

Why The Excuses?

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[0:00] Please take your copy of the scriptures and turn to Luke chapter 14. We are going to begin reading at verse 12 and read through verse 24.

! Luke 14, 12. Then Jesus said to his host, When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors.

If you do, they may invite you back, and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed.

Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous. When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.

Jesus replied, A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet, he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, Come, for everything is now ready.

[1:14] And they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, I've just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me. Another said, I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out.

Please excuse me. Still another said, I just got married, so I can't come. The servant came back and reported this to his master.

Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.

Sir, the servant said, What you ordered has been done, but there is still room. Then the master told his servant, Go out to the roads and country lanes and make them come in, so that my house will be full.

I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet. Who do you think has to listen to the most ridiculous excuses?

[2:24] Some of you who are school teachers must hear some real doozies about where that homework assignment is, or where it isn't, and why it isn't turned in.

Parents. Have to hear excuses, no doubt, on why the children didn't get back. Under curfew. Well, there were two trains and an accident, and so on go the stories.

You who are employers. Have to hear why someone didn't come to work. A death in the family, but the fifth one in a month. Different excuses.

Different excuses. Policemen. Why you're speeding. The IRS. Why you haven't paid your taxes. On and on it goes. Our world is full of excuses, but I don't believe all of them together equal the excuses that Jesus Christ puts up with every day for why people do not come to him to be saved. Now that's amazing. That men would make excuses for not coming to him to be saved. But they have their excuses.

[3:36] They have the reasons for not doing so, and Jesus tells us what they are here in Luke chapter 14 of the scriptures. He tells a story, and we're going to see three things this morning.

The story itself, and then the story interpreted, and then the story applied. The story itself is familiar enough to his hearers, though there might be elements in it that would be a little strange to us and need to be explained.

The story goes like this. There was a man who was giving a great feast and invited many guests. Now, in those days, a host would issue two invitations.

He would send out the first invitation way in advance just to get it on the calendar of his guests. And that invitation was given.

And then a second invitation would come on the actual day of the feast. At the right time, he would send out his servant to tell the people who had earlier been invited, the time is right.

[4:41] Everything is now ready, so come to the feast. Well, this was common etiquette, and to refuse was a great insult.

Well, though these had been invited way in advance, they all alike, we're told, began to make excuses and were given three examples of the kinds of excuses that they gave, the reasons they couldn't come to the feast.

The first man says, well, I've just bought a field and I must go and see it, so please have me excused. I can't come. Do you think for a moment that a Jew would ever pay money for a field he had not seen in advance?

It's humorous. It was meant to be humorous. Jesus told a funny story. How stupid our excuses are. The second says something similar.

I've just bought five yoke of oxen and I'm on the way to try them out. But why now? If you've bought them, they're yours, and will they not be there tomorrow to try out?

[5:52] And the third man really is stretching things. I just got married, so I can't come. It's out of the question. You mean you're already that hen-packed that she won't let you out of the house?

You mean you can't bring her along? The silly, feeble, lame excuses that these men gave for not coming to the feast.

Now, though all their reasons are different from each other, all of them are nothing more than lame excuses. They want the host to think that they would really like to come, but they simply can't.

They don't just say, no, I'm not coming to the feast. They give him the reasons why they can't come. Now, what's the dirty little secret behind their reasons? It's that they don't want to come.

They just want him to think that they do, but they can't come. You see it? So, fellas, you've been dating a young lady for three months, and she announces one day that it's over.

[7:02] And she does it with these words. I'd really love to keep dating you, but I really need to spend more time with my dog. Now, you're free to believe her if you want.

But men, translated, that means, I really don't want to date you. Though I just said I did. I would rather date my dog.

So with these three examples, they're not real reasons why they can't come to the feast. There was not one of the three that were legitimate reasons that would keep a man from coming to the feast. It's very obvious. And Jesus' hearers would quickly get that point. They're just flimsy excuses trying to hide the truth that they really don't want to come to the feast.

And that, by the way, is a form of lying, isn't it? It's being deceitful. No wonder the host was angry when he hears of their excuses.

[8:07] He's no dummy. He sees right through these excuses. And he's insulted that they would place such a low value on him and his feast.

That they snub his great kindness and even lie to him in the process. Well, the feast must go on. And so food has been prepared.

It's not to be wasted. So he quickly sends his servant to go out into the alleys and the streets and to bring in the underprivileged in town.

The poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame. Which in that society were often neglected and often despised by respectable folks. And so the servant goes and he gathers them and they come.

They do come to the feast. But the servant says there's still room. So the master sends him on out further. Then go out of town. Go out into the country lanes and the ditches.

[9:14] And make them come in so that my house will be full. So that's the story. The story itself. Now the story interpreted. What does it mean?

Well, we need to remember where Jesus told this story. Jesus was eating in the house of a prominent Pharisee along with other well-off Jews.

And he comments on his host's choice of guests. I've noticed that you have invited others like you and your friends and the well-off and those that you like and so on.

And so he says to his guests, When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

And no sooner had he spoken of the resurrection of the righteous and the rewards that are coming in that day, than one of those at the table said to Jesus, Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast

in the kingdom of God.

[10 : 23] And Jesus' story that we just went through is his answer to this man's comment. The man appears to be a religious Jew. One of these Pharisees or scribes, teachers of the law.

And they expected that when Messiah would come in his kingdom, there would be a great feast. Indeed, Isaiah 25, verse 6, and other passages in Scripture set forth the glories of the kingdom of heaven as a great feast.

A feast of rich foods and rich drinks. Well, this man is looking forward to that day when Messiah comes in his kingdom and will all be feasting.

And no doubt those gathered around that table thought that they had a reserved seat at that feast.

There was a saying that if only two people get into heaven, one will be a Pharisee.

Well, these are the Pharisees and their cronies and they're eating here. And so they think we're in like Flynn. And we're going to make it if anybody makes it. And so this guy is saying, won't that be great when we sit at that feast in Messiah's kingdom?

[11 : 36] Well, Jesus says, I have a story for you. And it's a story to warn him and all who had heard him. So what does the story mean?

Well, the man who gives the feast is God. God is the one giving the feast. And the feast is the kingdom of God in all of its blessings, both in this life and in the life to come.

It's the gospel feast. It's the blessings of salvation that come through Jesus Christ, the Messiah, that he has brought and won for all of his people.

Like the forgiveness of sins. That's a choice meat. And there is the peace with God. The delicacy of a right standing with God that I am right with God.

He looks at me and says, there is nothing that I have to condemn him for. He is right. He's righteous. And there's the sweet sonship privilege and that I become a child of God.

[12 : 42] There's fellowship with God. There's having God for you. There's freedom from sin's bondage. There's eternal life. And all these things right now begin right now in this life.

But then there's also some of the feasts that will only be served up at Christ's return. A new body, a new heavens, a new earth where only the righteous live.

To be absolutely free from sin and temptation, from death and sickness and the curse. To be with the Lord Jesus in his presence, with his people, with joys unknown forever and ever.

That's the feast that Jesus provides for his people. So God has invited many guests to enter his kingdom, to come to Christ and enjoy this gospel feast.

Now, who did he invite first? Well, he first invited the Jews, didn't he? We see that instruction given to Paul, one of the preachers, one of the inviters. That he is to go to the Jew first and then also to the Gentile.

[13 : 47] And so the invitation came out to the Jews well in advance of the coming of this feast in Jesus Christ. Clear back in the Old Testament, God sent out the invitation through the prophets.

There's coming a feast, a feast of rich things. Be prepared for it. Look and believe on it. Prepare yourself to receive that gift by turning to God in repentance and faith.

Believing the promise. So the invitation was given in the Old Testament to the Jews. But then when Jesus Christ actually came, Messiah came and brought his kingdom to earth.

And accomplished all those privileges of salvation by his life and his death and resurrection. A second invitation went out. He's here.

The feast. The kingdom of God is at hand. Everything is prepared. Now come and eat. Come to Jesus Christ.

[14 : 51] And the feast that is found in him. Enter. The kingdom through faith in Christ. But you remember their response that though he came to his own, his own received him not.

And instead they refused to come to him that they might have eternal life. They despised and they rejected his offer. And they all had their reasons, didn't they?

They had their reasons for not coming to Christ. These Jews gathered around the table as Jesus was talking to them. Were already thinking about how to kill him.

They'd already rejected him out of hand. They had their reasons though. I mean, he's a blasphemer. He claims to be God. And he's breaking the Sabbath. That's clear.

He's healing on the Sabbath. Can't be the Messiah. He deceives the people. He's not delivered our nation from bondage to Rome.

[15:52] We're still under the heel of the Romans. You see, he didn't fit their desires and their expectations. Their carnal earthly expectations. And so they're saying we simply can't.

Wow. We can't receive him. We can't trust in him to be our Savior. And our Messiah. But God saw right through their flimsy excuses.

To the truth of the matter. And that was that they did not want to come to him. They did not want to submit to him. They didn't want to submit to his word.

They hated him. They hated him. Why? Because he told them that the things that they were doing were evil. He told them that their religion was just a false religion.

And it did not impress God at all. It was like filthy rags, in fact. And they needed to repent of their religion. Their good deeds as well as their bad deeds.

[16:57] And so they didn't want him to be their Messiah, King, and Savior. He shattered their pride. And yet they thought that they would be the ones that are feasting in the kingdom of heaven.

Well, God's anger is justified for rejecting his kind offer. Treating his own son with contempt. Think of it. God is the one who's throwing the feast for sinners.

For rebels. And God says, I sent my own son to bear the curse in the place of sinners. And you want nothing to do with him? And so he invites the down and out to come to the gospel feast.

These religious rulers in Israel didn't want him. And so he says, OK, to the alleys and the streets, the unfortunates, the disenfranchised. The prostitutes and tax collectors, the immoral sinners, go out and bring them in.

And when you read the scriptures and you read the gospels, that's what you see. That the religious often were the ones that despised the invitation. But the tax collectors and sinners like Zacchaeus and others heard the invitation and came.

[18:18] And they came into the kingdom. They feasted on Christ and this forgiveness of sins that he was offering. But still there was much room in his house.

And so God sent the gospel invitation to those outside of Israel. Go to the Gentiles. And that's what you see in the book of Acts and the gospel. First to the Jew, but then send it out wide.

It's not a big enough thing just to gather in some believing Jews. We must go to the nations and gather in guests because my house must be full, God says.

Well, now the story's over. And Jesus explains and applies it to his hearers in verse 24. He says, I tell you.

And the reason we know that the story is over and this isn't part of the story is because when he says, I tell you. In English, we can't see it, but the you is plural. It's no longer the master talking to his servant.

[19:23] Go out into the alleys and the streets. Now go out of the town into the ditches and the country lanes and bring them in. Make them to come. No, he was talking master to servant, singular.

But now there's a change. Now it says, I tell you. You see, now Jesus is looking around the table. And he's speaking to those Jewish religious leaders who are eating with him at the Pharisee's house.

And he says, I tell you, not one of those men who were invited will get a taste of my banquet. Notice Jesus refers to the banquet as my banquet.

You see, it's his feast. His forgiveness, his peace, his righteousness, his kingdom, his salvation. It's all purchased by him. And so it's his to give and to bestow. So the invitation, you see, all along has been to come to him and his salvation.

[20:34] There's no entrance into the kingdom. There's no way into all these blessings that are pictured as a feast except through Jesus. He's the only door. But they refuse to come to him.

That they might have life. And so those who refuse to come to him will not get a taste of his feast. That was Jesus' hearers that day around the table.

They wanted the feast, but they didn't want Jesus. Do you know people like that? They want salvation's blessings, but they don't want Jesus as their Lord and their Savior.

And though these were very religious Jews and they had a long history with God throughout the Old Testament. And they had many privileges spiritually. They had the scriptures that no other nation had.

And they had many promises. And yet, though they had all these privileges and had been invited often to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yet, because they refused to come to Jesus, they would

not have one bite of the banquet.

[21 : 46] There would be no forgiveness of sins for them. There would be no peace with God. No right standing. No heaven. No eternal life. Only the ongoing anger of God forever.

One wonders if Jesus was ever invited back to this Pharisee's house for dinner. But if we walk away from this dinner story with no deeper concerns, we've missed the point altogether.

Because what happened in this story is still happening today, wherever the gospel invitation is going out. This same response is still being found.

So the story is not just about some Jews in Jesus' day. No. There are lessons here for us who have heard the gospel invitation.

So we come then to the story applied. We've seen the story itself. The story interpreted and now the story applied. And there's two lessons I'd like for us to notice.

[22 : 53] First lesson is see the greatness of God's love in this gospel invitation. See the greatness of God's love. You say the gospel invitation.

What is that, John? Well, let me just seek to put it in three minutes. God made you. And he made you for himself. He created you. And as your creator, you owe him worship.

You owe him your trust, your love. And your obedience. But we all have sinned and not done what he's told us to do.

We rebelled. We turned our backs to him. All of us like sheep have gone astray. We have turned each one to his own way. Not God's way, but our way. And sin is disobeying God's commands.

Like you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. We didn't do that. And you shall love your neighbor like you love yourself. And we didn't do that either.

[23 : 56] We broke his commands. We sinned against him. And therefore, we were guilty before God. To be guilty means that we deserve punishment. We deserve to be punished for our rebellion against God.

And the punishment for rebellion against God is hell. Jesus himself preached on hell more than anyone else in the Bible.

And as the one who knows its reality, he warned people lest they come to it. Yes, because of our sin, we deserve to go to hell.

And we're helpless to save ourselves. We can't get ourselves out from this guilt. We can't do enough good things to make up for one of our sins.

All of our religious rituals, all of our good deeds do not make up for one of our sins against God.

And so we're helpless to free ourselves from guilt, from the power of sin.

[25 : 00] We can't change our hearts. We can't make ourselves love God or love our fellow man like ourselves. And so that's our predicament. But here's the good news, that instead of leaving us to perish in our sin and misery, God sent his son into the world.

His one and only son, his eternal son. And he became a man just like us and was born under the law. And he obeyed the law in every point. Tempted like we, but he never sinned.

He kept every command. He indeed did love God with all his heart and loved his neighbor as himself. And so he qualified to be a sacrifice to take the punishment in the place of sinners.

Because he didn't have any sins to pay for himself. He was the only one who could say, I will stand in the place of judgment and take the punishment that sinners deserve.

And that's what he did. He takes the wrath of God, the condemnation that would have been ours for all eternity in hell. And there on the cross, he suffers infinite wrath.

[26 : 08] And then he invites all men everywhere to come and to partake of this salvation. There's the invitation.

Turn from your own way. You've turned from God's way and gone your way. Now turn from your way and come back to God through faith in Jesus. Look to Jesus.

Trust in what he has done for sinners. That's the only way that God will accept you. If you trust in what Jesus has done for sinners. And God will look upon you and see you as covered in the work of Christ.

His obedience. His blood. His punishment. He will see that as you trust in Christ, everything that Christ did for sinners is counted yours. So he obeyed the law perfectly.

And that's counted as yours. And he suffered the punishment that your sins deserve. That's counted as yours if you believe. So when God comes to judge you, there'll be nothing to judge.

[27:11] It's already been judged in Jesus. That's the good news. And now he sends that message. The feast is ready. Everything is ready. Everything's prepared. Now come and trust in Jesus Christ.

And if you do, you'll have all the benefits of salvation. Beginning now and running forever and ever. Now, can you see the amazing love of God in the invitation then? Who's he inviting? He's inviting those that turn their back on him and says, I don't want you. I want my way. And he's inviting them to come.

Think what it cost him to put on this feast. It cost his own son. His own son had to be damned. What love is this?

That an invitation should find its way to my house. And wherever the gospel is going today, wherever the gospel is going out in truth, God is inviting sinners to come to Jesus Christ and the feast that is in him.

[28:20] So it doesn't matter who you are or what you've done. Come for everything is now ready. You see, in love, he's provided everything that the sinner needs to be saved.

You don't bring your sack lunch to this feast. It would be an offense to the host. No, he's spread the table. He has given his son. He has made everything that you need to be done by Jesus Christ. So don't bring your sack with you. You come. Everything's now ready. Jesus has made the work. Jesus has done the work. And he offers everything that the sinner needs in order to be right with God.

That means that all the blessings that Jesus purchased for his people could be yours today. There's the invitation. Come. Come and take it. You could be forgiven today. You could have God say, I will never remember your sins against you forever.

[29:27] Everyone in this room, myself included, have things that we would be embarrassed for you to know about.

Our sins. And what is the joy? What is the privilege of this feast that God would say, John, they're covered.

The blood of Jesus covers them. And they will never be brought against you. They're forgotten. The privilege, you see, that could be yours as you sit there this morning.

Wherever the gospel goes. The offer. Of what Christ has purchased is made to you. You only need to receive this offer. Christ.

Come to him. It's not enough that his son has prepared the feast. He wants his house full of guests. He wants to see condemned sinners forgiven. He wants to see guilty people rejoicing that their sins are gone forever.

[30:32] And so he said, I want my house full. And so Jesus Christ comes from heaven and purchases all these blessings for us. And he's he's not just saying, well, there's the there's the invitation.

I really don't care what you do with it. No. To read the words of Jesus is to feel the heart of Jesus when he says, come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

I want you at rest. I don't want you at war with God. I want you to know peace, soul peace. Come to me. He says, all you who are thirsty, come, come.

If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. And whoever comes, I will in no way cast out. You see the heart of God inviting you to come.

And then those servants that he sends into the world, his ministers and his people bearing witness to the gospel. And they're inviting you to come. And notice what he says to his servants.

[31:34] You go invite people. Well, where shall we go? We'll go in the streets, the alleys, the roads, the country lanes and bring them in. And then he says, make them come in.

Now, that's not violence by violence or physical force that we're to make people come in, but rather by compelling arguments, by persuasive reasoning, loving persuasion.

We are to make people, to compel people to come to Christ. You see, there's no take it or leave it attitude in those who give the invitation.

They rather stand in the place of Christ and say, as an ambassador of Christ, I beseech you. Be reconciled to God. Come to Christ.

Come and partake of this gospel feast. Taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Come on, try him. Put yourself out onto Christ and see how great this feast is.

[32:39] Jesus Christ will be your Lord and Savior. If you will have him, he's for you. The feast is yours if you'll take it. And so we say, why should you linger? Why should you wait?

When the invitation stands open, enter now. What could there possibly be that would be more valuable than Christ? And this feast that he provides.

Such is the love of God that invites you and compels you and says, come on, come in. Take my Savior and all the blessings of salvation in him.

There's a second lesson simply confronting us with the fact that not everyone invited to Christ in the gospel actually comes to Christ.

But rather, most make excuses. We see that in our story, don't we? Human beings are reasoning creatures. God gave us a mind.

[33:39] And that simply means that there are always reasons for everything that we do. There are reasons why you're here this morning. I don't know all those reasons, but they are.

There's a reason why you're wearing what you're wearing this morning. There are reasons for everything that we do. You may not have thought about those reasons.

You may not have even identified those reasons. Why do I do what I do? But they're there nonetheless. Now, if you are not a Christian at this moment, if you have not come to Christ to save you from your sins, there are reasons why you have not answered the invitation.

There are reasons. I wonder if you have thought of your reasons. Jesus' story is telling us whatever they are, they are lame excuses that offend God.

Do you see that in the story? They might sound plausible to you. I mean, I've got this new land. I've got to go see it. I just got married.

[35:00] I can't come. And it may seem to your own mind that that's a plausible reason to be excused from coming to Christ. But do you know how he sees it?

I don't want to come. I don't want your Christ. Whatever you say is the reason. He knows the heart behind it.

You love this and that more than him. A field, oxen, a wife, things, people. You love your sins. You love yourself being in control.

You love you being your God rather than him. You value brief passing pleasures more than him.

Have you thought of the trivial things that people prefer over Christ?

A cell phone. People spend gobs more times with their cell phones than they do with Jesus. Some don't have any time for Jesus.

[36:02] The little things that people would say, I want this. And that's why I can't come to Christ. Things in and themselves are not sinful, but it shows their hearts.

And no wonder God is offended. A girlfriend. Popularity. Money. Whatever.

Perhaps the greatest excuse that God is given today by those he's invited to Christ is this. Not now, but later. I dare say that we've all used that excuse at one time.

I have. Have you? Or did you all respond the first time you were invited to the gospel feast? No, we didn't. We said not now, but later.

And when we said that, we say, I know this is what I should do. Some of us at least were at that point. And maybe some of you are at that point. Maybe not all of you are. Some of you have other excuses. But you say, I know this is what I should do.

[37:06] I want to come and I fully intend to come. But just not yet. Not now. I'm too young. I've got some things I want to do with my life.

I want to wait till I'm old. I want to wait till I'm out of high school. Once I graduate from high school, then I'll come to Christ. And then you graduate from high school and you say, well, I mean, when I'm out of college, then I'll come.

And then, I mean, when I get married. And then it's, I mean, I'm going to wait until my spouse comes to Christ. Then I'll come. Or I'm going to.

And you see what it is. It's just an excuse. It's all an excuse to put off God.

As if God is supposed to think that you really want him. You really want him. Well, the dirty little secret is, and he knows it, that the reason you procrastinate is because you still don't want him.

[38:08] Or you would come. Now. You don't want him. You still love your sin. You still love having it your way. You still love living life for yourself.

And so consider this. Consider how your excuse looks to God. That's what Jesus is wanting you to see in this story. Saying, I will come tomorrow, really means, I don't want you today.

Are some of you saying that to God? I don't want you today. That would be honest at least. That would be honest. You'd think Christ was inviting people to hell.

The excuses that they make not to come to him. But oh, he comes. He comes as the wealthy benefactor to give to bankrupt sinners.

He comes as the cleanser to give to defiled dirty sinners. He comes as the doctor with the cure to give to sin-plagued sinners who are dying.

[39 : 22] And yet they have excuses for not coming to him. Do you see something of the heart of man? Just how against God man's nature is.

When even when he's offered eternal life in Jesus Christ. No. If coming to Christ is the only way, I will not come. And so Jesus says, compel them to come.

You see, it's going to take some work, Christians. Gospel ministers, it's going to take some compelling. Make them come. It's going to take some persuasion.

It's going to take some arguments. It's going to take some praying. But you see God's heart in that? He wants them to come. He wants his house full.

Indeed, Jesus is more willing to save sinners than sinners are willing to be saved by him. He has more grace to give than sinners have a heart to receive.

[40 : 25] So make them come in. Now, you know, all of us were that way, weren't we? All of us were that way. And our reasons for not coming to Christ would embarrass us if we had to stand and tell you what it was that stood in our way.

But you know what? He kept inviting. He kept inviting. And then finally we came. And you know what we're doing now? We're kicking ourselves wondering why did we wait so long before we came?

What was it? What was it that held me back? What does the pig pen have to compare with the feast that is Jesus Christ?

The truth is, my friend, there will never be a better time for you to come to Christ than right now. Never be a better time than right now. Now is the accepted time.

Now there's still room in his house. Today is the day of salvation. You have no promise of any tomorrow. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

[41 : 30] But come to him. To reject him again today will only make it easier to reject him tomorrow. You see, the heart grows harder by waiting, not softer. There's never a better time to come than now.

And if you come, he will receive you. But if you do not come, he will invite others who will come. He loves to save sinners.

He wants his house to be full. And even while you're putting Christ off with your excuses, do you know that others are coming to him? Right here. People are coming to Christ.

People are accepting the invitation. And all around the world, sinners are coming to Christ. The house is filling up. The message is, get in while there's room.

Come today. But you say, I've already sinned too much to come. Oh, that's another excuse, isn't it? He has grace that is greater than all of our sin.

[42 : 30] You say, but I must clean up my life first before I come. Who has ever cleaned himself up first before he gets into the shower? Jesus is that fountain open to cleanse us from our sin.

You don't clean yourself up first. You come to him just as you are. And the blood of Jesus, God's son, cleanses from all sin. And if you tarry till you're better, you will never come at all.

Because Jesus hasn't come to call the righteous, but to call sinners in their sin to come to him. You say, but it's already too late. I've been making excuses for years and years and years.

And so did we. So did we. Do you know Jesus is so gracious that even after trying everything else, if we still come to him, even as the last resort, he'll meet us with open arms.

That's what we did. We tried this idol, that idol, this worldview, that worldview, this philosophy, this. And it all failed us.

[43 : 42] And then in desperation, we look to Christ. And lo and behold, he accepted us. You see, he turns none away. That's his promise. Whoever comes to me, I will in no way cast out.

So I challenge you this morning by the very words of Jesus. Can you not see that there's no good reasons for you to stay away from Christ? Only flimsy excuses.

Confess them as such. Drop them at once. Confess what you've been doing. Come, for everything is made ready. Jesus ready stands to save you.

Full of pity, joined with power. We're going to sing a closing hymn. And if you don't know Jesus, I want you to allow us sinners who've been saved by Jesus to sing this song to you.

It's number 393. We were right where you perhaps are today. And we were lost in our sin.

[44 : 46] We had our reasons for not coming to Christ, for not accepting the invitation. But then we came and we tasted. And we want to urge you to taste and see that the Lord is gracious.

Right there in your seat. Just trust in Jesus. Cry out to him. God, be merciful to me, a sinner, for Jesus' sake. I trust in what Jesus has done to save me from my sins.

I have no other plea, no other argument, no other reason why you should save me. If you gave me what I deserve, I should be in hell right now. But for Jesus' sake, because he died for sinners, save me.

You can do that right as we sing. Let's stand as we sing number 393. Come, ye sinners. Hear it from others who have come. And hear it from the Son of God who welcomes you to come.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for revealing your heart to us this morning in your word. That you are a holy God. And yet, you are a God of love.

[45 : 53] And you sent your one and only Son into the world to save sinners. That whoever would believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. You've shown us what a serious thing it is to hear the invitation and to refuse it.

That they will not receive one taste of your banquet is your word. Thank you for coming among proud, self-righteous Pharisees in the day that you walked the earth, Lord Jesus.

For sitting down at the table and having a talk with them. Telling them this story. Seeking to rescue them from their vain self-confidence in what they had done.

Thank you for going out and sending this message to the down and out. Those that are despised even by the world.

Even the devil's castaways and inviting them to come with nothing to offer. But just to come and take freely of this rich salvation feast that you have provided for sinners.

[46 : 56] Thank you for coming to us this morning and spreading that feast again. And for holding out your arms again. Saying come.

Oh, make them to come, we ask. And we'll give you praise. Thank you for waiting for us. Thank you for drawing us. Who have tasted and seen that you are gracious.

Send us on our way then. Urging others to come and to taste this great salvation. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.