

## A STRAIGHT TALK NO. 2122

A SERMON  
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, JANUARY 12, 1890,  
*DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON,*  
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*"I cannot come."  
Luke 14:20.*

THERE are different ways of replying to the invitation of the gospel when you mean to refuse it. They are all, at best, bad; and they may all be classed under one head, for, "they all with one consent began to make excuses." But yet some are more decently worded than others, and have a greater show of reason about them. The first two sets of people who were invited to the supper said to the servant, apologetically, with some appearance of courtesy, "I pray you have me excused." But the third man did not beat about the bush at all, or pray to be excused—he said tersely, bluntly, sharply—"I cannot come." This was a final reply. He did not intend, nor wish to come to the supper. "I cannot come," was a snappish reply but as he had married a wife, he thought the idea of his coming was utterly unreasonable, and he needed no sort of excuse.

Now, what did that mean? Well, it meant that he thought very lightly of the giver of the feast. He had no respect for this "certain man," who had made a great supper. He had an opportunity of slighting him by refusing his invitation, and he did so outspokenly, saying, "I cannot come."

It also showed that he had a very low opinion of the supper itself. It might be a respectable meal, but he did not need it—he could have quite as good a supper at home. He was better off than those people in the streets. Those hedge birds might be glad enough to get a supper for nothing, but he was not dependent upon anybody, and he could do very well for himself. Do you not know many in this world who have no opinion of Christ, no love to God? Religion is to them mere nonsense—an unpractical, dreamy matter about which they have no time to concern themselves. It is a pitiful thing that they will not even *think* of the God whom angels worship! And the Christ who is the loveliest of the lovely—in Him they see no beauty! And the priceless provisions of mercy, the pardon of sin, the salvation of the soul, heaven of God—they neglect these things as if they did not need them—or could get them whenever they please. Thousands are proudly independent of the free grace of God—they are good enough and virtuous enough—they need not cry for mercy as the wicked and profane. In their own judgment they are quite able to fight their own way to heaven; they need not the charities of the gospel. Contempt of the great Feast-Maker and contempt of the feast itself—these two pieces of proud disdain induce a man to say, "I cannot come."

But there was more than common pride in this brief, gruff speech, for this man had, at the first, made a promise *to* come. He had been invited to come, and it is implied in the parable that he had, at that time, accepted the invitation. He had accepted the cards of invitation to the supper, and though he had done so, he now flies in the face of himself, and says, "I cannot come." I think that I am addressing some here who have pledged themselves many a time to come to Christ. If I remember rightly you asked the prayers of friends, and promised that you would be in real earnest; you looked your wife in the face, and said, "I hope that it will not be long before I am with you in the church of God, and shall no longer have to go away and leave you alone at the Lord's Table." You asked some of your Christian friends to make a point of praying for you—but you have never carried out your intention of becoming a true Christian. Your resolutions may be still read in God's eternal book of record—but they are there as *witnesses* to your falseness and changeableness. The counterfoils are there, but there is no fulfillment of any of the resolutions. God remembers them although you have forgotten to carry them out. You accepted the invitation on the spur of the moment, but when worldliness got the upper hand with you, you went back to your old obstinacy, and said, "I cannot come." Perhaps you have not said it in quite as sharp a tone as I used just now, but it has come to the same thing, for you have not come to the Gospel Supper. It

matters little whether you say it angrily or quietly—if you do not come, the practical result is the same. I think I hear some of you, even now, say, “Do not ask me so often; I cannot come! It is of no use to worry me about it. I do not wish to be uncivil or unkind, though I said I would come, I retract my words! I cannot come.”

In saying, “I cannot come,” the man intended, as it were, to dismiss the matter. He wished to be understood as having made up his mind, and he was no longer open to argument. He did not parley. He did not talk. He just said, matter-of-factly, “I need no more persuading! I cannot come, and that settles it.” Certain of our hearers have come to such a condition of heart that they would gladly silence our gospel expostulations—with a kind but determined tone they would say—“*I cannot come*; do not trouble me anymore.”

I suppose that this man, after he had made that positive declaration, felt that there was truth in what he had stated. He said, “*Therefore* I cannot come.” He had a *reason* to support him in what he said, and he went home, sat down, and enjoyed himself. He felt that he was a righteous man, quite as good as those who had gone to the supper, and perhaps rather better. He could not blame himself, for when a man cannot do it, why, of course, he cannot do it! And why should he be censured for something impossible? “I cannot come”—how can I help that? So he sat down with a cool indifference to eat his own supper. It was nothing to him whether the great giver of the feast was grieved or not—whether his oxen and fatlings were wasted or not. He had said it to his conscience so often that he half believed it—“I cannot come, and there is no disputing it.”

I have no doubt that many who have never come to Christ have made themselves content to be without Him by the belief that they cannot come. Although the impossibility, if it did exist, would involve the greatest of all calamities, yet they speak of it with very little concern. Practically, they say, “I cannot be saved; I must remain an unbeliever.” What an awful thing for any mortal to say! Yet you have said it till you almost believe it, and you wish us, now, to leave you quite alone for this dreadful reason. You do not want to be troubled tonight; the text already begins to startle you a little, and you do not like it. You are almost sorry that you are here. If the Lord helps me, I will trouble you far more before you go out of this place! I have heavy tidings from the Lord for you! I shall endeavor, if I can, to pull away those downy pillows from your sleepy head, and wake you up to immediate anxiety lest you perish in your sins! With kindly importunity I will plead with you, and try to show you that this little speech of yours, “*I cannot come*,” is a wretched speech! You must throw it to the winds, and prove that you *can* come by coming at once, and receiving of the great feast of love, and honoring Him that spreads it for hungry souls.

Two or three things I would like to say about this case, for *it is very serious*. It was bad enough for this man to say, “I cannot come,” but it is far worse for *you* to say, “I cannot come to Christ.” Remember, if the invited guests did not come, and come at once, they could never come, for there was only that one supper, and not a series of banquets. The great man who made the feast did not intend to prepare another. A very grave offense would be committed by their not coming to the one supper. My dear hearers, there is only one time of divine grace for you, and if that is ended you will not have a second opportunity! There is only one Christ Jesus—there is no more sacrifice for sin; there is only one way of eternal love and mercy—do not forsake it. I pray you do not turn away from the one door of life, the one way of salvation! If it is slighted now, and the feast is over—as it will be when you die—then you will have lost the great privilege, and you will have been guilty of a gross neglect, from the consequences of which you never will be able to escape! Note this and beware!

Besides, it is not merely a supper that you will lose when you say, “I cannot come.” To lose a supper would be little, and might soon be set right when breakfast came round. But you lose *eternal life*, and that lost in time can never be found in eternity! You lose the pardon of sin, reconciliation to God, adoption into the family of love—those are heavy losses! You lose the joy of faith for life, and you lose comfort in death—who can estimate this damage? Lose not your immortal soul! Oh, lose not *that*; for if you gain the whole world it will not recompense you for such a loss! Lose what you will, but lose not your *soul*, I pray you, seek that salvation without which it had been better for you that you had never been born!

Besides, once more, if you do not come to Christ it will imply the greatest insult that you can put upon your Maker. You have already grieved Him by breaking His laws—but what will be His indignation when you refuse His mercy? When you turn your back on His Son? When you refuse not only your God, but your crucified Savior hanging there with outstretched arms, bleeding His life away, that He may save you? Do not turn your back on your own redemption! No blood was ever sprinkled on the threshold of an Israelite's house, for he must not trample on it—that would be ruinous, indeed. The blood was on the lintel, and on the two side posts, but never underfoot. Trample not upon the blood of Christ! And you will do so if you refuse His great salvation. If you will not come to Him to be saved, you have as good as said that you will be damned rather than be loved by God—that you will be damned rather than be saved through Jesus Christ His Son. It will prove a costly insult to you, as well as a grievous affront to your Lord.

Having said so much by way of preface, I am now going to take those words, "*I cannot come*," and handle them a little with the hope that you may grow ashamed of them.

**I.** First, this man declared, "I cannot come because," he said, "I HAVE MARRIED A WIFE." He had promised to come to the supper, and he was bound to fulfill his promise. Why did he want to get married just then? Surely he had not been compelled to marry all in a hurry so that he could not keep engagements already made! He was bound to keep his promise to the maker of the feast, and that promise was claimed of him by the messenger. He could not say that his wife would not let him come. Such a declaration might be true in England, but in the East the men are always masters of the situation, and women seldom bear rule in the family! No Oriental would say that his wife would not let him come! Nor in these Western regions, where the woman more nearly gains her rights, can any man truthfully say that his wife will not allow him to be a Christian. I do not believe that any of you will be able to say, when you come to die, that your wife was responsible for your not being a Christian. Most men would be angry if we told them that they were hen-pecked, and could not call their souls their own. He must be a fool, indeed, who would let a woman lead him down to hell against his will! The fact is, a man is a mean creature when he tries to throw the blame of his sin upon his wife. I know that Father Adam set us a bad example in that respect, but the fact that this was a part of the sin which caused the ruin of our race should act as a beacon to us. You certainly, as a man, ought not to demean yourself so much as to say, "I cannot come, for my wife will not let me." If one of you, however, continues to whine, "My wife is my ruin; I am unable to be a Christian because of my wife," I must ask you a question or two before I believe your pitiable story. Do you let her rule you in everything else? Does she keep you at home each evening? Does she pick all your companions for you? Why, my dear man, if I am not much mistaken, you are a self-willed, cross-grained, pig-headed animal about everything else! And then, when it comes to the matter of religion, you turn round and whine about being governed by your wife? I have no patience with you! It is more than probable that the very best thing that could happen to you would be to have your wife on the throne of England for the next few years. Upon such a solemn matter as this do not talk nonsense. You know that the blame lies with yourself alone—if you wished to seek the best things—the little woman at home would be no hindrance to you.

This man said, "*I cannot come*." Why? Because he had a wife! Strange plea! For surely that was a reason why he *should* come, and bring her with him! If any man, unhappily, has a wife opposed to the things of God, instead of saying, "I cannot be a Christian, for I have an unconverted wife," he should seek for double grace that he may win his wife to Christ. If a woman laments that she has an unconverted husband, let her live nearer to God, that she may save her husband. If a servant has an unconverted master, let him labor with double diligence to glorify God that he may win his master. Thus you see there are two reasons why you should come to the gospel banquet—not only for your own sake, but for the sake of your unconverted relatives.

My neighbor's candle is blown out—is that a reason why I must not light mine? No, but that is a reason why I should be all the more careful to keep mine burning, that I may light my neighbor's candle, too. It is a pity that my wife should be lost, but I cannot help her by being lost myself. No, but I may help her if I take my stand, and follow Christ the more resolutely because my wife opposes me. Good man, do not allow your wife to draw you aside! Good woman, do not let your husband hinder you! Do not say, "I cannot attend the house of God, nor be a Christian while I have such a husband as I have."

No, that is the reason why you *should* take your stand the more bravely in the name of God, that by your example, those whom you love may be rescued from destruction. How do you know, O wife, but that you may save your unbelieving husband? How do you know, O servant, but that you may save your unbelieving master?

I remember hearing Mr. Jay tell a story about a Nonconformist servant girl who went to live in a family of worldly people who attended the Church of England. Although they were not real believers—they were outside buttresses of the church, but they had very little to do with the inside of it—and outsiders are generally the most bigoted. They were very angry with their servant for going to the little meeting house and threatened to discharge her if she went again; but she went all the same, and very kindly but firmly assured them that she must continue to do so. At last she received notice to go—they could not, as good Church people—have a Dissenter living with them! She took their rough treatment very patiently, and it came to pass that the day before she was to leave her situation, a conversation took place somewhat of this sort. The master said, “It is a pity, after all, that Jane should go. We never had such a good girl. She is very industrious, truthful, and attentive.” The wife said, “Well, I have thought that it is hardly the thing to send her away for going to her chapel. You always speak up for religious liberty, and it does not look quite like religious liberty to turn our girl away for worshipping God according to her conscience. I am sure she is a deal more careful about her religion than we are about ours.” So they talked it over, and they decided, “She has never answered us pertly, nor found fault with us about our going to church. Her religion is a greater comfort to her than ours is to us. We had better let her stay with us, and go where she likes.” “Yes,” said the husband, “and I think we had better go and hear the minister that she goes to hear; evidently she has got something that we have not. Instead of sending her away for going to chapel, we will go with her next Sunday, and judge the matter for ourselves.” And they did, and it was not long before the master and mistress were members of that same church! Do not say, therefore, “I cannot come because my master and mistress object to it.” Do not make idle excuses out of painful facts which are reasons why you should be more determined than ever, even if you have to go to heaven alone, that you will be a follower of Christ. Keep to your resolve, and you may entertain the hope and belief that you will, by His grace, lead others to the Savior’s feet.

**II.** A second reason is even more common. It is not everybody who can say, “I have married a wife,” but *everywhere* you can meet with a person who pleads, “I HAVE NO TIME.” You say, “Sir, I cannot attend to religion, for I have no time.” I remember hearing an old lady say to a man who said that he had no time, “Well, you have got all the time there is.” I thought that it was a very conclusive answer. You have *had* the time, and you still have all the time there is—why do you not use it? Nobody has more than 24 hours in a day, and you have no less. You have no time? That is very singular! What have you done with it—you certainly have had it! Time flies with you, I know, but so does it with me, and with everybody. What do you do with it? “Oh, I have no time,” says one. I say again, you have had the time, and that time was due, in part, to a solemn consideration of the things of God. You have robbed God of that part of time which was due to Him, and you have given up to some inferior thing what your great Lord and Master could rightly claim for the highest purposes.

You have time enough for common things. See here, I never meet any of you in the middle of the day in the street in your shirtsleeves. I do not find you going up and down Cheapside half-dressed. “Oh, no, of course not; we have time to put on our clothes.” You have time to dress your bodies and no time to dress your souls with the robe of Christ’s righteousness? Do not tell me that! I do not meet any one of our friends saying, towards evening, “I am ready to faint, for I have had nothing to eat since I got up. I have had no time to get a morsel of meat.” No, no! They have had their breakfast, and they have had their dinner, and so on. “Oh, yes, we have time to eat,” says one. Do you tell me that you have time to feed your bodies, and that God has not given you time in which to feed your souls? Why, it is not commonsense! Such statements will not hold water for a moment! You must have time to feed your souls if you have time to feed your bodies! People find time to look in the mirror, and wash their faces, and brush their hair. Have you no time whatever to look at yourself, to see your spiritual spots, and to wash in the fountain that is open for sin and for uncleanness? O dear sirs, you have time for common things, and you must certainly have time for those much more serious and important matters which concern your souls and immortality!

You have no time? How is this, when you waste a good deal? How much do many of us spend in silly talk? How much time do certain persons spend in frivolous amusements? I have heard people say that they have no time, which I am sure I do not know what they can have to occupy themselves! Are there not many people about who, if they were tied in a knot, and thrown into the Bay of Biscay, would be missed by nobody, for they do no good to any mortal being? They are living without an objective—purposeless, aimless lives—and yet they talk about not having time! Such pretenses will not do. When you plead with God, say something that looks like commonsense.

You have no time, and yet you undertake more *secular* work? You keep a shop, do you not? “Yes, I have a large shop.” You are going to enlarge it, are you not? Will you have time, do you think, to attend to it when the business grows? “Oh, yes, I dare say that I shall find time—at any rate, I must *make* time, somehow or other.” You are going to take a second shop, are you not? How will you manage it? “Oh, I shall find time.” Yes, my dear sirs, you can find time for all those enlargements, and speculations, and engagements! Now let me be frank with you, and say that you could find time for thought about your *soul* if you had a mind to do so. To plead that you have no time for religion is a fraud! It will not do! It is lying to God to say that you have no time! When a man wants to do a thing, if he has no time, he *makes* time. I beg the idle man not to go on deceiving himself with the notion that he has no time. “Where there’s a will there’s a way.” Where there is a heart to religion, there is plenty of time for it. Blame your unwilling minds, and not your scanty hours! You will have time enough when your hearts are once turned in the right direction.

Besides, time is not the great matter. Did the Lord demand of you a month’s retirement from business? Did we command you to spend two days a week in prayer? Did we tell you that you could not be saved unless you shut yourself up an hour every morning for meditation? I would to God you could have an hour for meditation; but if you cannot, who has demanded it of you? The command is that you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and forsake your sin—and this is a matter which will not interfere with your daily work. A man can turn the potter’s wheel and pray; a man can lay bricks and pray; a man can drive the carriage and pray; a man can walk behind a plow, and yet he can be walking with God. A woman can scrub a floor and commune with God. A man can be riding on horseback and yet he can still be in communion with the Most High. A woman can be sewing dresses. and growing in divine grace. It is not a matter in which *time* comes in so much as to interfere with any of the ordinary duties of life. Therefore throw away that excuse, and do not say any longer, “I cannot come because I have no time.” At once repent of your sin, and believe in the Lord Jesus—and then all your time will be free for the service of the Lord, and yet you will have not a moment less for the necessary duties of your calling.

**III.** There is a third form of this excuse, and a very common one—“I HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO.” Now, come on! I will have you by the throat over that. I shall contradict you daily. *You have nothing more important to do!* That would be utterly impossible! Nothing under heaven can be of one-hundredth part of the importance of your being reconciled to God, and saved through Jesus Christ! What is that more important business? To make money? Where is the importance of that? You may get a pile of it, and the net result will be greater care, and the more to leave when you die! But you tell me you must have an opportunity for study. Well, that is better, but what are you going to study? Science? Art? Politics? Are these important compared with the saving of your soul? Why, if you have an educated mind, and it is lost, it will be as bad to lose it in culture, and learning as to lose it in ignorance. Your first duty is to be right with your God who made you! Put nothing before your God. Has Christ redeemed you? Rest not till you know the truth of that redemption by being reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Nothing can be as important to a man as to be obedient to his Maker, and enjoy his Maker’s love. Nothing, therefore, can be as important to a man as to be pardoned through the Savior and changed by the power of the Holy Spirit from an enemy of God into a friend of God.

“Oh,” you say, “But my business occupies so much of my time.” Yes, but do you not know that very likely your business would go on better if you were right with God? Many a time a business goes wrong because the man is wrong—and sometimes it is even incumbent upon God to be at cross-purposes with a man because a man is at cross-purposes with Him. If you walk disobediently towards Him, He will walk contrary to you—but when you are obedient to Him; He can make other things subservient to you. In a little church on the Italian mountains I saw, among many absurd paintings, one picture which struck me.

There was a plowman who had turned aside at a certain hour to pray. The rustic artist drew him upon his knees before the opened heavens, and lest there should be any waste of time occasioned by his devotion, an angel was going on with the plowing for him! I like the idea. I do not think an angel ever did go on with a man's plowing while he was praying, but I think that the same result often comes to pass, and that when we give our hearts to God, and seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things are added unto us. If religion does not make you richer, which it may not do, it will make you more content with what you have. The blessing of God with a dinner of herbs will make it better than a stalled ox without that benediction. He that would make the best of this world, and have the greatest enjoyment here of the truest and best kind will do well to give his first attention to his Savior—and his whole heart to faith in Him—and diligence in His service. You have no more important business, I am quite sure, that the business which concerns God and eternity.

**IV.** I have heard some use the excuse "I CANNOT AFFORD TO BE A CHRISTIAN." Well, my friend let us have a talk about *that*. Cost you more than you can afford? What do you mean? What cost? Cost you *money*? It need not. It will cost you no more than you like to spend upon it with a glad heart. God will give you a generous spirit which will make you love to support His cause, and to help the poor, and contribute your share to all Christian mission work. But in the kingdom of Christ there is no taxation! Giving becomes a gratification, liberality a luxury! Nothing will be dragged from you by force. Surely our God abhors money that comes into His treasury by anything but the freewill offerings of loving hearts. It will not cost you much in that way, I am sure, for you are only to give as God has prospered you.

Suppose man should say, "Well, I must take a seat in the chapel if I would comfortably hear the gospel." Very well; will it be unjust that you bear your proportion of necessary expenses in supporting the man who gives all his time, thought and ability to you? Will you pay as much in a year to hear the gospel as many pay for one night at the play? Yes, and do not many at a horserace spend a hundred times more than they ever gave throughout their whole existence either to the poor or to the church of God? What you save by holy, gracious, thrifty habits will render this no loss to you, but a gain!

"Oh, but I meant that I could not afford it, for I should have to lose several friends." Is that friend worth keeping who is an enemy to God? The woman who would lead you away from God, or the man who would keep you out of heaven—are friends of that sort worth having? Be brave and end a connection which will otherwise endlessly connect you with the bottomless pit!

"Oh," says one, "but I mean that I should lose so much in trade." Ah, well, I will not ask you to explain what you mean by *that*—for there is an ugly look about that statement. You know more about your trade than I do. No doubt there are trades which pander to the vices of men. and become all the more profitable in proportion to the growth of drunkenness and impurity. These must be given up! Moreover, there are traders who live by puffery, and lying, and cheating—and I do not recommend you to profess to be a Christian if *that* is *your* line of things. It is better to give up all profession of religion when you go in for unrighteous gain. What? Did I hear a hint about adulteration? Did I also hear that you do not give full weight and true measure? Ah, my dear fellow, give up that game at once, whether you become a Christian or not! But certainly, if that is what you mean, the loss of dishonest profits will be a great *gain* to you—both for this life and the next.

"Well," says one, "I should have to give up a good many pleasures." Pleasures which block the road to heaven ought to be given up at once! You may think me a very melancholy sort of person, but I fancy that I am about as happy as any man in England. I appreciate a merry thought, and a cheerful speech as much as anybody; I can laugh and I can enjoy good, clean, humorous remarks as well as most people. And having now served the Lord for nearly 40 years, I bear my witness that I have never had to relinquish a single pleasure for which I have felt a deliberate desire. As soon as you are renewed in heart, you are changed in your pleasures—and that which might have been a pleasure to you, once, would then be a misery. If I had to sit in some people's company, and hear what some people talk about, it would be hell to me! One night, having to preach up in the North of England, this unfortunate circumstance occurred to me. When I got down to the railway, I was put into a first-class carriage with five racing gentlemen who were going to the Doncaster races. Happily they did not know me, but from the beginning to the end, the conversation of these gentlemen was garnished with expressions which

tortured me. And at last they fell upon a subject which was unutterably loathsome. I pray God that I may not be condemned to dwell with such people forever, for it would be hell to me! Ladies and gentlemen, you need not think that I rob myself of any pleasure when I do not go to racetracks, or associate with the licentious! It is my pleasure to keep far off from the pleasures of those men of pleasure, in whose company I was forced to spend that evening. The pleasures of this world are so full of dust, dirt, and grit that he who has once washed his mouth clean of them, declines another meal of such bunk. You will lose no pleasure if you come to Christ!

**V.** I hear one other person say, "I cannot come." Why not? "Well, sir, I do not mean that I shall not come one of these days, but IT WOULD NOT BE CONVENIENT JUST NOW. I could not yield my heart to the Lord tonight." No. I know. You have an engagement tomorrow which must be attended to, and it would not be quite the thing for a Christian. Just so; it would not be convenient tonight, nor on Monday, nor will it be on Tuesday, depend upon it—your anxious thoughts will have gone by then. It will not be convenient to be saved? You want to see a little "life," do you not? "Life" in London means death. "Oh, but just now I am only an apprentice!" Then at once be bound apprentice to Christ! "But I am a journeyman; when I get a little business of my own, then will be the time." Will it? Oh that you would become a journeyman to Christ! "But I have associations just now that render it difficult." That is to say God must wait *your* convenience? Is that the way the poor treat the doctors who receive patients gratis? Do they say, "Doctor, it is not convenient for me to call upon you before 10 or 11 o'clock in the morning; it is not convenient for me to come to your house; I shall be glad to see you if you come to my house about half-past 11 in the evening." Would you send a message to a physician in the West End that you will be pleased for him to attend to you for nothing, if he will come at your time? "Oh," you say, "I should not think of insulting a doctor like that; if he is kind enough to attend to me for nothing." And yet you will insult your God! You mean that *God* is not worthy of your strength and health now—but when you are old and worn out—*then* you mean to sneak into heaven, and cheat the devil! It is dirt mean of you! I can say no better. Though the Lord is exceedingly gracious and merciful, yet when men make up their minds to it that they will only give Him the worst end of life—it is small wonder that they die in their sins! What must God think of such treatment? Do not say, "I cannot come." Come at once! The Lord help you to come!

**VI.** I have heard people say, "I cannot come, sir, for I CANNOT UNDERSTAND IT. I am a poor man. I never had any education." What is it that you cannot understand? Can you not understand that you have broken God's law, and that the just God must punish you for it? You can understand that! Can you not understand that if you trust the Lord Jesus Christ, then it is certain that He took your sin and bore it in His own body on the cross, and put your sin away, for His name is the "Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world"? Can you not understand that if you trust in Him you have Him to stand in your place—for the Scripture says, "He has made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him"? You can understand it if you wish to do so. There is nothing in the gospel which the poorest and the least educated cannot understand if their minds are made willing to know and receive the truth of God. If the Spirit of God will come upon them, they cannot only understand the gospel, but grasp it, and enjoy it, and begin to teach it to others, too—for the Lord makes the babes to have knowledge and discretion in His ways—while the wise and learned in scientific matters often miss the way to the eternal kingdom.

I have done. The sound of the bell tells me that my time has fled. Another bell will one day warn *you* that you have done, and that your life is over, even as my sermon is over. But I need to say just this. If there is any man here who says, "I cannot come," I beg him to express himself properly, and speak out the sad fact as it ought to be spoken. Here is the style—"Unhappy wretch, I cannot come to Christ! Millions in heaven have come, but I cannot come! My mother died in a good hope, but, 'Mother, I cannot come.' My father has gone home to be with Jesus, but I cannot come." I thank God that this statement is not true, but if you say it and believe it, you ought never to rest anymore, for if you cannot come to Christ, you are the unhappiest person in the world! Is there any woman that cries, "I cannot come," or any man that pleads, "I cannot come"? Wherever you are sitting or standing, let the bell that told out the death of the last hour warn you of your *spiritual* death; for if you cannot come to Christ and

eat of His supper, you cannot be saved! You cannot escape from the wrath to come—you are doomed forever!

May I ask you to do another thing? If you still intend to say, “I cannot come,” will you speak the truth now? Will you alter a word, and get nearer the truth? Say, “I *will* not come.” “I cannot come,” is Greek, or double Dutch—but the plain English is, “I WILL NOT COME.” I wish you would say *that* rather than the other because the recoil of saying, “I will not come; I will not believe in Jesus; I will not repent of sin; I will not turn from my wicked ways”—the recoil, I say, from that might be blessed by God to you to make you see your desperate state. I wish you would then cry, “I cannot sit down and make my own damnation sure by saying that I will not come to Christ.”

Will you now, instead of refusing to come, resolve to come at once? Say, “I will come to Jesus. Tell me how.” You can only come to Christ by trusting Him. Trust yourself with Him, and He will save you! Never did anyone trust Jesus in vain! Trust has a powerful influence over the Lord Jesus. He comes to the rescue of a soul that leans wholly upon Him. He will do all things for you—He will change your nature as well as forgive your sin! And your nature being changed, you shall lead a new life from this time forth, and grow in divine grace until you become like He in whom you trust! And then He will take you to be forever with Him. Washed in the blood of the Lamb, you shall walk with Him in white amidst the glorified!

Thus I have talked tonight in a very homely way. I pray the Lord to bless words which are intended to be faithful, plain, and impressive. May we meet in heaven! There are very many strangers here tonight—may you not be strangers to the Lord Jesus! Many of our friends are away, and some of you have come out although it is a nasty wet evening—I take this as a token for good. God bless you! I pray that you may get the double blessing, and may remember this gloomy, dark, December-like evening in May by the blessing that God shall put upon you through Jesus Christ, His Son. Amen.

**PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Luke 14.**

**HYMNS FROM OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—501, 560, 550.**

**LETTER FROM MR. SPURGEON:**

DEAR FRIENDS—I hope this sermon may touch the consciences of the careless. It should be widely scattered if such is found to be the case. I have earnestly sought that it may be so by the power of the Holy Spirit. Please unite with me in this. I do not find myself quite recovered. We have wet weather and my old enemy tries me. I hope to shake it all off soon, and to return to work in good condition, but this may need a little longer delay. If this rest sets me going for all the remainder of this year it will be a very good investment. Remembering my readers in my prayers, I am your servant for Christ’s sake,

Mentone, Jan. 3, 1890.

**C. H. SPURGEON**

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