

# The Invitation To Come

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] our worship by singing to God's praise. This is on page 40 of the psalm book, Psalm 34. We're going to sing from verse 8 down to verse 14, the tune of St. Columba. And this psalm, in the verses that we're singing, it gives us this invitation that we're looking at today to come.

Verse 8 begins, come, taste and see, the Lord is good, who trusts in him is blessed. And verse 11 uses the same word. It says, come here, my children, gather round and listen to my word, and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord. We're going to sing from verse 8 to 14, and we stand to sing to God's praise.

The Lord is blessed. O fear the Lord, who sings with me, You will not be oppressed.

The Lord, who sings with me, The Lord, who sings with me, And I will forget fruit, But those who wait upon the Lord Will all my many new Come here, my children, gather round And listen to my word And I will let you understand How you may fear the Lord

Does anyone delight in life And long to see good days And keep your tongue from evil's feet Your lips from lying grace If I can turn from evil past And that is what is right Decide to know the way of peace I assume it with your mind

[ 3 : 3 1 ] We're going to come to God in prayer Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer Lord our gracious God We thank you for the beauty of this day That it is a day that you have made for us And help us to delight in it And to delight in not just the beauty of the sun shining upon us And the beauty of all that we see around us But the beauty of your word And the beauty of the message that it gives We thank you that it is a word that speaks to us all We thank you that it is a word that invites us to come And taste and see of the goodness of God It invites us as children To come and hear, to gather round and hear your word And we thank you for that delight that we have today And being able to do so And may you bless all that we do Here in the church And as the young ones go out to Cresce and Twin East Sunday School and Bible class We pray that you will be with us in all of these things

That you will guide us and help us In all that we do and all that we say And Lord bless us Bless us with your presence Bless us with your peace That peace that passes all understanding We pray to know it in our hearts And help us to know Lord That you speak to us through the Bible Through your word And may it be what directs us today In all our days As we ask all of these things Knowing how often we fall short How often we fail you in different ways But thankful for your good mercy towards us So bless us and be with us we pray And pardon our sins in Jesus name Amen A word to the young ones before you go out It was great to see so many of you Yesterday as we had our church day out First time in a long time That the sun has shone for so long I think I saw on the weather charts last night That Stornway had the most sunshine In the whole country So we really couldn't have picked a better day

To have our church day out And it was good to enjoy being together Enjoying time on the beach Enjoying time having games And I'm sure you've all got your different highlights Of the day Maybe it was enjoying the food Just enjoying being with friends Or enjoying taking part in the sports And I was so delighted to be on the winning team Of the tug of war It was just so good I mean I expected the men to win And they did Isn't that right?

Is that true? Yes, no No It was actually when I woke up In the middle of the night I had a dream that we won But we hadn't We were well beaten But I'm sure the ladies had a quad Tied to one end of the rope That was just pulling in that direction But it was a great day out And the tug of war reminds me Of what we're looking at in the Bible today And what we look in the Bible so often It's this idea of being pulled In different directions God is trying to bring us to himself He's inviting us to himself There's that pull towards him But so often there's other things That are pulling us away In a different direction There's so many things That will distract us from God And keep us not looking to God And yet he's still Every time we come and hear his word Every time we look to him He's pulling us He's calling us back to himself And so maybe we're in a bit of

A tug of war today Young and old alike We're being pulled In different directions But the Bible reminds us That when we know God When we trust him He has a hold on us A strong hold And he'll never let us go We'll never be on the losing side with him Because he keeps us safe And he keeps us secure So no matter what else Pulls us away In a different direction As we trust in him He has a hold on us That is truth The truth at the start of my talk Was the men didn't win But the truth with God Is that he has won the victory for us And that we are secure with him So as we go into that struggle That pulling in different direction Trust God And he will keep A hold Of you all And we're going to say

[ 8 : 04 ] The Lord's Prayer Together now So we'll say The Lord's Prayer Our Father Which art in heaven Hallowed be thy name Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth As it is in heaven Give us this day Our daily bread And forgive us our debts As we forgive our debtors And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from evil For thine is the kingdom The power and the glory forever Amen We're going to sing again To God's praise This time in Psalm 95 Page 357 of the Psalm books Psalm 95 We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 6 And during this singing Those going out to the Sunday school You can come out through this door To my left So we're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 6 Again there's this great invitation

In the Psalm Come O come Let us sing to the Lord Come Let us everyone A joyful noise Make to the rock Of our salvation The tune is done firmly And we're going to stand to sing To God's praise O come Come let us sing To the Lord Come let us Everyone A joyful noise Sing to the Lord All our salvation All our salvation Let us speak for His presence Come with praise and thankful voice Let us sing songs to Him with grace And make a joyful noise For God On God And make God And make Him Above all God See His Death softly Have thou in His hand The strength of ills is His Give Him the spacious sea beyond For He the sin did may That wide and also from His hands His form of thirst O come and let us worship Him Let us worship Him Let us fow them with hope And on our beach Before the Lord Our maker Let us fall We will turn together to read In God's Word We are going to read in the New Testament And in the Gospel of Luke Luke chapter 15 We are going to read from verse 11 Down to the end of this chapter Luke chapter 15 And at verse 11 You will find it around page 1054

It's a well-known parable That Jesus told The parable of the prodigal son So we are going to read from verse 11 And he said There was a man who had two sons And the younger of them said to his father Father, give me the share of property That is coming to me And he divided his property between them Not many days later The younger son gathered all he had And took a journey into a far country And there he squandered his property And reckless living And when he had spent everything A severe famine arose in that country And he began to be in need So he went and hired himself out To one of the citizens of that country Who sent him into his field to feed pigs And he was longing to be fed With the pods that the pigs ate And no one gave him anything But when he came to himself

[ 13 : 11 ] He said How many of my father's hired servants Have more than enough bread But I perish here with hunger I will arise and go to my father And will say to him Father, I have sinned against heaven And before you I am no longer worthy to be called your son Treat me as one of your hired servants And he arose and came to his father But while he was still a long way off His father saw him and felt compassion And ran and embraced him and kissed him And the son said to him Father, I have sinned against heaven And before you I am no longer worthy to be called your son But the father said to his servants Bring quickly the best robe And put it on him And put a ring on his hand And shoes on his feet And bring the fattened calf And kill it And let us eat and celebrate For this my son was dead

And is alive again He was lost and is found And they began to celebrate Now his older son was in the field And as he came and threw near in the house He heard music and dancing And he called one of the servants And asked what these things meant And he said to him Your brother has come home And your father has killed the fattened calf Because he has received him back safe and sound But he was angry and refused to go in His father came out and entreated him But he answered his father Look, these many years I have served you And never disobeyed your command Yet you never gave me a young goat That I might celebrate with my friends But when this son of yours came He who has devoured your property With prostitutes You killed the fattened calf for him And he said to him Son, you are always with me And all that is mine is yours

It was fitting to celebrate and be glad For this your brother was dead and is alive He was lost and is found Amen And may God bless that reading from his word Let's again just bow our heads in a word of prayer Let us pray Lord our gracious God As we continue to look to you in worship And look to you for your help And for your spirit to be with us As we read your word And as we come to open it up together We thank you that it is what is called the gospel The good news And that we live in a world that still has good news To be offered to all In the midst of all the bad and sad news That we so often hear We thank you that the word of God Is that good news That it speaks to us of such a gracious God Even as we have read of in this passage We thank you that it reminds us of ourselves In so many ways

How we can go wandering away from you How we can think that we have freedom away from you And yet oh Lord Help us to come to our senses Even as the prodigal son And to realise That you have all that we need And that you are all that we need And so may you help us to come to you today To come hearing your word To come tasting of your goodness To come and worship you With all our hearts And all that we are And we do thank you for all who are here today We thank you for seeing so many young ones Going out to the Sunday school And to the Bible class And we pray for them Lord That as they begin their classes today And as they have begun school In these last few weeks Lord we pray for your blessing Your protection over each one of them And all our homes and our families Lord we ask for you To be with us Lord In all our different needs You know them You know our very hearts You know all the The pools that are on it Lord

Pulled towards you And pulled in other different directions But we thank you for the strength that you have That you are mighty and powerful to save That you hold on to your people With an everlasting arm An arm that is full of power and might And so help us to put our trust in you And to know that you are with us That you are for us And we do pray Lord That you will guide us Even in these days ahead As we go into this week And you bless us In all that it entails Returning to our homes And our families Returning to our workplaces In this coming week Our places of study Whatever we do Lord We thank you that there is that promise That you go with us And so we pray that even your word As we hear it today And as we study it Would go with us too That it would be a word That resonates in our hearts A word that speaks to us A word that we are able to share with others To tell others what we have heard What we have seen of your goodness

[18:18] And we thank you that There is that assurance That even as we come to church today As we come back to church As we may be calling it That your church is a people That your church is a people That you are saving A kingdom that you are building up A church that nothing will conquer or defeat And so we pray Lord That your church Not just here and throughout our islands Or even our nation But to all ends of the earth To all corners of the world In which we live Might know your power even today That as your truth is proclaimed That it would be mighty to save So Lord hear our prayers Continue with us Lord Today and in all the days May you be our help And our strength As we ask all Pleading with you For forgiveness for all our sin That you might cleanse us And pardon us anew As we ask all in Jesus name And for his sake Amen We're going to sing again

Before we turn back To look at this passage together We're singing in Psalm 43 In the Sing Psalms Page 54 of the Psalm books Psalm 43 A psalm that reminds us Of how God's truth goes out And encourages our hearts Encourages our souls To know that we have a God Who is with us A God who is on our side Come vindicate me Oh my God Against this nation Plead my cause Deliver me from wicked foes And hypocrites Who break your laws And in verse 3 it says Oh send your light forth And your truth Let them direct me In your grace And bring me to your holy hill And to your sacred dwelling place We're going to sing The whole of this psalm The tune is Rockingham And we stand to sing Amen

Amen Amen Defeat me Oh my God Against this nation Plead my cause Deliver me From wicked foes And hypocrites Who break your laws To harm my stronghold And my God Why them have you Rejected me I must act all

While thou thou art in greed Untaunted by the enemy O send your light For thou art in greed Let them direct me In your grace And bring me to your holy hill Into your sacred dwelling place And to your sacred dwelling place And to God's altar I will call To God my joy And my delight And I will praise you With the heart O God you are O God you are My God of might Why are you Why are you down Why are you down So my soul Why are you so Disturbed in me Trust God For I will praise him yet My Savior My Savior And my God Is he For our time

[ 23 : 33 ] We're going to turn back And look at the passage We read in Luke chapter 15 And this parable Of the prodigal son Luke chapter 15 Now folks It's going to be on Verse 11 to 24 I just want to read A couple of verses So as we go into it Verse 17 Speaks of the son Who had gone away From the father And says But when he came to himself He said How many of my father's Hired servants Have more than enough bread But I perish here With hunger I will arise And go to my father And will say to him Father I have sinned Against heaven And before you I am no longer Worthy to be called Your son Treat me as one Of your hired servants And then it says And he arose And came to his father But while he was still A long way off His father saw him And felt compassion And ran And embraced him And kissed him Back to church Sunday

Is what we have called today Maybe you're here Because you got An invitation card That had these words on it Maybe you saw the banner Outside the church What is Back to church Sunday What does it mean And what's it All about Well It's more than just Coming To a building It's more than just Trying to get Someone off your case Maybe someone's been Asking you for a while To come back to church And you think Well I'll just Do it now And that'll be it Done with It's maybe something You think you already Know what it's going To be like Maybe you think You know what It's like in the past And it's just Just the same I wasn't listening then I'm not going to listen Now There's so many ways We can think about Coming back To church But whether you've Never been to church Whether you haven't Been to church For years Or even if you're Coming back today After being here Last week There's something

We all Have in common And it's that None of these Are the way That we are to come Back to church It's not just Coming back To see a building It's not just Coming back To please someone It's not just Coming back Out of habit It's more than that Coming back To church Even coming back To church Week by week If we're in that Routine In that habit It's to meet With someone It's to meet With someone Special And to hear A story That changes Lives And continues To change Lives Continues to change Even the Christian's Life Week by week Day by day It's a glorious It's a glorious Story About a glorious Saviour A Saviour Who is Jesus That's who we Come To meet With here That's the purpose Of coming Back To church

To realise That we have A loving God Who is the Father we see Described in this Parable of the Prodigal son A loving God Who has given Us his own Son Jesus Who has given A son Jesus That we might Know the joy Of salvation In him Now what was Your expectation Maybe coming To church Today What was your Thinking Coming to Church Today Maybe you're Thinking even With the sun Shining outside I could be Doing so many Other different Things today Maybe your Expectation was Just to come And to go Maybe your Expectation was To sit And just not Listen But even the Psalms that we Have been singing They remind us That we are to Come and sit And listen And hear And worship Worship the God Who is speaking To us And to come And to know Him as he Speaks to us Through his Word And Jesus

We find in The gospels Whether it's Matthew, Mark, Luke Or John As you look Through them You find Jesus Who was A great Storyteller He often Used stories Or parables As they're Called To speak To the crowds Who had Gathered round To speak To them About their Lives And their Circumstances And what Was going On But also To speak To them In a Special way That reminded Them of Their need Of God And that's What we see In this Parable We think Of storytelling Maybe you've Known people Who would Tell stories Maybe you know People even Today who Tell stories But storytelling In many ways Is a dying Art Now that we Have so many Other forms Of communication Is often Through a Screen A one Way Communication And we're Just listening But it's So much Better to Be in the Company Of someone Who is Telling A story And here As the People were Gathered Around Jesus

[ 28 : 35 ] They were Here listening To this Man who Was just An incredible Man They were Astonished At him So often And what He was Saying And what He was Doing And they Were hearing Jesus The son Of God Speaking To them And today It is the Same For us We meet With this Great Storyteller We meet With Jesus Jesus Who speaks To us And speaks To us Here today Through this Parable Of the Prodigal Son But what's This story About Maybe you've Heard the Story before Maybe you've Grown up Hearing this Story And you've Heard it Maybe many Times The parable Of the Prodigal Son It's a Well known Story That Jesus Told But what's It about Your Immediate Reaction Maybe It's about This young Son Who just Wanted to Live life To have Freedom To get Away From Everything Maybe you Think it's About the Older Brother The one Who When this Young son Came back He was Jealous He was Angry

He didn't Wanted to He squandered His Inheritance He treated Them Unfairly Unjustly And he Was Just Not Wanting Anything To do With Them Is That What The Story Is About Well Neither Of These Are The Main Character See The Main Character In This Story As Jesus Is Telling It Is The Father And The Father's Response To His Son We're going to look at his response to the younger son today.

And in this we see the great invitation of the gospel. That's the title of our sermon this morning, the invitation to come. To come.

We see this father who is already looking for his son as he comes to return to him in verse 20. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran to him and embraced him and kissed him.

It's like Jesus is telling the crowd. He's telling ourselves, this is who we need. This is the father that you are to come to. To come and know the warmth of this welcome.

[ 30 : 48 ] And to see the glory and the power that is in Jesus himself. The one who is, as the Bible describes, the way to the father. Come.

Come is what the Bible so often says to us. Come. Come. No matter what our situation. No matter what our circumstances. The text on the invitation card was, Come, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Wonderful invitation. Come. Come. When you think of the word come itself, if you take each letter of that word, you could put it like this. Come, because Christ offers me everything.

Christ offers me everything. And that's what we see with this young son who goes away from his father, but who comes home, as it were.

So we're going to see three things in this parable for ourselves today. Three things that we can relate to, I'm sure, ourselves in many ways. We can relate to this younger brother.

[ 32 : 03 ] And the first thing I want to see is a recognition. A recognition. When you read of this young brother, do you see yourself, the young son, do you see yourself in him?

I'm sure many of us can look at this young son and think, that's me. That's maybe me just now, or that's been me in the past. You recognize the kind of situation he's in.

You recognize the kind of attitude that he has. He's just, in his life, he wants to get away and have freedom. He wants to enjoy his life, but everything seems to be just restricting him.

And he's like so many, so many since Jesus told this parable down through all the generations. Right to this very day, there's so many who can relate to this young son.

Men and women, boys and girls, down through all the generations. This kind of attitude, this kind of outlook on life is so often a stage that we come to ourselves.

[ 33 : 06 ] A position we find ourselves in. And what is it that we see? Well, it's like Jesus is describing so many that are brought up, as it were, around church circles.

Like many of us today, we may have even brought up either going to church or knowing about church in a Christian community where we see so many different churches.

And it can leave us asking so many questions. It can even leave us looking around and think, what's the point in it? Oh, I just want to get away from this. It just seems to stifle our lives.

It seems to just tell us, you can't do this, you can't do that. It's so often the way we think of the community that we live. We've been there. I've been there.

And we start speaking to ourselves just like this younger son and saying, I want my freedom. I want to get away from all of this. And you see it in this young son.

[ 34 : 13 ] He said in verse 12, Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me. Give me my share. Give me my inheritance. Give this to me so that I may go away and live my life, enjoy my life.

He wants to be his own boss. He wants to do his own thing. He wants to live life the way he sees fit himself. It's like that cry in Braveheart that Mel Gibson so often puts out, if you've watched the film.

The cry, freedom. That's what this young son wants. He wants his freedom. He thinks he recognizes his need in life.

He thinks he recognizes how he wants to live his life. He wants to get away from all of this. He wants to be free. But you realize the seriousness of his request when you recognize in verse 12 what that actually means.

When he says, Father, give me the share of the property that is coming to me. It should only come when the father dies. And he's basically almost saying to his father, I wish you were gone.

[ 35 : 26 ] I wish you would just let me have my freedom and live my life. And can we not relate to that, recognize that perhaps in ourselves today or in our past?

This recognition that all we want is to do things in our own way and on our own terms. We're almost saying to God, that's what the parable is telling us, God, we don't want you.

We want nothing to do with you. I just want to get away from you and have my freedom, have my life. This is what he thinks that he needs.

And so he goes away. Goes away to enjoy himself, or so he thinks. And it goes on to outline his life. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had, took a journey into the far country, and there squandered his property and reckless living.

This is the freedom that he was looking for. This is what he was wanting to enjoy. This is what he thought he recognized life to be. Living life to the full.

[ 36 : 45 ] Enjoying himself. Having his liberty. And yet it's described as reckless living. Reckless living. And that's what it is.

Because without God, our lives are in danger of ruin. The parable is called the parable of the prodigal son because prodigal means spending our resources just lavishly and freely but recklessly. It's about an extravagance. And that's the way he wants to live his life. Is that you today? Is that the way you want to live your life?

Is that the way you are living your life? Just give me my freedom from God. Give me my freedom from this place. These people. Let me just get away from it all. Maybe you've been running away like this.

Looking for answers in many different places. Hoping to come to the point where you're able to say, Now I'm free. Running away so often seems like the answer.

[ 37 : 54 ] Running away is where we think we recognize the answer to all our problems. But it's not. And the son soon recognizes the emptiness of it all.

He soon recognizes just how far away he has gone to the extent that when a severe famine comes, he ends up living with pigs.

Just wanting to eat some of their food. His life just comes to a low ebb. In his freedom, he's not free. He doesn't have what he expected. All that he thought he would recognize as good for him and good for his life, good for his freedom, it's nothing.

It's empty. And do you recognize that in your own life today? Running from God just leaves you empty.

[ 39 : 00 ] You can imagine the crowd who are hearing this story. They're hearing Jesus telling this, and they're shocked by it.

The behavior of this son. And they would be thinking, We're going to hear something here about what Jesus will do to those who turn their back on him. How he's going to punish them.

How he's going to be hard upon them. That they're going to get what's coming to them. This son, they're probably waiting just for him to come back, and then they're going to see how he's going to be treated.

Well, it's not what they expect. Perhaps today, you're coming back to church. You're thinking, you know what kind of response you would get.

You think you're maybe going to be judged or looked down on. You don't deserve anything. Anything. And yet we see the response of this young son.

[ 40 : 00 ] And the response of the father. And how different they might be to our expectations. How different they were to the expectations of the crowd that was looking on.

Because when you look at the response, which is the second thing we see here. We see first the response of the son. It says in verse 17, When he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger.

The life of freedom and joy that he was wanting to have it hadn't lasted long. It wasn't what he anticipated. It wasn't what he expected. He had spent all his money on reckless living.

And then this famine arrived in the country. And he had nothing. He was left empty handed. I'm sure many of his friends were turning his back on him.

Once the money was gone. Once all the fun was gone. Once the trials came. They were gone. And he's left by himself. And the crowd watching Jesus telling this story.

[ 41 : 10 ] They're thinking, Here comes the crux. Here comes when we see what's going to happen to him. The punchline is coming. But it's not what they expected.

The son says, I will rise and go to my father. And we'll say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. So he has this response. He almost knows where he needs to go. But his expectation is so low now that he's only going to be just like a servant in his father's house. He doesn't deserve anything. But it says this, He came to himself.

And it's a wonderful phrase that. Because it reminds us all that no matter how far away from God we've tried to run, that there is always a point where we can come to our senses, come to ourselves, and think, Is there not better?

Is there not hope in this world for me? Is there not something I can look forward to, something I can enjoy? The course that starts this week and Thursday evening, it's about hope explored.

[ 42 : 25 ] It's about looking into this in more detail and thinking, There is. There is more that we can enjoy in this life. There is more to life than just finding my freedom myself.

It's about finding our freedom in Christ. And this is the beginning of this son coming to his senses, coming to realize, I have done wrong against God.

I have done wrong against my father, as he describes here. We have done wrong against God, but that we can still come to him. That's the invitation of the gospel.

That's the invitation of the word of God. It's for all to hear. Every one of us to come. To come, whether it's for the first time, for the hundredth time, no matter how often we've already come back to church, it's about coming back to our Savior, coming back to Jesus, day after day, week after week, and keeping close to him, because he realizes there is better.

When we go away from God, when we do as the son did initially, when he asked for his inheritance, run away from God, what was he doing? Was he stopping worshipping?

[ 43 : 45 ] He wasn't. When we go away from God, it doesn't mean we worship nothing. We worship something else in the place of God. He was worshipping the money, his inheritance.

He was worshipping his freedom, his lifestyle. All of these things were his God. But these gods left him empty. There's a song that's sung.

It's called, I'm Coming Back to the Heart of Worship. And it says this, it's all about you. It's all about you, Jesus. I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made, when it's all about you, it's all about you, Jesus. We end up worshipping the idols of this world, the false hopes of this world, when we run away from God. But he invites us to come back.

He invites us to come to himself. Now, this young son, he'd forgotten many things, but he hadn't forgotten his home.

[ 44 : 54 ] He hadn't forgotten his home or his father. In verse 18, I will rise and go to my father and will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

He hadn't forgotten that there was a place for him to go. And maybe you had forgotten that there was a church to come to.

Maybe you had forgotten that there was a place you could come. Maybe you thought it was a place you wouldn't be welcome. But everyone is welcome. Everyone is invited to come.

To come because here we see that we need this father ourselves. All of us. Each one of us. We need God. And so his answer was, I'll go home.

I'll go home. How many of us have longed to get away from home? In our young days, we've longed to get away and just enjoy life, live life.

[ 46 : 06 ] And it wasn't what we expected. But the wonder of God's grace is that it so often speaks to us and reminds us that there is a place and that the father hasn't forgotten about us.

You see, the father here, his response in verse 20, while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

What he didn't expect, he got and got it in abundance. It's an amazing picture there of just the grace and the love of God.

Ronrig sang a song, it's a Gaelic song, Chile Migachi. I'll return home. And it says in the line as well, chachadil mi, gynchail mi, gynmog rach.

I will not sleep until I return to my love. And that's the way we should be with God.

[ 47 : 21 ] Return home. Even if it means sleepless nights, unrest, because God so often stirs up an unrest in us like he did in this young son.

He wasn't resting. He wasn't happy. He wasn't enjoying life until he came to his senses and returned home. Even to be a servant, that he says.

It's a time to come home. Not just back to church in the sense of being in a seat or being part of the worship service sitting in or tuning in online, but coming home to Jesus.

to come because Christ offers me everything. There is a response of the son and the response of the father.

The third and final thing we see here is the rejoicing. The rejoicing. The expectation of returning home for the son was that he would receive nothing.

[ 48 : 37 ] just wanted to be a servant. Just wanted to have a little bit of food. And he comes to the father in verse 21.

He says, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. And that's the way we can look at ourselves.

I'm not worthy. I'm not worthy of any of this love of God. I'm not worthy because of the way I've lived my life, that we have gone away from God, that we have shunned him and just turned my back on him.

And you can imagine again the crowd here. The expectation of the crowd would have been that this young man, he was going to be given the punishment that he deserves. The father will sort him out. The father will make him, pay him back every last penny that he owes. And we feel this burden, this weight. How can I possibly come?

[ 49 : 41 ] How can I repay a Lord who I've shunned and turned my back on? And yet we are reminded it was not about us paying the price.

When you look at the gospel, the good news and the invitation that it gives to us to come, it's come to Christ. Christ who offers me everything.

Christ who has done everything for me. Christ who went to the cross to pay for my sins. Christ who has risen, who has ascended, who is coming again.

It's not about what we do, it's about what he has done for us. We have to come acknowledging our sin against him. But not come with our own expectations of what we need to do.

Perhaps your expectation coming here is very little. You're thinking just lowly of yourself, undeserving of any of this.

[ 50 : 51 ] Maybe you're even saying, I don't want any of it. But the amazing thing about the gospel is it's an offer. It's an offer to us all to come.

And when we see the love of God here, what does the Father give to the Son? The last thing the crowds would have expected to hear, the best robe, a signet ring, give him shoes, go and kill the fattened calf.

All of the best, all of the goodness and love of God is seen in this. The kindness, the mercy, the grace is overwhelming.

It breaks us to think how undeserving we are and how much God wants to give and has given. The Son here realizes he doesn't deserve it.

But nonetheless, he gets it. And that's grace. The grace of God. He has paid the price.

[ 52 : 13 ] All our debts all our sins, all our forgetfulness of God. Jesus has paid the price.

And he says, come. Christ offers me everything. There was a father called Patrick Henry and he knew his life was coming to an end and he was sorting out his will.

he had a family and his family were to receive all that he had. He was quite a rich man. And he said this, I have now disposed of all my property to my family.

He arranged it all so what they were to get. But then he said, there is one more thing I wish I could give them. And that is faith in Jesus Christ.

if they had that and I had not given them a single penny, he said, they would have been rich. But if they had not that and I had given them all the world, they would be poor indeed.

[ 53 : 27 ] This young son, just like ourselves, he thought his riches was found in living life to the fool, but living it recklessly without God.

And he ended up poor. But in coming back to the father and in receiving his mercy, he ended up rich.

There's a time to come to your senses. There's a time to come home and to see the father you thought, he won't welcome me, but to realize he longs for you.

He's looking for you. Even as a father here was looking for his son, he saw him a long way off and ran towards him. But the Lord is waiting for you to come.

The invitation is there. Come, Christ offers me everything. Not just come back to church today and that's it.

[ 54 : 41 ] You can go away and not come back again. But to come today, not to a building, but to a person who is Jesus Christ.

And to come to him tomorrow and every day to entrust your whole life and your being to him. For he loves you and longs for you to come home.

Come. Come today. Come tomorrow. Come in the week ahead. Come to him for all eternity and know that love of Christ that wants what is best for you.

Come, because Christ offers me everything. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we thank you that you are one who will never turn us away from yourself, but that you are even today looking out for us, that you are longing for us to come home and help us, Lord, to know that in you we have one who will give us a warm welcome, who will receive us gladly, that even as the Father said in this passage, this my son who was lost, he is found.

We pray, Lord, to know that rejoicing even today in our own hearts, that we would come from being a people who are lost and running away from God to being a people who are trusting, who are receiving that welcome home and knowing the love of God and rejoicing in your goodness to us through Jesus Christ.

[ 56 : 22 ] So hear our prayers and continue with us. We ask the forgiveness of our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 100 in the Scottish Psalter version, page 362, the first version of the Psalm, Psalm 100.

Page 362, we'll sing the whole of this Psalm, a Psalm that just reminds us of giving praise to God and coming into his presence and going on in his strength.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, and serve with mirth his praise forth tell, come ye before him and rejoice.

The tune is Old 100th and we'll stand to sing the whole of this Psalm. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice, and serve with marvelous praise for tell, come ye before him and rejoice.

all that the Lord is God did deed, without doubt it he did us say, we are his not love he in not bad is weary to take o'er into and his ire to earth fors lee is unirtland Proach with joy his courts and two.

[ 58 : 55 ] Praise God and bless his name always. For it is simply so to do.

For why the Lord our God is good, his mercy is forever sure, his truth at all times firmly stood, and shall form his true age in truth.

After the benediction I'll go to the main door. We'll just close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forever. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you.