

The Last Invitation

Revelation 22:17

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FOCAL Read Responsively Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. **And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**

Evangelist Ray Comfort received a letter from a fireman who lost his faith in God when he lost a close friend while fighting a fire. The man wrote: "{My friend} showed me that no matter what, God should always come before anything else . . . We decided to attack {a fire} from two different sides. ... She was only 150 to 200 yards to the south of me when the wind shifted violently! We had been through this training a thousand times, but I could hear her screaming my name over all the other noises around me! The survival process is simple she would always tell me. First thing above all, before you do anything, is you believe in God! Then you take out your survival blanket and cover up, and God will do the rest. To me God didn't do His part! By the time I could fight my way through the smoke and fire, she had already burned to death! Her blanket had gotten hung on a small tree, so she had no chance! I carried her burned body over a mile and placed it in a body bag! I also placed my faith in God in that same body bag along with all my hopes and dreams."

I myself understand how easy it is to allow a tragedy in this life to threaten your faith and spiritual well being. I can identify with this fireman's pain. But we also need to remember that life is much more than the *now* that we live in. God gave us physical life, but also offers us a life

beyond this life that is more beautiful than you can even imagine. It is so beautiful that - before God finished writing the final chapter of His Bible - He gives *one final invitation to that life*. This is God's best for us, not that we live forever in this life, but that we join with God in a spiritually intimate way both now and for all eternity. This is what is represented in our text, "**the Spirit and the Bride say, Come**". This is the big picture. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, has a Bride that will be with Him forever. This Bride is introduced to us in the previous chapter. We read:

Revelation 21:9-11 ... I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb's wife. {10} And {the angel} carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, {11} Having the glory of God...

The Bride is the **Heavenly Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a Bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:1-2)**. It is a place where **"God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God"**.

The Heavenly Jerusalem is a place of love, which is why it is called **"the Bride of the Lamb"**. Those who do not love Jesus Christ cannot be a part of that place. Heaven is not a default place where "good people" go. Who shall be in that City without walls? The Bible tells us

Revelation 22:14-15 Blessed are they that do his

commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. {15} For without {that city} are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Only those who **do His commandments may enter in through the gates into that city**. Those who are **without the city are dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, murderers, idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie**. Or, as another version of the Scripture puts it,

Revelation 22:15 Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.^{NIV}

Only those who are wed to Christ by faith shall enter into the Bride, that Heavenly Jerusalem. Only those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and keep His commandments shall be in that beautiful place. Again, I understand the sadness and loss that the fireman felt. But, dear friend, that dear lady is not gone. She survived the fire, and entered a Heavenly City without walls. She is in a place with the Lord that she loved. Remember what she told you:

"The survival process is simple she would always tell me. First thing above all, before you do anything, is you believe in God!"

If you're going to survive God's inevitable tragedies, the only way you'll do that is to abandon your way and come to God's Way. **The Spirit and the Bride say "Come"**. Come to Jesus Christ, believing on Him. Believe that His Way is the Only Way, the only truth, and the only Life (**John 14:6**). He will save you out of the fire, both now and into eternity.

May God touch your hearts with His Word.

1. The Spirit And The Bride Say "Come"

FOCAL Revelation 22:17 And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come.

The word translated "come" in our text is the Greek word **ερχομαι** (**pronounced** er'-khom-ah-ee), which means "to move from where you are to go along with another". The Spirit and the Bride say "Come".

You cannot "come" and continue following your own path. Dear friends, God does not follow us, but we follow God. If we want to be saved we *must* follow God.

ILLUSTRATE Too many people view salvation from damnation as if it were no more than buying a bus ticket. They think "I've followed the formula, and said the words, and now I'm saved". Salvation is much more than getting your ticket punched for Heaven. Salvation is first of all about **repentance and submission**. You must realize that *your way* will not get you to Heaven. You

must realize that *you are a sinner*, and unfit to enter that Heavenly City in your own merit.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

The greatest enemies of Christ were the Pharisees, the self righteous followers of the Law. They constantly followed the Lord and mocked His agenda. They were blinded by their own self righteousness, and continued to follow that road even unto damnation. The Pharisees, *going behind Jesus' back*, went to

Matthew 9:11 His disciples, {asking} Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

How did Jesus reply? He said:

Matthew 9:12-13 They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. {13} But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

God does not want empty sacrifices committed by empty self righteous people.

The Law should have convicted the Pharisees that they were sinners. Instead the Pharisees embraced the rituals of the Law but rejected the Redeemer of the Law.

Jesus Christ came to this earth to be our Redeemer. He came to Redeem us from sin and selfishness. He came calling us from following our own path to destruction to following His path. Our sins have been **remitted and removed if we have - recognizing ourselves to be sinners - sincerely called upon Jesus Christ to save us from our sins.** We who are *born again* are not under the Pharisaic Code of Conduct, but we have been redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb and brought under *another covenant*.

Just as a Bride vows to follow her husband "**to love and cherish him, to honor and sustain him, in sickness as in health, in poverty as in wealth, in the bad that may darken your days, in the good that may light your ways, to be true to him in all things**", so does the believer cling to Christ. It is He that loves us, and He that gave Himself for us. He has made us worthy to stand before God by offering His own body up to judgment.

Hebrews 10:14-20 For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. {15} Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, {16} This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; {17} And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. {18} Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin. {19} Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, {20} By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his

flesh;

We who believe are *dead to the Law of Moses*, and motivated by the Holy Spirit of God. It is the **Spirit AND the Bride that say "come"**. If you have been saved then the Holy Spirit of God *has worked* and *keeps on working* in your hearts.

Romans 7:4-6 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. {5} For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. {6} But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

We who are **born again of the Spirit** are not like the Pharisees, who followed the rituals of the Law but were **spiritually dead on the inside**. Jesus belongs to us who believe.

**Blessed Assurance, Jesus is Mine!
Oh what a foretaste of glory Divine.
Heir of salvation, purchase of Blood.
Born of His Spirit, Washed in His Word!**

The day that you were saved the Holy Spirit convinced you that you were a sinner that needed to be saved. The Holy Spirit taught you that **Jesus Christ offered Himself as a sacrificial payment for your sins**. You

believed this, and **calling upon the Name of the Lord you were saved**. Upon your salvation God the Holy Spirit came and indwelt you. He, as the Hebrews text tells us,

"put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"

The **Spirit** put the Law of God in the heart of the believer, just as God prophesied through Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 11:19-20 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh: {20} That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Those who enter into the **Heavenly Jerusalem, the Bride of Christ** are those who are in love with Jesus. **We are part of His Bride**. The Bride desires to please the Groom.

The Spirit of God works in the Christian to make him or her *want to please Jesus*. The Spirit of God makes us into a part of the **Bride of Christ**.

There are times when we do not please Jesus, times when the Christian fails in His attempt to do as the Lord asks. But as a part of His Bride we are not presumptuous. We love Jesus for He gave Himself sacrificially for us.

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

Therefore we who are His follow His direction. **LOVE IS FIRST OF ALL AN ACTION NOT AN EMOTION**. Love is a doing.

If you are of the Bride then you will want to please the Groom. If you are born again then you will want to please Jesus Christ. What did Jesus say?

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

What are His commandments? To follow Him. To do as He says. To do what He says because you love Him, and because He is worth it all!

2. Those Who Are Part Of The Bride Must Tell Others To "Come"

FOCAL Revelation 22:17 ... And let him that heareth¹ say, **Come**.

We talked about the invitation of the **Spirit and the Bride, who said "Come"**. Who else invites the lost to salvation? **"Let him that heareth say, "Come"**. The word "heareth" in the Greek text is a Present Active Participle, which could be translated as **"he who keeps on hearing"**. Who **"keeps on hearing"** the Lord? Those who have been saved.

¹ Present Active Participle of ακουώ (**Pronounced ak-oo'-o**), to keep on hearing

If you have received the **Word of Life**, then you need to share the **Word of Life**.

The Apostle Paul told the Church at Phillippi:

Philippians 2:14-16 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: {15} That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; {16} Holding forth² the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.

He told them in essence, "Don't get off course! Don't forget that **you are part of His Bride, and you are sons of God - alive from the dead - in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation. You are God's light to this nation!** Listen! The words translated "**holding forth**" is once more a Present Active Participle, which could be translated as "**keep on presenting, or thrusting forth**". We who are believers have the **Word of Life**. We are to

Romans 6:13 yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

Here is our calling. We are not to fight, and mutter, and murmur, and find fault. We have been born again by

² Present Active Participle of *επεχω* (Pronounced *ep-ekh'-o*), "keep on holding forth or hold towards, keep on presenting"

faith in Jesus Christ, and as those **Sons of God born into His Kingdom by faith** we keep on crying out "**Come! Come to Jesus! Come to Him Who gave Himself for you.**" Just as it was in Paul's day our **nation is crooked and perverse, but we are to shine as lights in the world.** Like the moon we reflect the glory of God the Son. We tell them to come, and **keep on holding forth His Word of promise.** We tell the world to **COME! Come, be a part of the Bride. Be a part of that Heavenly City.** Come and believe on Him, and you, too, shall hear His Voice.

If you have heard Jesus, then others should see Jesus in you. There is nothing that leads a person to Christ so much as someone who has been saved *living their lives for Jesus*. We are commanded to live for Jesus if we are saved!

The Apostle told the Church at Ephesus:

Ephesians 4:21-23 If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: {22} That ye put off ... the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; {23} And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;

Put away anything in your life that ruins the bright and shining light of the Gospel. If it interferes with your "**come**" then it is against God. The Bride will live forever with her Groom, so she invites all who will to Come. The only way you can bring light to our nation is to stand with the Savior and bid them "**Come**". Come to

Jesus. Leave your old way of life, and Come!

3. What Must You Do To Be Saved?

FOCAL Revelation 22:17 And let him that is athirst³ come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

Salvation is a supernatural encounter with Almighty God. It is not something that I can do for you, nor is it something that YOU can do for YOU. You cannot save yourself. But you can tell if you're thirsty. Jesus said

John 4:14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

I do not understand everything that happens in this life. I do not understand why children die. I do not understand why evil people often prosper. Sometimes the things that are going on around us confuse us, and attempt to draw us away from God. Dear friends, **God has promised to one day make all things new.** The Bible says:

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

I am not God, and neither are you. I do know this. The Bible tells us that

³ Present Active Participle of διψάω (Pronounced *dip-sah'-o*), that keeps on thirsting

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

You can continue to follow your path apart from God, but in the end you'll still despair and still be thirsty. If you're thirsty for a better life - and eternal life beyond this life - then you need to give yourselves to Jesus. Jesus Christ is the Groom of the Bride. The Scripture says that

Romans 5:8-9 ... while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. {9} Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

There is a day of wrath coming for those who reject the invitation to salvation. The Bible clearly states that those who are:

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

The Heavenly Jerusalem is a place of Life. Those who possess eternal life by faith in Christ shall enter that city. Those who do not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on them.

I understand the hurt of the fireman, and understand the hurt of all who have been burned by life. May I say that I believe the Lord understands, too, and hopes that your

tragedy will lead you to **"Come"**. Famed Pastor **W.A. Criswell**⁴ wrote a poem that I really liked, and I'll share it with you as I close:

**"I asked the aged mother whence,
Her helpless widowhood's defense,
She answered, "Christ is all".**

**I saw the martyr at the stake,
The flames could not his courage shake,
Nor death his soul apal,
I asked him whence his strength was given,
He looked triumphantly to Heaven, and answered,
"Christ is all".**

**I stood beside the dying bed,
Where lay a child with aching head,
Waiting Jesus' call.
I saw him smile, twas sweet as May,
And as his spirit passed away,
He whispered "Christ is all".**

**I dreamed that hoary time had fled,
The earth and sea gave up their dead,
A fire dissolved this ball.
I saw the Church's ransomed throng,
I caught the burden of their song,
Twas this, that Christ is all in all.**



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Revelation 21:9-11; Revelation 21:1-2; Revelation 22:14-15; John 14:6 _____

1. The Spirit And The Bride Say "Come"

Revelation 22:17; Romans 3:23; Matthew 9:11; Matthew 9:12-13; Hebrews 10:14-20; Romans 7:4-6; Ezekiel 11:19-20; 1 John 4:19; John 14:15 _____

2. Those Who Are Part Of The Bride Must Tell Others To "Come"

Revelation 22:17; Philippians 2:14-16; Romans 6:13; Ephesians 4:21-23 _____

3. What Must You Do To Be Saved?

Revelation 22:17; John 4:14; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Proverbs 14:12; Romans 5:8-9; Revelation 21:8
