

# The Gospel Ministry of Jesus Christ

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] Turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 11. First Gospel of the New Testament, Matthew 11.

I'll begin reading at verse 20 to the end of the chapter. Matthew 11, verse 20.

This is God's Word. Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies?

[ 1 : 1 6 ] No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day.

But I tell you, that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you. At that time, Jesus said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children.

Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure. All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. Brother Bob, preach the word. That is our text for this morning, and I want to thank you for having Kathy and me to be with you and renew our fellowship, our love, I mean our very sincere love for you as a church, and thanksgiving to God for your kindness through us over so many years.

[ 3 : 1 1 ] Would you look there at that text in Matthew 11? Amen. I'd like to speak to you this morning, a presentation that maybe you're not a Christian.

I'd like to present to you the words of Jesus Christ in hopes that you would listen carefully and that you would consider the condition of your soul, consider His words, and your standing before Him, before God, a personal, living, real God that made the sun rise this morning and gives you your breath and blood to move and mind to think and holds your very life and eternal soul in His hands.

And then this evening, I'd like to address the church from a passage that my whole goal is to encourage you and speak to you as a church family. And I hope that you might truly be more encouraged after today than you were when we began.

Here in this text, Jesus is preaching the gospel to a generation that has no interest in the gospel. Now, I'd like to use three points.

That's what preachers do, right? Three points. I don't have a poem, so I apologize for that. But three points, and the first point is this. As we look at verses 20 to 24, we're going to consider the lostness of man.

[ 4 : 53 ] And then 25 to 27, we'll look at the sovereignty of grace. And then verses 28 to 30, we'll look at the free offer, the loving mercy, and invitation of Jesus Christ to anybody and everybody to come unto Him.

So the first point, verses 20 to 24, the lostness of man. And my first point of four under that heading is this. Men who do not repent go to hell.

We see that in verse 23, that if you do not repent, you will be brought down to Hades.

A number of translations have Hades. And as was read, I think, Stan, yours was to the depths. But he's saying to Capernaum, if you don't repent, you'll be brought down to hell.

There is a real hell. An everlasting furnace where men and women and children suffer the punishment of God due to their sins.

[ 6 : 10 ] Suffering the judgment of God endlessly and consciously. Hell is a creation of an infinitely just God.

A God who will not clear the guilty. Who will not overlook sin. Hell is a place where the justice of God is deliberately measured out.

It is a place of everlasting burnings. It is a place where the fire is never quenched. It is a place where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness.

In a place where Jude says it is so dark, it is the blackness of darkness forever. There's been a lot of attempts to try to explain away the reality of hell.

Obviously, folks do not want to hear about such things. And they've looked for credible options to think about the problem of evil in this world.

[ 7 : 25 ] How is there any kind of justice and what will be done with evil? There's been the attempt to imagine reincarnation or purgatory where there's some suffering to pay for evil and then hopefully be released.

And there's the whole attempt of annihilation that once you die, that's it. You're burned up. It's gone. No more consciousness. It's, you're done away with. But that's not what Jesus talked about.

In fact, the word hell is used 24 times in the New Testament. Jesus used the word hell 22 of the 24 times.

And it's a startling realization that if you understand what Jesus is saying about hell and you embrace that, it is startling. to consider that people are in hell right now suffering without any hope of escape.

There's no satisfying the penalty of sin in such a way that they may hope someday to get out. That's not what Jesus taught.

[ 8 : 53 ] This place of torment stands in contrast to heaven and it will last as long as heaven. It's not my idea so I humbly request don't shoot the messenger.

It is God's idea and it is Jesus' declaration of what is true and real and happening even as we speak.

It flies in the face of human thought and reasoning. And Jesus says whatever you've got to do to avoid going to hell you want to do it. If your eye is offending you causing you to be enticed and seduced after the things of this world and it's occupying your mind's and heart's desires in such a way that you have no time to deal with your soul and the things that Jesus has proclaimed you'd be better to pluck out that eye and go to heaven with one eye maimed than to go to hell with a whole body.

If your hand is offending you and causing you to stumble and you're grasping for this world and grasping for notoriety and accomplishment and pleasure and authority if you're grasping in such a way that it's not you can't be right with God you'd be better to cut off that hand and go to heaven maimed than to go to hell with a whole body.

Whatever you've got to do to avoid hell you want to do it. And if you do not repent Jesus says you will perish you will go there. you may be married to the godliest woman that's walked on the face of this earth or you may have grown up with godly parents but if you die and not have a saving relationship with the living God when you die you will go to hell forever.

[ 11 : 07 ] the second point I see in this text of 20 to 24 is this it's very possible to assume that all is well with your soul when in fact it's not.

You may assume you're okay and I work and labor among a people there in West Atlanta all of which believe God's got their back and they're okay.

but the question in verse 23 to Capernaum is this Capernaum you're exalted to heaven you'll be brought down to hell Capernaum you don't think you don't assume that you're going to heaven do you?

No you're not going to go to heaven you may think you are you may assume you're okay with God will you be exalted to the skies?

They were boasting that they would be going to heaven saying I'm basically a good person I've done more good in my life than bad my wife thinks I'm a good man but Jesus says think about it Capernaum you don't really expect to be exalted to heaven do you?

[ 12 : 36 ] No matter how good you may think you are the only way to approach God is if your sins are forgiven and if you have been robed in the perfect righteousness of his son Jesus Christ now they were deceived they thought they were safe after all they had had all this preaching going on within their cities they had books of miracles done they were so privileged into Capernaum alone the nobleman's son was healed the demoniac of the synagogue was delivered Peter's mother-in-law was healed the lame man carried on by the four Jairus' daughter the woman with the issue of blood two blind men the dumb demoniac the centurion servants all within these few cities there were more miracles done by Jesus Christ there than had been done in all the rest of his pilgrimages put together they had all these privileges and they thought they were safe in this nation we live in you hear often about

God bless America and have a lot of folks that like to sing those anthems and sing amazing grace and just kind of assume that they're okay because they are in Christian America convince themselves they're safe what about you are you like so many and these of Capernaum or Bethsaida who assume that all is well with their soul when in fact it's not do you feel safe before God what would be the ground of your confidence how do you know that you are safe before God how do you know if you're ready for your last day your last hour your last breath how do you know is it because you've gone to church some is it because you pray occasionally is it because you pride yourself on being good being a giving person but will you arrive at the judgment of God and hear what so many will hear those devastating words like in verse 21 woe to you

Chorazin woe to you Bethsaida Capernaum you'll hear the woe notice if you would turn back to Matthew 7 Matthew chapter 7 and here's a passage that really God used in my wife Kathy's life to make her take a second long look at the condition of her soul the words of Jesus Christ in Matthew 7 21 he said not everyone who says to me Lord Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven but he who does the will of my father in heaven just because you're calling upon God at different times does not mean you are right with God verse 22 Jesus says many will say to me in that day Lord Lord have we not prophesied have we not preached and taught the Bible in your name have we not cast out demons in your name and done many wonderful works or wonders in your name then Jesus says and then

I will declare to them I never knew you depart from me you who practice lawlessness and depart from me means that you're headed for an eternity of destruction being cast out of the presence of Jesus Christ and I guess we really should ask the question is that going to be you assuming all is well with your soul when in fact it's not number three of this first section is where there's the rejection of greater light there is the greater punishment Capernaum Bethsaida had the very son of God living among them preaching to them demonstrating these incredible miracles and power right before their very eyes appealing to them in the most reasonable and the purest arguments the best preaching that could possibly be done on the face of the earth and yet they rejected him they would not repent

Tyre and Sidon notice verse 21 of our text in Matthew 11 21 Tyre and Sidon these are Gentile cities very wicked given to Baal worship idolaters denounced by the prophets you can read the Old Testament Joel Amos Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel they all condemn these cities for their idolatry and their immorality and verse 23 of our text he's speaking about Sodom even Sodom and we all know what Sodom is popular for even today Sodomites reflect the depraved and corrupt nature of the city called Sodom and Jesus is saying to Bethsaida and Capernaum and to Chorazin when I come with my judgment and when you stand before me in your final day it is going to go easier on a city like

[ 18 : 42 ] Sodom than upon your soul because you had greater light you had all this preaching you had all this demonstration of the grace of God and you rejected it Jesus is saying the more offers of grace you put off the greater will be the weight of your condemnation refusing great light is worse than practicing great immorality so there are ways in which living in Bremen Indiana and having a more conservative culture and opportunities to hear the gospel that it will go worse for you if you reject Christ than if you would be living in San Francisco California among those who are godless and having no interest whatsoever in anything closely connected to the Christian faith young people growing up and the amazing privilege of a

Christian home do you realize how severe your punishment will be you've had parents who have loved you and prayed with you sought to have family worship and taught you the Bible and these memory verses they've appealed to you to walk with God you've had pastors that have poured out their hearts teaching you the Bible and calling you to Christ you've had Sunday school teachers who have labored and worked with the Bible and cared about your soul you've had youth group leaders you might say but I'm not a sexual pervert or a murderer no but have you been born again are you putting off the seeking of Christ and the giving of your soul to Christ as your king and unless you're born again doesn't matter how wonderful and godly your home doesn't matter all the appeals and teachings and care that you've received to press you onto

Christ in fact the more the worse it will be with you unless you're born again and number four miracles are not sufficient to change men's minds men say if I could only see a miracle I would believe why didn't these Jews in these cities where Jesus lived and loved them and ministered why would they not repent when they saw the dead being raised and the blind given their sight why did they not repent they had the very son of God living in their presence preaching lots of miracles surely they would listen no they didn't you say what would it take surely if they could just find Noah's ark if they could just prove that that was true if they could go up to Mount Ararat and find that gopher wood surely people would believe the Bible and get serious about their souls and

Jesus said of the hardness and blindness of people's hearts he said even if one came out of the dead and walked out of hell itself with the stench of hell's flames upon them still you won't believe unless you will believe the preaching of Moses and of pastor John Heaney and of your parents you won't believe even if you saw the greatest miracle that's ever happened the second section we're looking at is in verses 25 to 27 as we continue on with the words of Jesus Christ and he's saying here in verse 25 that amid all this unbelief and this rejection does Jesus give up in defeat does he wring his hands and say poor me no one's listening to me no but in the midst of such pervasive rejection

Jesus starts his own worship service and he's full of thanksgiving and praise to God is that counter intuitive or what and I give you four points on this one about God's free and sovereign grace number one Jesus is thankful for the grace of God to save some and it's amazing that God would have mercy upon any rebel sinners that he doesn't it's amazing that he doesn't turn all men into hell right now for their sins he doesn't have to save anybody no one earns salvation no one deserves salvation we get used to the idea of God's kindness well that's God's job surely that's what he's going to be he's going to be kind but if you understand your sin in light of his purity his holiness you are amazed that he would have mercy upon any

[ 24 : 07 ] I tell people on the west side of Atlanta I am the biggest sinner in Atlanta Georgia and they look at me like come on no way and I have to assure them oh I am and that makes the grace of God all the more amazing that he has saved a wretch like me God reaches into a world of rebel sinners to sheep who are going astray every one of them going their own way he does not deal with everybody according to what their sins deserve but he chooses to save some to deliver some from their just condemnation and that is grace I deserve the worst but he's given me the best and that is grace secondly

Jesus is thankful for the sovereignty of God's grace among all these Christ rejecting hell deserving sinners it's not men who are in control it is God who's hiding and revealing verse 25 it is God who does according to his own good pleasure verse 26 it is God who determines whom he will reveal his grace to and then and then only do they believe men are way too consumed with their own wisdom and self sufficiency assuming they're in control of their lives but Jesus knows this widespread rejection of his ministry is not the gospel failing it's not a weak gospel but it is the sovereign working of an almighty God to save some and he worships his

God and father for his sovereignty and giving his grace to some and he's confident that there's going to be a whole heaven filled with worshipers and innumerable company before the throne of God when it's all said and done thirdly he says in verse 25 that sovereign grace transforms men into babies this is what God does to a man to the most self sufficient and wicked men and I've seen it I've seen God take these roughnecks that work on oil real rigs I've seen God take railroad workers and concrete contractors and businessmen of international corporations and university professors and that irresistible grace of God turns those men into adoring worshipers of God he turns them into babes infants infants that are hungry to hear

God's word and the word of God becomes sweet to their taste and satisfies their souls like nothing else can babies are also known for their dependence and when Jesus refers to the wise and the prudent he means the self sufficient and the arrogant and that's how you know that a work of God's grace is going on in a man's heart you see humility and you see childlike trust you see hunger for more of Christ Jesus and you see a dependence upon God for everything in the life a newborn babe is thrown himself upon Jesus with all his hope and trust and he lives then in the word and upon the grace of God no guesswork about who a Christian is these are signs of true repentance and number four sovereign grace as we see in verse 27 has been transferred from the father to

Jesus the son you see how the father and the son know each other infinitely perfectly revealing this inter trinitarian relations they have with one another and this authority to pour out justice in the final day of judgment and to bestow saving grace according to the father's eternal purpose has been given to Jesus Jesus Christ is Lord and men's destinies are in his hands your destiny is in the hands of the son of God who reigns in heaven above it may seem that you're in control of your life but by God's grace you'll wake up one day and realize it's not you're not in control you will not map out and determine your own destiny that's been given to the son of God

[ 29 : 37 ] Jesus Christ and in verse 27 the ones who know either the son father or the son are those whom the son chooses to bring into that saving knowledge he has the power to save whom he will he has the power to save you this morning he has the power to change your mind in such a way that you wake up and realize you've been going the wrong way with your life and you need to do an about face and relinquish the control humble yourself and give yourself put yourself at the feet of Jesus Christ and have him take over your heart and life and become your king he has the power to do that with any person here this day just like he did with this great big sinner one day and he humbled me he has the power to harden whom he will and in this sovereign authority and power

Jesus rejoice he rejoices so much when you look at these verses in this section and they present the sovereignty of grace they call for three things one they call for humility you cannot say well I'm going to come to Jesus when I get good and ready but I got news for you as he revealed to me about my heart if you're not born of God you're a prisoner to your own sin you're a slave you're locked up on death row and you don't have the key to get out of that jail sale and off that death row humility but also praise and that's what Jesus did he began this worship service with God and he rejoiced that his father is king his power reigns and he will save whom he will when he will and it's for us as children of God let's give him glory he has that kind of powerful grace within his own hands give glory to the

Lord if you're not what you used to be if you're not ruining your life today in chasing after a world of sin and your own good pleasure if you're not ruining your life today and you're pressing after Christ it's not because you don't get to pat yourself on the back you get to fall in adoring praise and humble thankfulness and say father thank you thank you that you didn't leave me to myself and my own choices praise but also thirdly assurance Christian as you witness for our Lord and invite people to hear the gospel you'll face rejection just like Jesus you'll face that but you need to know this you cannot witness or preach good enough to turn anybody's heart to Christ Jesus had the best preaching ever he had the most amazing miracles ever and that was not good enough and that's true with us but we can rest assured that Christ will save his people from their sin he said all that the father has given me they shall come to me with absolute certainty

Christ will save his people from their sins and he's building this church and he's populating heaven he's preparing his bride and he is going to triumph so don't be discouraged have a worship service as did Jesus get your focus back on the sovereignty of his grace then go back right back out as did Jesus and keep offering that mighty savior to anybody and everybody everywhere calling on them to repent and some will come so we've looked at the lostness of man we've looked at the sovereignty of grace but notice thirdly in verse 28 the freeness of salvation i'll just read those verses again many have heard these and i've i've talked to folks that don't know much about the bible at all but they've heard these verses where jesus says come unto me come unto me all you that are that are laboring you're weary you're heavy laden come unto me i'll give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me for i am gentle and lowly in heart and you'll find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light four points under this section jesus jesus extends a free invitation to all sinners to come to him just as sweet and sincere as you've ever heard him say anything whoever you are come unto me though christ was rejected by so many for so long he holds out his hands to a rejecting rebel world again and again and again preaching the gospel and though all men have no ability to come to christ and no interest to come to christ yet he keeps inviting come unto me come unto me come unto me come on let's reason together though your sins be as scarlet they'll be white as snow though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool you come to christ today and you can find your heart and life cleansed of anything and everything you've ever done that's wrong anything that you might be ashamed of that others might know about or could hear about all gone washed away come believing that christ can and he will save the worst of sinners come at once and don't don't put it off come in childlike trust because there's no other savior there's one god and there's one mediator between god and man and that's christ jesus jesus said i am the way i'm the truth and i'm the life and no one comes to the father except through me so come on you want to know god you want to have a relationship with god and know why you're here and where you're going come unto me i'm the way i'm the truth and i'm the life and there's no other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved i'm the only way come to me he is everything he claimed to be and all sinners are welcome and all sinners are received to come to jesus whoever you are no matter what you've ever done jesus godly receives anyone

and everyone right now if you'll come to him jesus will forgive you all your sins and bring you into the sweetest of all relationships you could know in this life i came to christ when i was a wild-eyed teenager and i had a lot of ambition and a lot of energy to live for myself and to have eek out as much fun and pleasure as i could have in this life and god stopped me in my tracks and he made me to see my sin and i heard those words come unto me and i came unto him by his grace and for his glory i came unto him secondly the kind of sinners invited to come to jesus you see in verse 28 they are sinners who are weary and heavy laden no one else is invited but those who have been burdened down with their sins they have no more strength to pursue any other possible course of hope if you've come to realize you're on a dead end run and you realize there's no value to life why would you even get out of bed in the morning what do you have to live for and the more you try you end up laboring and it's kind of like getting your car stuck in the mud the more you hit the accelerator and the faster the tires go the more stuck you get the more you go down try try to salvage your own life try as you may to eke out some type of satisfaction or purpose for your life but if you come to that place where you realize it's hopeless and you're not finding the answers for your life

[ 39 : 15 ] Jesus says come unto me come on has your sin been revealed to you do you feel yourself to in your life to really it's hopeless even on the brink of despair come to Christ if you're not there if you're not if you haven't got to that place where you're hopeless of managing your own life and securing your own future and having anything that's meaningful if you're not there if you haven't been brought to the end of yourself if you're just fine then you're content to ignore the claims of Christ yeah you wouldn't come to Christ what he has is not for you but if he has revealed that to you come on thirdly what will you receive if you come to Christ rest and he says it twice in two verses you'll receive rest you'll receive rest from sin's bondage and burden you'll receive rest from your guilt and your misery are you tired has your sin plagued you enough is your sin oppressing you enough and holding you down and tormenting you come unto

Christ he'll give you rest in Jesus there's peace with God in Jesus there's this calm repose before a holy God where he instills a new energy into life for you and he opens up your eyes to see life as you've never seen it before he puts within you a sense of opportunity ambition for something real and if you come to Christ it can be yours and you can know this God and enjoy an intimacy with him a love life with him talking to the men last night about the Muslim faith and they really have a God that's distant and cold and mechanical and they don't have that kind of relationship I was sharing with him I was talking with a Muslim guy on one

Friday night he was parking cars outside a strip club asking what he'd been doing and he said well he'd gone to his Muslim service that day Friday began to question him what did that do for you and what do you think about God what kind of relationship would you have with this God and to him as devoted as he was as a Muslim he had none his God is distant he doesn't know him Jesus would say come unto me a real person come unto me and my father and he'll be your father too and you may call upon him and commune with him and imbibe in him and enjoy him and you can have this give and take of fellowship with this God it's living and it's real and you're not going to find it anywhere else but through Jesus

Christ who would lead you to the one true and living God come unto me Jesus says and fourthly what will you find if you come humbly and immediately to Jesus and the answer is Jesus love the song we sing I have Jesus and he has me you come to Jesus and he says I'm not harsh and I'm not mean I'm not a porcupine you don't have to be afraid of me like you know dread me and stay away because of how I might treat you or react to you no you come unto me and you'll find in me the sweetest friend the kindest friend most loving and wise and gracious friend in Jesus Christ come unto me David says whom have I in heaven but you and on the earth there is none none beside you none that

I desire none that fulfills anything in my soul you and you only you know whoever you are I just want to tell you I wouldn't trade Jesus for 10 billion of these worlds you can have them I rather have Jesus than anything he's made my life to be real life to be abundant life real life and he is such a sweet savior and the scripture says this mighty king delights in taking those who are bruised reeds they're ready to snap they're brittle they're broken they're like smoking flax and their lives are on the verge of losing all hope and purpose and joy Jesus is so tender and so gentle with anyone who will trust him I told folks this past Tuesday night we're going through this very text doing it to share with them and

[ 44 : 51 ] I got to this point and I said you know Jesus is so nice where are you going to find someone so nice as Jesus he said my yoke is easy in becoming a Christian you take the yoke of Jesus Christ on your back and his yoke is the sum total of all his teachings his promises and his commandments you take that upon your back a yoke is this wooden frame this harness that is placed on the shoulders of a beast maybe a couple of oxen or maybe just one oxen and they plow they labor they serve they're the one that owns them and is using them to plow a field to do good for them Jesus says put my yoke on you serve me and if you won't take his yoke you can't come to him but you come to me and put his yoke on you and become a servant of



Jesus Christ serve him with your life make that be the beginning and the end of all your thought how can I serve Jesus what can I do to please and honor Jesus what is the will of Jesus and I'm telling you if you take the yoke of Jesus and put it on and serve him he says my yoke is light and my burden is easy being a Christian is not a hassle it's not boring and it's not hard take the commandments of all the commandments of Christ and when you know Jesus in that way they become your delight you are thrilled to be able to be under that harness and yoke of Jesus Christ because there and there only do you find the real reason for your life he says come to me you don't have to be afraid of that yoke again when I was a teenager I was out to live

I didn't want to be harnessed by anybody and anything I wanted to do my own thing but Jesus stopped me in my tracks and he realized I needed him and whatever it cost whatever it meant I put myself at the feet of Jesus Christ and I said Lord Jesus Christ I need you come into my soul be my king wash away my sin be my savior I give myself to you and I gladly put myself under your authority and love you and serve you with my whole life today in closing I would speak just a word to you as Christians you still have Jesus to come to every day of your life no matter what you face no matter what you're going through come to Jesus every day and find rest for your souls this world is a tough place to live in the worst things could happen to any one of us even yet today come to

Christ every day come to your good shepherd every day his loving reception of you did not stop with your conversion he loves you today ever bit as much as he loved you yesterday and he's going to love you tomorrow ever bit as much as he loved you today your savior Jesus Christ will never stop loving you he's got you in the hollow of his hand and no one's going to pull you out not even you he loves you he's with you and you may come to Jesus Christ no matter what you face in this life he understands your heartaches and your disappointments he says come unto me if you've been deflated with ambition to live because of all the disappointments that you faced in life come to Christ come to Christ and nuzzle up next to him set your gaze again upon him and find in him a revival for your soul of his life and his love he will do it if you come to him

Christian again today he understands the sadness of having and the frustrations of having an unconverted spouse or kids in your family he understands all that don't bear that by yourself alone keep coming to Christ throwing yourself at the feet of Christ looking and trusting in Christ he'll make the difference for your life teenager young person he understands you're wondering who you really are you wonder if you ever know the answers for your life or the direction you might take for your life come to Christ whether you're a Christian or not come to Christ and find in him that course find in him that reason find in him that strength find in him that love he will love you when you feel like no one else on planet earth loves you come to Christ and you will be glad salvation is in

[ 50 : 18 ] Jesus Christ real life is in him and I'm so glad that by the grace of God he saved a wretch a rebel a hopeless sinner like me I'm 71 years old I've walked with Jesus since I was a teenager and I can testify to you that he has always been a precious and faithful friend and savior to my soul I cannot recommend him highly enough to you come unto him God bless you as he did I