

Come to Jesus, Just as You Are

By: David Burruss

There is something deeply comforting about the invitation Jesus gives in Matthew 11:28: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He does not address people who have everything figured out or whose lives are free from trouble. He speaks to those who are weary and burdened. Some carry the weight of sorrow, disappointment, or uncertainty. Others struggle with guilt, regret, and the consequences of past decisions. Whatever has made life difficult, Jesus directs our attention away from our own strength and toward Him.

We sometimes convince ourselves that we must get our lives in order before approaching God. We think we need to overcome certain struggles, correct our weaknesses, or become better people before He will receive us. But that misunderstands why Jesus came. He said, “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance” (Matthew 9:13). Christ came because humanity needed saving, not because we had proven ourselves worthy. Paul reminds us that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). God's love did not wait for us to become deserving of His sacrifice. He provided the way of salvation when we could never have provided it for ourselves.

Jesus illustrated God's willingness to receive repentant sinners in the parable of the prodigal son. The young man demanded his inheritance, left his father's house, and wasted everything through reckless living. Eventually, he found himself hungry, humiliated, and longing for the food his father's servants enjoyed. Recognizing his sin, he decided to return home and acknowledge what he had done. Jesus described the father's response: “But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him” (Luke 15:20). The father did not excuse his son's rebellion, but he welcomed him when he returned in repentance. The parable beautifully reveals God's compassion toward those who turn from their sins and seek His mercy.

That distinction matters. Coming to Jesus as we are does not mean remaining as we are. His invitation is not permission to continue living in sin. He calls us to repentance because sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2), and only through Christ can that separation be removed. When Saul of Tarsus learned the truth about Jesus, he was told, “Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul could not undo his past, but he could obey the Lord and receive forgiveness. Likewise, we come to Christ through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, trusting His grace rather than our own goodness. We do not clean ourselves up to earn salvation. We submit to the Savior who alone can cleanse us from sin.

Yet following Jesus does not mean life's difficulties suddenly disappear. He told His disciples, “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Christians still experience suffering, disappointment, and uncertainty. There may be seasons when our prayers seem unanswered and God's presence feels distant. But our circumstances do not determine His faithfulness. Psalm 34:18 reminds us, “The LORD is near to those who have a broken heart, and saves such as have a contrite spirit.” Even when we cannot understand what God is doing, we can trust what He has revealed about His character.

Consider Paul's experience with the thorn in the flesh. Three times he pleaded with the Lord to remove it, but the answer he received was not what he requested. The Lord told him, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul discovered that God's grace could sustain him even when his circumstances remained difficult. We often want God to demonstrate His power by removing whatever troubles us, but sometimes His strength is revealed through the endurance He provides. His grace does not guarantee an easy life, but it is sufficient for those who continue trusting Him.

There is another important part of Jesus' invitation that deserves our attention. After promising rest, He says, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:29). Jesus offers rest while calling us to submit to His authority. Taking His yoke means becoming His disciple, learning His ways, and following His instruction. The rest He promises is not found in independence from God, but in surrendering ourselves to His wisdom. Jeremiah acknowledged, “It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). We need the Lord's guidance because our understanding is limited, and our own desires do not always lead us where we ought to go.

Perhaps you are carrying something today that has left you exhausted. Maybe you are troubled by decisions you wish you could change, or you are facing circumstances you never expected. You do not have to pretend everything is fine or understand how every difficulty will be resolved. But you can turn to the One who knows your heart, understands your needs, and offers something this world cannot provide. If you have never obeyed the gospel, His invitation calls for your response. If you have wandered from Him, His Word calls you to repent and return. If you are faithfully following Christ through a difficult season, remember that your suffering has not escaped His notice.

One day, God will wipe away every tear from the eyes of His faithful children, and death, sorrow, and pain will be no more (Revelation 21:4). Until then, we walk by faith, trusting the Savior who gave Himself for us. You may not know what tomorrow holds or understand everything happening in your life, but you can know the One who offers forgiveness, strength, and eternal hope. Jesus still says, "Come to Me." You do not have to have everything figured out before responding to His invitation. You simply need to recognize your need for Him and be willing to follow where His word leads.