, we read the Bible because there the Father makes the Son known.

Jesus is always the main thing. Nothing, no one at any time gets to take Jesus' place. Jesus has a unique relationship with the Father.

He is the Son, the eternally begotten One, the one-of-a-kind Son of the Father. He is well placed to perfectly make known the Father to us.

No one can do it better. Christ alone reveals the grace and the glory of God the Father to us.

[7 : 23] What gift of grace has God the Father given us in Christ Jesus the Son? More than we can imagine or deserve. With every breath, we desire to follow Jesus.

With every breath, we long to know him more, that Jesus might be everything to us. In Jesus, all the blessings of God's mission are made real and made known to us.

we receive all the benefits of Christ. We receive all the glory of God's mission through Jesus.

back at the burning bush, when Moses turned aside so that he could see why the bush was burning but not being consumed.

The voice of the Lord from the bush said to Moses, take off your shoes. The place where you're standing is holy ground. After all these years, I hope you know that I'm not at all keen to be adding to or taking away from the words of Holy Scripture.

[8 : 43] But there are one or two verses which we come to in Bible reading and by faith, I hear those words of the Lord from the bush spoken to us. Before you rush into these verses, take off your shoes.

The place where you're standing is holy ground. When you take your shoes off, you are without words declaring that you're sticking around for a while.

That you're intending to stay where you are. That you're not going to be getting up and walking out of doors and going somewhere else. You've taken off your shoes so that you can slow down, so that you can sit where you are.

And there are some verses where God says, you need to sit down here. Take off your shoes. The place where you're standing is holy ground.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart.

[10 : 02] And you will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Slow down and listen. We are not reading here reported speech, but the direct speech of Jesus.

Turns out this is the only record of the direct speech of Jesus where he says, come to me. If you want to benefit from the mission of God through Jesus, you need to come to Jesus.

You're not going to benefit from God's gift of grace if you turn your back on Jesus, if you walk away from Jesus, if you try to put anything else on the same level as Jesus.

Because Jesus needs to be above everything. the one to whom you come. And there is no other way to benefit from God's grace than to come to Jesus.

[11 : 18] If I could, I would go for you. But I can't. You have to come to Jesus yourself. There is no other way to come God's grace.

Only you can recognize in the mighty works of Jesus the presence of God for you. Only you can turn around and change your life and come to Jesus because he invites you.

Jesus invites you. His invitation is not a stick but a carrot. His invitation is not a threat but a promise. His invitation is peaceful and gracious. Hear the call of the kingdom. as you take your shoes off and sit before Jesus.

Hear him call you to come to him. Jesus uses four doing words to encourage you and all creation to come to him.

[12:28] Come to me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. A few weeks ago Andrew chose to share with us John Bunyan's hymn.

Perhaps you remember we sung it just recently and maybe you remember it from years ago. At the start of the pilgrim's progress Bunyan as though in a dream imagines Christian setting out on the journey to the presence of God.

Bunyan used the phrase eternal city. But Bunyan pictured Christian weighed down by a heavy load on his back and struggling on the way because of this burden.

And on his journey he came to a place where it was wide open and the pathway fell away and at the foot of the hill Christian saw a cross and as he saw the cross of Jesus his burden jumped from his back and rolled away down the hill.

Jesus says come to me and I will lift your burden up from you and at the cross you will have rest and peace.

[13:47] God's mission is to set you free from every burden under which you labor. The burden of making yourself right with God.

The burden of trying in your own strength to earn something from God which you can never do. The burden of running around making yourself weary trying to do everything for everyone else.

Jesus died to give you rest. The cross stands over all creation that you might come to Jesus and he will give you rest in him not just for a moment but forever.

Sit there with your shoes off come to Jesus and see what he will give you that rest you have been weary for.

Jesus said come to me take my yoke upon you. Doesn't immediately sound comforting but think again think again Jesus the craftsman has shaped a piece of wood perfectly to fit you which he will lay upon you.

[15:15] Jesus carries our load in a yoke that is perfectly fitted and shaped for him.

The deeds and words of Jesus his teaching about God your father about the coming of God's kingdom this is the shaped yoke that Jesus would place on your shoulders.

The way to come to Jesus is through submission and humility. You don't get to see which way to come.

Jesus gets to see. The yoke is a picture of our bending our knee our constraining ourselves to the way of Jesus for there's no other way to come.

The mission of God is fulfilled in your life and mind only through Jesus. We must limit ourselves there.

[16:23] A few weeks ago another hymn that we sang a faith cook's hymn based on Rutherford's words and the tune's called Rutherford the sands of time are sinking.

Samuel Rutherford was a minister in the 17th century in a wee village down in the borders Anworth over in Galloway and he had a bad habit in preaching which in those days the sermon would go for an hour and a half he had a bad habit of losing his place and wandering off he would say something and it would interest him and off he would go!

bring bring yourself to

God and fit yourself for the kingdom of heaven you need Jesus to teach you the gracious mission of God is to provide for you the teacher you need and you need to sit and listen to him entering a new way of life requires us to learn how we are to live that new way of life there is no possibility that we can come to Jesus and figure it out on our own thanks be to God Jesus is our teacher come to Jesus and learn from him here's the gold it's all gold but listen to this come to me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light now there are some good teachers and they are good teachers but they're very strict discipline is everything you boy stop looking out the window you boy pay attention maybe that was only me that heard those phrases from the teacher but you see here

Jesus is saying I am not a teacher who's going to stand at the blackboard and shout at you I am not a teacher who is going to write up things on the blackboard and expect you to copy them down!

[20:14] the way I will teach you is by doing it by living it by showing you what the life of grace lived in the presence of God under the blessing of God's mission looks like the entry into God's kingdom can only be found through humble living and that's what Jesus shows us the life of God's grace in our life is to become more and more like Jesus Jesus took our human flesh he shared our life with us in part so that looking at Jesus we might see what the life of God's kingdom is like that's

our goal that's what we aspire to is to live as Jesus lived what you will find when you come to Jesus is that everything he asks of you he makes possible Jesus will not burden you with more than you can bear come to Jesus the gentle and humble king and you will find in God's kingdom a relief from all ourselves striving take off your shoes the place where you're standing is holy ground you cannot come to Jesus if you're in a hurry be honest with yourself is there anything you have ever done in a rush that has worked out well for you you need to slow down to let Jesus the good shepherd be your pace setter you need to stop running so that you can hear the words of the gospel you need to make time actively make time to sit with your shoes off in the presence of Jesus and be blessed by him come to me come to Jesus and receive the relief from the frantic toil he will give you come to Jesus with your empty hands and receive the burden of only grace and mercy come to Jesus before you understand and because you don't understand so that he can teach you come to Jesus because he is all you need God's gracious mission reaches out to you in Jesus your saviour only then does God's gracious mission reach out through you to others come to Jesus be blessed by his mission to bless you come to Jesus and through you others will be blessed in God's mission to bless them let's pray together father we want to fall before you and have that experience of you lifting up our heads and we see only Jesus may Jesus be everything for us the goal towards which we praise the way in which we come the strength through which we come the joy and peace which we long for let it all be Jesus and only him be glorified among us we pray through Jesus Christ our saviour Amen