

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

“Come, for all things are now ready.” That is God’s gracious Invitation to you. Rightly understood, it is the purest Gospel invitation. “Come”, the Lord says. He bids you come to Him. The God who created all things, the God who in the beginning spoke and it was, the God who was before the beginning, and will be forever, desires fellowship with you. He wants you to be with Him, to receive of His Gifts. “Come”, He bids you.

But of and by yourself you would not seek fellowship with God. For you cannot by your own reason or strength come to Him, or believe in Him. Your sin prevents it. By nature you prefer other things than God: material things, human relationships.

If you could understand the holiness and power and majesty and the might of God, and if you could truly understand your sinfulness, you would run away from God in terror. You would, as did the first man, hide, and try to cover your sins that God not see what you have done. It didn’t work, of course.

Yes, man hid. But God found Him, because God is omniscient. He knows all and sees all. He knew before the beginning where man would be – fallen, hiding, desiring no fellowship with God, preferring rather to try to be equal to God. God knew that from eternity.

And that God, the same omnipotent God, the eternal God, the God against whom you have sinned, is the God who in love bids you “Come...” “Come, for all things are now ready.” First, He makes all things ready. Then He bids you come. That means that what you could never accomplish, all things, God has accomplished.

God has finished the work. And more, He has done it for you, that you who would have desired no part with God, you who were lost in sin, you who were dead in your transgressions, He has made all things ready that you hear and respond with joy to His call: “Come.”

How is it that you, a lost and condemned creature, can “Come”? God gives you the answer in the Words of His Gospel Invitation: “...all things are now ready.” He has made it possible for you to come to Him. For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a certain man who gave a great supper...”

And before many guests arrive at a supper, before the full number of the elect can be joined to the Holy Church, there is much work to be done. But it is not work that you could do. For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? According to Eden’s curse there must be a death. And it is by that death that all things are made ready.

In the darkness of Golgotha, the Lord proclaimed “It is finished.” He completed the work of your redemption. He has done it all. He rendered the required death. He gave Himself an Offering for many. He is the sinless Lamb, upon whom the transgressions of the world are placed, the Sacrificial Lamb that makes the perfect, once-for-all Sacrifice of Himself. He was conceived and born without sin, Holy. He lived a perfect life. He died your death. He defeated death by emptying the tomb, the Light overcoming the darkness. All things are now ready.

So God bids you, and all men, “Come”. He invites you and all men to partake of the salvation that He has won for you. He invites you, having forgiven your shortcomings, your sins, your unworthiness, your doubts, your transgressions. He bids you simply hear His gracious invitation and believe. For faith can do no other. Faith worked by the Gospel hungers for the Heart and Center of the Gospel, which is to say that faith hungers for Christ.

Most reject His invitation. They prefer worldly things to the Holy Things. Land, oxen, and temporal relationships eclipse the One who gives them in the eyes of sinful men. Fallen men receive the Gifts of God, but rather than recognizing Him as the Good and Gracious Giver, they take blessings and turn them into mammon. The very things that God gives to show His grace and mercy become to sinners idols that separate them from God.

He bids all men come. Most will not. You live in a world of those who reject His invitation, who mock His grace. Indeed, hear the Beloved Apostle: “Do not marvel, my brethren, if the world hates you.” Those who reject Christ must also reject those who follow Him. But God’s mercy, His grace, His love, is boundless. So the Master sends His servants into the highways and hedges that His House be filled by those who are imperfect, those who are unworthy to draw nigh unto God.

He sends them to invite you. He sends them to preach the Gospel to you. He sends them to teach the Scriptures to you. For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. He gives the Apostolic Doctrine, the Truth of His Holy Word, He gives His Saving Gospel to servants, called and ordained sinners, that His Finished Work and His Gracious Gospel Invitation be preached to all men.

Yes, He gives you earthly gifts. He gives you land, the things you need for this body and life, and as it pleases Him a faithful spouse. But to you who believe in Him, to you redeemed by the Blood of Christ, to you who go in His Way, the Way of Wisdom, to you He gives a better land, better gifts, and He fashions you into a better Bride for Himself.

For the land He gives you is the true Promised Land, heaven. And the Gifts He gives you require no toil. They are the Means of His Grace. They are Mysteries, divine, heavenly Gifts that bring Christ to you. And He makes you His Bride, the Bride of Christ, the Holy Christian Church, His Beloved, His Redeemed, His Betrothed.

Christ is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. It is He alone, Wisdom Incarnate, who could proclaim “It is finished.” All things are now ready. Wisdom has built His House, the Holy Church. It is the House bought with His Blood, built on the foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles and the Evangelists, built upon the Rock which is the right confession of Christ. It is in this Church, in His House, that He serves His Great Supper.

He has hewn out the Seven Pillars, the Seven-Fold Spirit proclaimed by the Prophet Isaiah, the Spirit that comes by the breath of God, the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son, the Spirit that fills you in your baptism, the Spirit that brings you the forgiveness of sins, the Spirit that works faith in you, the Spirit that gives you new life. His Spirit works in the world that His House may be filled.

So it is to you that He says “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed.” He bids you hear and believe. He bids you forsake foolishness and live. He bids you go in the way of understanding. For the wisdom of faith knows that He has slaughtered His Meat. He has mixed His Wine. He has furnished His Table.

He places His Body with Bread, and His Blood with wine for you to drink. He bids you “Come”, take and eat, take and drink. For you, you given faith in Him, you given the understanding that comes with salvation, for you He prepares His Table this day, and bids you “Come, for all things are now ready.”

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