

Come with us

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[0 : 00] I want you to turn with me this morning to the chapter we're reading, Numbers chapter 10, and I want us to look at verse 29 and possibly also on to verses 33. In verse 29 what it says, And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, we are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you. Come thou with us, and we will do thee good, for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel. He said unto him, I will not go, but I will depart to mine own land and to my kindred. And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee, for as much as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, that thou mayest be to us instead of eyes. And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness the Lord shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee. Now in the lives of men and women, there are times when they're presented with solemn issues, which may affect their lives, if not their destiny. And that's brought into sharp focus at a time of a communion season, when we become even more conscious of the fact that we're on different journeys. Now don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying for a minute that all who sit at the Lord's table are the Lord's, or that all who sit and who are not at the Lord's table are not the Lord's. I had the privilege for many years of living beside an old lady who never made public profession. And yet I have absolutely no doubt that today she is in heaven. But what I am saying is, there comes to be, there is a fact that we are all on different journeys. In any congregation, there is what is called a mixed multitude. There are those who are the Lord's, and there are those who are not. And God alone knows that. He knows the thoughts and the hearts.

Of each and every one of us. Now normally in the evening, an evangelical service is given. But I want to look at this text today, as I believe it has a message to us, as we stand here in the first Lord's Day of a new year, the first Lord's Day of 2018. And when we look at this text, and when we look at this message, we have to say that a wrong decision, or no decision at all, may involve us in regret, in remorse, and in everlasting sorrow. And on the other hand, if we have a right response to the overtures of God in the gospel, it will bring to us peace and eternal happiness. Now in this chapter, and in this verse in particular, we read of a man who at the crossroads of destiny was asked by Moses to throw in his lot with the people of God. We see Moses in this verse speaking to this man called Hobab, his father-in-law, and telling him to come with him. And he was also given the promise that if he did so, he would truly share in their blessings and their inheritance. Because Moses says to him, I, God has said, he will give the land to us. Not he might give, he will give the land to us. Now we have reason to believe that although Hobab at first hesitated, and we see later on here, there was a hesitation, there was a hesitation, and he said he wouldn't go. Which was to the word which was spoken by Moses to him. He did join himself to the Israel of God. And he is today in heaven.

But I want to give these solemn words here, a personal application to each and every one of us, with the hope and the prayer, that all here may hear and obey this appeal. Now this, these verses, there are three important points. We see, first of all here, an urgent appeal and a loving invitation. In verse 10, 29 it says, Come thou with us. Come thou with us. Come thou with us. Come with us. Hobab was related to Moses by natural bonds. He was his father-in-law. But it's not in this way the words are spoken.

[5 : 41] And you know, the Lord's people, wherever they are, here or wherever, we have a great concern. Yes, for family. But it goes beyond that. We have a great concern for the many we see, and the many we meet, who are strangers to grace and to God. And we would love everyone to come.

If you look at the great example in Scripture of the Lord Jesus himself, we are told he wept over Jerusalem. He wept over the many souls in that city who would not listen to him and who would not come.

And you know, if we read through Scripture, Jesus' ministry was very much reaching out. Here, Moses is speaking to one person, to Hobab.

If we read the Bible, the Scriptures, and we read in them, we see Jesus. How often he went looking for the one. We see the parables. We see the lost coin, the lost sheep, the lost son.

All bringing out this one great thing. The importance of a human soul. You know, in January 1963, a Milford Haven thrall of the Boston Heron was wrecked off the island of Shiremer, at the very bottom of my uncle's croft.

[7 : 18] And one of the local fishing boats went out to try and effect a rescue. And they managed to get a small boat out, and they managed to save two of the crew.

Four of the crew were saved. Seven were sadly lost. And afterwards, when the media came round to ask questions, one of the questions that was asked of the skipper of that boat was, did he not in any way hesitate through going out on a southerly 412 storm to effect a rescue?

And before he could answer, his father, one of our elders, said, Son, if you knew the importance of a human soul, you wouldn't ask that question. And how true that is.

One single soul. The great Samuel Rutherford, a minister in the north of England, was much used by the Lord in a place called Unsworth.

Samuel Rutherford said at the end of his ministry, If one saved soul from Unsworth meet me at God's right hand, my heaven will be two heavens in Emmanuel's land.

[8 : 27] One soul. And that man was a man who was so richly blessed. The importance of one soul cannot be overemphasized.

Moses here is speaking to Hobart. One person. And he wants him to come with him. You know Moses himself, when we read the account of Moses, in the midst of all his afflictions, was a happy man.

Moses could have been brought up as the son of Pharaoh. But we're told he gave all that out to go and lead the people of God.

He had recompense, we're told in the Hebrews, to the reward. And Moses knew that man, we can carry nothing to eternity, but sin or God.

Moses knew the alternative to following the Lord was God's displeasure. And he saw that in the plagues. He saw that in the Red Sea.

[9 : 27] Now the blessed implication of these words we are given here is that the free offer of salvation and the invitation of the gospel have the sanctions of God's word.

The words, and I quoted this before, The Lord himself says, Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And one of the last words in the Bible is come.

So often we see these words given. The Lord says so often these words. Now that doesn't mean we can save ourselves. But there are three solemn facts which confront us in relation to the gospel. First of all, we are all accountable. We are all accountable to God. You know, by nature, people are gregarious.

We like being where other people are. We don't like doing things on our own. We tend to rather to be with people and to go with people. But you know, a solemn fact is that this is the last journey we all must make.

[10 : 37] The last appointment we all must keep. So we stand here at the beginning of a year. We don't know what the year holds for any of us. But there's one thing sure. We will one day have to keep this appointment.

We hear of people putting off appointments. But this is one which cannot happen. The Lord knocks on our door in various ways.

Even throughout a year which has gone by. We have been conscious of the Lord knocking. He speaks to us in illness. He speaks to us in death.

And we see and we are conscious. Even when we come to congregations. And it's years since we've been here before. We are conscious of numbers changing.

We are conscious of those we knew were gone. And there is this continual passage of time. And the Lord speaks to us in this way. And each way he's reminding us that this is our latter end.

[11 : 41] Each time he's reminding us that this is the way that we must all go. He's knocking on our door in different ways. And there is something we can do.

We can pray to God. We can cry for mercy. If as yet we are strangers to grace and to God. We can cry to him.

The cry of the drowning man might not risk you. But it might well bring something, someone to his aid. And God's people say amen to that. We can pray to God.

Pray to him to come into our lives. Pray to him to come and to be our God. You know the wind bloweth where it listeth. We're told that in scripture.

When Moses said come. The Holy Spirit accompanied that word to Hobab's heart. And he came. And when we say to people come.

[12 : 39] We do so in the hope. That the spirit who also says come. Would work in the hearer's heart. We don't know when something that is said to someone may be blessed.

We don't come here thinking we have anything wonderful to say. We are very conscious. Any of us who stand here. Of our human needs.

And frailties. And poverty. And even when we stand in pulpits. We are very conscious. How poor we are. In relation to many others who have stood here.

But you know. We don't know. When something that we say. May be blessed to someone. I remember many years ago in Scalpy. Alistair Smith our minister.

He was a man greatly blessed of God. And I remember going out one night. And he told us. And I was unconverted at the time. I was unconverted for years afterwards. But I remember him telling us that.

[13 : 40] That afternoon. He had decided to preach on this text. And I have never heard in the text. Preached on before or since. It is in the Old Testament. That the spiders have no hands.

And are in kings palaces. And I heard that text. And with the arrogance of unconverted youth. When I was going out. I said to the chap that was sitting beside me. Well imagine thinking that that was for anyone.

Imagine thinking that service was for anyone. And yet the next Wednesday. A lady still in her congregation. Was in church for the first time. That service had been blessed to her.

The Lord had spoken to her. And we don't know when we are sitting in church. When the Lord may say something to us. That might be blessed to us. I heard countless, countless sermons.

And God saved me. Through reading a gospel tract. Not any service I had heard. Just simply reading a gospel tract. And I was given it by someone.

[14 : 39] And I promised to read it. And I was only looking at it. Because I had promised to read it. And God spoke to me. And God changed my life. And I will always be grateful.

For the person that gave it to me. And for the fact that I read it. And I looked at it. So we don't know. Sometimes when communions come round.

We hear people saying. And you will hear people saying so often. Maybe you have even said it yourself. Well I am not good enough. But as another said. God didn't come to save little sinners.

Or good sinners. But great sinners. And bad sinners. Christ saved in the scripture. The poor publican. When he left. The Pharisee.

On his own. And you know. How solemn it is. When people say. And you will have heard this said too. And maybe you have said this. And people say this so often.

[15 : 36] Well I am as good as anyone else. I am as good as anyone who professes. But you know how terrible it is. How terrible it is. Divine contempt.

In relation to people who put the righteousness. Before God's. Our best before God's. Is our worst. And we should never ever ever substitute.

Our own good works. For the sportless. Christ's righteousness. Many of us. Thought. We had sins that couldn't be forgiven.

But the Lord said to us. Come. And we came. So we see this invitation. This invitation is given. By Moses. To hope up.

It's an urgent one. And for us. When we hear. The gospel invitation. There's an urgency about it. It's not next week. It's not next year.

[16 : 32] As you know. From entering this year. There are many who sat. In this position. At the beginning. Of last year. Who this year. Have been called into eternity. We don't know.

What the year holds for us. But God says to us. If we're as yet. Strangers. To grace and to God. He's saying to us today. Come. And to me.

Come. And follow me. Now. There's an urgency. To it all. And not only. When we look at this invitation. This invitation also.

Had a sure hope. And a great promise. Moses assured hope up. We are journeying to the place. That God will give us. He would do good. God had promised. A land flowing. With milk. And honey. Yes. Because of their disobedience. And unbelief. Only two saw it.

[17 : 30] When we. Joshua. And Caleb. Moses himself. Never saw it. He just saw the promised land. From the top of Pisgah. And he was already in heaven.

When he appeared. On the Mount of Transfiguration. Canaan. Was just. A type. Of another country. Which is heaven. And when Moses mentioned. The lower Canaan.

Here to Hobab. His eyes were fixed. On the one. The God. Who is invisible. And where he dwells. We're told in Hebrews. How Moses.

Endured. And sought. A heavenly country. You know. Moses. Was a pilgrim. And God's people. We're pilgrims.

And strangers. In earth. And this is. What Moses meant. When he said to Hobab. That he was journeying. If I was going to ask any of you. How you'll get home today.

[18 : 26] Well you've all got a set way. You can get home. If you get the end of the road. And you turn right. Instead of left. And you're supposed to turn the other way. It's not going to get you home. There's only one way.

And there's only. It's the same. With heaven. As I said in the children's address. Yes. We live in a day and an age. When we're told so often. There's lots of different ways.

There's only one way to heaven. And that's by. The blood shed. On Calvary's cross. And for Moses. It was the same. It began. With the slaying of the blood.

And it's the same. With ourselves. Another evidence. For Hobab. As Moses spoke to him here. Was. The great provision. How had.

So many people. Survived in the wilderness. How had so many people. Come thus far. Hobab might have wondered. How they had survived.

[19 : 23] They had survived. Because. Of the manna from heaven. And because. Of the stream from the rock. And you know there. Until people join with us.

And we see this with Hobab. Till people join with us. They know nothing. Of the spiritual fear. Now to enjoy this rest. And happiness. Which Moses had.

Hobab had to. Share. In the reflection. Moses wasn't promising to Hobab. That things were going to be. Easy. No.

There were many. Many. Many. Difficulties. Ahead. There were many afflictions. There were many things. They were in a. Hostile. Country.

In a hostile. Environment. And you know. When we. Follow Jesus. The afflictions. Which we face. Are not hostile. To our happiness.

[20 : 20] Or to our holiness. Very often. The greatest blessings. Come through the greatest trials. The greatest privileges here. Is partakers. Of Christ's suffering.

Now Moses. Did not. In any way. Conceal this. When he spoke to Hobab. Moses. And the people. Knew. The presence of God. And when we say this.

To people. To follow Jesus. Oh. It's not going to be easy. We'll have. In lives. Ups and downs. But. When God. Is on our side. We are.

Going to be. The victors. And Moses. To Hobab. Was saying the same thing. Come with us. Follow Jesus. And. God.

Will. Be. Your God. God. So. When we say. To people. To follow us. We will do thee good. We're not only. Moses wasn't only emphasizing.

[21 : 16] How wonderful was the company. Of God's people. But. You will be safer. And happier. In this company. We see in scripture.

People like David and Ruth. Who chose. The people of God. And they're now in heaven. And you know. Those of us. Who profess his name.

We're not perfect. If you go about. With magnifying glasses. You'll find. Flaws. In our lives. Paul himself said. He was the chief of sinners. But those of us.

Who follow the Lord. Have something. You'll never find. Elsewhere. A desire. For. The salvation. Of all around. And how happy.

We are. When we see people. Coming. To the Lord. So Moses here. Has given. This great promise. To Hobab. If you come with us.

[22 : 10] You will be partakers. Yes. Of our afflictions. But you'll also be. With us. And you will be. Partakers. Of our joys too. Now we see.

Hobab's. Immediate reaction. And it's not. Favorable. At first. Hobab's. Probably thinking. Am I going to leave. The comforts. Of my home. To go into the wilderness.

With Moses. With them. With the children of Israel. I'm leaving my own. Temporal. Comforts. Past afflictions. The children of Israel.

Have. Had. Are many. There may be. Trials ahead. We're going into a barren. And dreary land. But you know. Something happened. The second appeal.

Moved in. Because. When first of all. Hobab said. He wasn't going. If we look at the end. We see. That. Hobab. Moses said to him.

[23 : 08] You come with us. Because you'll be expert. In the wilderness. And we can use you. In Joshua. We're told. Of Hobab's name. And his descendants. So.

He did. Come. He did. Come. There. Moses saw in Hobab. Gifts. And talents. And you know. It's very sad. When we see people.

With gifts. And talents. Not used in God's services. And you might say. Well. There's not a lot. I can do. In God's services. But there is.

The old hymn says. There is a work for Jesus. That only you. Can do. There is something. You can do. You can show. And I'm sure.

Many of you have seen it. God's people. Showing. Examples. We can pray. When I was a young boy. There was an old lady. Who lived quite near me.

[24 : 02] And I used to do little jobs for her. And she. One day. She actually stopped. Coming to church. And one day. When I was doing a chore for her. She asked me. Would I do something for her?

Would I go to church? Twice. And would I write down. What was said? And would I bring it to her. On the Sabbath evening? Now that was.

As they say. To use modern parlance. A big ass. Because it meant. I had to go out twice. And I had to listen twice. But she was very good to me. And I said.

Yes. I would do that. So I went out. And I did that. And what I remember. Is one night. Going into that house. That old lady was praying. And it wasn't that she was praying.

She didn't hear me coming in. But she was praying for me. Now I'm sure. Many people prayed for me. But. This was the first time. I was aware of hearing.

[24 : 57] Someone actually doing it. And in the passage of time. I left home. And on the way to university. And the old lady died. And I came home for a funeral. And one of the things.

That struck me. As we lowered her into the ground. For the last time. Was the question. Who will pray for my Lord. Was so now. It was 16 years later.

Before I was converted. But that old lady's prayers. Were answered. And that old lady. Simply praying. She wasn't able to do. Very much else. But that prayer.

The prayers of God's people. Carry on praying. We don't know. When our prayers. Will be answered. And you know. There's something. We can all do.

For the Lord. There's a work for Jesus. That only you can do. Remember the analogy. We are given in the New Testament. Of the different parts of the body. Some parts we think of.

[25 : 54] As more important than others. But. Each part. Can. Has a vital. Role to play. Each part. Has. Something.

Something. Something. That it can do. And you know yourself. If something happens. And it doesn't. And it's not able to function. My thumb. I squashed it. When I was very young. Working under a car.

Put a pin in it. And it doesn't bend. Now that might seem. Very very very simple. Not bending. But. It's something that. Causes. Sometimes. Minor problems.

And. It's just something. Like that. We don't know. Every part of the body. Is important. So each one of us. Have something. We can do. In the church of God.

And if God is calling us today. We should answer him. Now finally. There's just three things. I want to say. Very quickly. First of all. It wasn't enough.

[26 : 48] For hope. To be related. By natural bonds. To Moses. That wasn't enough. And you know. Sometimes. We think. Because we know.

Those in the church. Because. Our parents. Grandparents. Were godly. That we'll be. All right ourselves. I thought that. For many years. Oh I'll be okay.
Because of my parents. No. No. No. We. It wasn't enough. To be related. In natural times. We had. Hobab had to.

Follow. The same as Moses. We have to follow. Jesus. We have. It's something personal. It's something. We have to do ourselves. It's something.
We can't. Leave. For someone else. To do. And something else. We notice here. Moses. Stopped.
[27 : 42] Moses asked Hobab. To come with him. Moses was. Moving on. We. Are all. Moving on. As I said.

I last stood here. In the. Time of the. Ministers. Of the late. Reverend. Angus. MacLeod. Some years ago. Since then. There have been. Many changes. Changes.
In personnel. Changes. In pastors. Many changes. We are all. Moving on. But one thing. Remains the same. And that's God. And you know.

There's a. Inscription. On a gravestone. In the north of England. A very solemn. Inscription. And it says this. Pause. My friend. As you pass by. As you are now.

So once was I. As I am now. So you will be. Prepare my friend. To follow me. And underneath it. Somebody inscribed. Roughly.

[28 : 37] Even more so. To follow you. Is not my intent. Till I find out. Which way you went. You know. We're all moving on. We're all given opportunities.

But. These opportunities. Are not opportunities. Which are going to last. Forever. We don't know. What's going to happen. We don't know.

What the future holds. We don't know. What's ahead of us. And a third point is. That Hobab here. Was given. A second chance.

Hobab said. First of all. I'm not going. But in the end. He did go. But there are. None of us knows. If we will ever be given. A second chance.

None of us knows this. No. I'm not saying this. To frighten anyone. I'm saying this. Just as a statement. A fact. Been over 40 years. Teaching. And in that time.

[29 : 35] I've seen 12. 12. Who are pupils. Taken into eternity. And I'm sure. If you had asked any of them. When they sat in class.

And they stood at the front. Do you think. You'll be gone. Before your teacher. Every one of them. Would have laughed. At the absurdity of it all. But that's not the way.

It worked out. None of us knows. When we will be given. Our last opportunity. We are here today. The gospel offer. Is given to us.

We see the words. Of Moses. Here to Hobab. Come with us. Follow me. Come. Now. There's an urgency.

To it all. Come now. Come with us. And you know. Hobab. Would never have regretted. Going with Moses. And if we.

[30 : 31] Go. With Jesus. We will never. Ever regret it. The Lord says to us. Come unto me. All ye that labour. And heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

It's a rest. Which the world cannot give. It's a rest. Which the world cannot take away. Jesus. Every time. We hear the gospel. He's passing by. And he's passing by.

Again today. And he's saying. To each. And every one of us. To follow him. There are many here. Who follow God. Who follow Jesus. And each one of them.

Will say. As I'll say myself. Their great regret is. They didn't do it. Earlier. Their great regret is. The years. Which they wasted. Which now.

They can never recall. But. We are given the chance. Today. To follow Jesus. And may each one of us. As we. Bow. Before God.

[31 : 26] Be resolved. To follow him. Say as another said. Lord. I believe. Help thou. Mine unbelief. Remember. The poor publican. All he said.

Was God. Be merciful. To me. A sinner. And the Lord. Was merciful to. And the Lord. Is promising. Us today. That if we call. On him. He will hear.

And may each. And every one of us. Know. The Lord. To be not. The saviour. Of someone else. But to be. Our personal saviour. And may we have.

As our Lord. And our God. And may we have him. As the one. Who will carry us. Through life. He'll never leave us. He'll never forsake us. He promises.

He'll take us one day. To our desired haven. And may that. Be the portion. Of each. And every one of us. As we gather. In his midst. May God bless.
[32 : 21] These few thoughts. In his word. Let us pray.