

WANTED, A GUEST CHAMBER! **NO. 785**

**A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“The Master says, Where is the guest chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples?”
Mark 14:14.*

AS FAR as we know, out of the many thousands who had come to Jerusalem from the utmost ends of the earth to keep the Passover, none were left unaccommodated with a guest chamber except our Lord Jesus Christ. Jerusalem, at the time of the Passover, was one great inn; the whole of the houses were occupied not only by the regular tenants, but by their friends from the country parts of Judea. Each one had invited his own friends, and all the houses were filled; but there was found no one to invite the Savior, and He had no dwelling of His own. He who received sinners, was excluded by all. The friend of man was houseless, and at the national festival He was no man's guest. He would have been left in the streets, if by His own supernatural power He had not found Himself an upper room in which to keep the feast. It is so even to this day; Jesus is not received among the sons of men save only where by His supernatural power and grace He makes the heart anew. Every pursuit has its eager followers, every art its votaries, every object its devotees, but Jesus is uncared for and neglected. Art, science, poetry, literature, mechanics, politics, wealth—all these obtain a willing homage; men need no renewal of their minds to follow after these; but to the natural man the Lord Jesus has no form nor comeliness, and He therefore is despised and rejected. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” Like the Levite in the days of the Judges, “There was no man that took him into his house to lodging.” All doors are open enough to the prince of darkness, but Jesus must clear a way for Himself or lodge in the streets. I think I hear Him crying even to His own church, “Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled: for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night.”

Doubtless one reason for this may be found in the fact that it was dangerous to receive Christ at that season. The rulers were hunting Him, thirsty for His blood, and they had issued the command that if any man knew where He was, he should tell them, that they might take Him. In the first place, to harbor Christ was to run the risk of being put out of the synagogue; in the second, to become the object of public contempt, and perhaps in conclusion, to meet with a sudden and violent death; therefore, prudent, careful men, closed their doors against Him, and argued that they could not expose their families to so much peril. They might in their hearts admire Him, in their souls they might lament that He was so harshly dealt with, but they could not run the risk of declaring themselves to be on His side by entertaining Him at that moment of excitement. So is it at this hour, men always have a good reason, as they think, for that most unreasonable of all unkindnesses—the rejection of Jesus, their best friend. The farm, the merchandise, the newly-married wife, all these are the transparently weak excuses for not coming to the gospel supper. Preoccupation of mind with some other pursuit; the self-denials which Christianity would involve; the difficulties which are supposed to beset a consistent Christian profession—any, and all of these, and even worse than these, serve to satisfy the human conscience with the shadow of an excuse. Jesus Christ is kept on the cold side of the door, and our worst enemies are welcomed. Though it is the highest honor that man can have to entertain Him, yet a cruel refusal is given Him, and any excuse in the world is thought to be sufficient.

Yet there was one who was willing to entertain the Savior, and the Lord knew Him and where to find Him, according to that ancient saying, “The Lord knows them who are His.” There shall never be a time in the world's history so dark but surely the Lord will have His chosen stars shining brightly amid the gloom. Christ shall never be so much despised but what there will be found here and there elect souls, hearts that the Lord has touched, who will say, “Come in and welcome, most sweet Lord: we rejoice to render You the hospitality of our loving hearts.” Be of good courage, my brothers and sisters; piety may be at a low ebb, but it shall never run dry: the lamp may flicker, but it cannot be extinguished; our ranks may be thinned, but the host shall hold the battlefield. There are a few names even in Sardis; there is one

Lot at least, even in Sodom; and in the raging Sanhedrin a Nicodemus holds a seat. In the worst times of superstition God raises up witnesses for His truth. We need never fear for the church—an imperishable seed is in her, and nothing shall destroy her. The gates of hell shall not prevail against her; though her ministers may fall, and many of her professed members may apostatize, yet the Lord will keep up the succession of the saints, and Jesus shall not lack a man to bear up the standard of the cross; so long as the earth remains, the everlasting kingdom of the Son of David shall stand.

I shall now call your attention to the whole incident of our Lord's finding a guest chamber in which to keep the Passover, and I shall regard the question which I have selected for a text, first, as *the mighty word of the Master's effectual grace*; and next, as *the affectionate inquiry of the servant's obedient solicitude*.

I. First, the Master says, "Where is the guest chamber?" This question may be regarded as THE MIGHTY WORD OF THE MASTER'S EFFECTUAL GRACE.

Our Lord intended to celebrate the Passover in the large upper room belonging to the person to whom He sent Peter and John; the message which He sent by their lips was all-powerful, the man at once yielded up his furnished parlor without difficulty or demur, because there went a power with the word which the man was unwilling and unable to resist. Viewing this as a symbolical representation of the way in which hearts are won for Jesus, we observe, in the first place, *that the time and the circumstances were all appointed*. Two apostles were commanded to go to the city, and when they should come to the city, providence would be there working before them—they were to meet a man just at the entrance of the city; he was to be there at the very moment of their arrival; he and none but he. This man must bear a pitcher—the pitcher must be filled with water; the water carrier must proceed to a certain house, and to no other. This house must contain an upper room, large enough to receive Christ and 12 others; this room must be in the possession of a person who would be perfectly willing to receive the Master and His disciples, and the good man of the house must be home to show the room, and give the messengers admittance at once. Here were several very unlikely things to meet together at one particular juncture, and yet they did so meet. Providence arranges that when the apostles are at the city gates, the tankard-bearer is there too, with his pitcher full of water; he goes to the house, the house is the right habitation, the man who possesses it shall be the right man, and Christ shall be entertained. beloved, there are quite as many notable circumstances to be observed in the conversion of each one of God's people. I do not doubt that the Lord has settled, concerning every one of His elect, the exact time when they shall pass from death unto life, the precise instrumentality by which they shall be converted, the exact word that shall strike with power upon their mind, the period of conviction which they shall undergo, and the instant when they shall burst into the joyful liberty of a simple faith in Christ. It is all settled, all arranged and predetermined in the divine purpose. If the very hairs of our head are all numbered, much more the circumstances of the most important of all events which can occur to us!

This may not seem to be a very practical truth of God, and yet I think it is. I may go, for instance, a journey by rail; it is left to my option at what time to start, and in what carriage I shall ride; yet I select a particular hour and carriage, and soon a person is thrown in my way whom I have never seen before; the conversation is directed towards holy things; that person is already anxious, and my conversation is so consoling that it seems to him that I am sent for the very purpose of relieving his anxiety. As we converse upon divine things he is led to see what he never saw before, the way of salvation by the substitutionary sacrifice is opened up to him, and he casts himself into the hands of the Savior. Now, who shall say but what there was an arrangement there which God Himself, in His infinite wisdom, saw fit to make for the designed end? You have two ways today of going home from the tabernacle; you know not why, but you select one of the two, and in that street, if you are on the alert, as you should be, and anxious to deliver souls from going down to the pit of hell, you may meet with an individual whom you would not have seen if you had taken the other route, and it may be that you, by a few words concerning eternal salvation, shall direct that person into the way of peace, and lead him to lay hold on eternal life. He who observes providence shall never need a providence to observe, and he who watches providence with the view of discovering occasions for usefulness, will find himself surrounded with golden opportunities for soul-winning. I would have you, therefore, respect the workings of divine providence, by being upon your watchtower to avail yourselves of them. You know nothing of the secret decree of God, but you can see what the decree brings forth, and then if you are wise, you can benefit your neighbors by it. Believe firmly that God has a purpose to serve by everything that occurs, and that He would have

you, His servants, watchful for all opportunities that you may bring men to knowledge of the truth of God. I hope, this morning, that there are some here who scarcely know why they are in the Tabernacle, but the secret is that eternal purposes of divine grace towards them are now ripe for fulfillment. Remarkable circumstances may have worked together to bring them here; possibly had it been finer weather, the crowd would have filled the place earlier, and they would have been excluded for lack of room—this wet weather gave them a chance of admission where the gospel is preached, and so the very drops of rain may have been God’s messengers of mercy to them, indirectly working for their salvation. There may be circumstances which I cannot pretend to guess, which revolve round some of you concerning which God has said, “Thus and thus it shall be, that I may bring this man to the spot where I intend to arrest him by divine grace, and make him a saved soul.” I do trust this may be the case, and that miracles of mercy may be worked by our Redeemer according to the counsel of His will.

Note further a second thing, albeit the circumstances were all foreordained, yet *Christ’s entrance into this man’s house was worked by instrumentality*. Had our Lord pleased to do so, He could have remained where He was, He could have secretly sent forth His Spirit into the householder’s mind to compel him to lend his upper room. Certainly there was no need why Peter and John should go as pioneers, for, if the Lord had gone Himself in person, at once He would of course have obtained quite as ready admission as His servants. But He chose to work by means. So it is in conversion; the Lord could save souls if He willed, without ministers, without teachers, without prayerful parents, without even the written word, but He does not choose to do so. There are a few instances in which men have been suddenly impressed where no cause for the impression was apparent beyond the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit. Apart from instrumentality, men have been awakened in the midst of their sins, like Saul of Tarsus, who was struck down while on the road to persecute the saints in Damascus; the most obstinate have been suddenly subdued; but the general rule is, that “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,” and men do not hear without a preacher, but God sends the preacher and the hearing ear, and then gives the willing heart by His effectual grace. So, beloved, we must never fall into the delusion that the purposes of God set aside the use of means. I have heard thoughtless or critical talkers say, “If God works out His purposes, then there is no need for preaching or any other means.” Ah, simpleton that you are, if we teach you that God works out His purposes by *means*, how crazy must you be to charge us with thinking lightly of the means! If God accomplishes His eternal purposes by preaching, then the more need for preaching, and the more encouragement in it, for what would be the use of preaching if God had not purposed to bless it? What were the use of plowing and sowing, if God had not predestinated a harvest by such means? We do not believe in a decree which ordains effects without causes: the ordinance of God is comprehensive, and takes in all things; instrumentality is as much in the decree as is the result of such instrumentality. God, who determined to save, determined also to save by means; He determined to save no man without faith, and to give no man faith except through the knowledge of the truth. The means are as much in the decree as in the result, and in using the means we hope to see the result following according to the Will of God.

The apostles who were sent to the householder, afford us a few instructive lessons. Mark carefully, that all the disciples were quite willing to go. You observe it is said, “His disciples said unto Him, Where will You that we go and prepare that You may eat the Passover?” So every Christian should be anxious and willing to win souls to God—as well the sisters as the brothers, as well the weak as the strong, as well the teens as the full-grown men—we should all stand prepared to evangelize the world, and all be anxious to have our Master’s blessing upon our work. Let everyone here this morning, who knows Christ in his heart, be saying, “Lord, what will You have me to do?” Let us each be in the spirit of Isaiah when he cried “Here am I; send me!” At the same time, the Master did not employ the whole of the 12 in this case, but preferred to send Peter and John. So in the conversion of His people, He more frequently blesses His chosen servants, His ministers of truth—these turn many to righteousness, and bring many captives to the Captain. He chooses His Peters and his Johns who have had the most familiar acquaintance with Himself, and are best adapted to deliver His gracious message, and upon these He puts special honor, thus manifesting His sovereignty in the distribution of both gifts and graces. Let every man who seeks to preach the gospel learn to do his Lord’s work in the style of Peter and John, who went not without being sent and commissioned. No man has any right to aspire to the Christian pastorate without a call from the Most High. There must come to us a setting apart, an ordination not of man, but by the eternal Spirit making us to be vessels of mercy unto the nations. When we obtain this anointing

and appointment, we must take care that we go about our work in our Master's way. These men were not to go blundering into the city, hurrying to knock at the first door they might hit upon; they must look out for the man with the water pot, and follow him. I think I see them. How anxiously they look around! And when they see the man, they ask no questions of him—that was not in the command—they follow blindly where he leads. I mark the holy joy in their faces as they see the water carrier stop at a door, and put down his load! How confidently they enter the house, and inquire for the landlord! The Master has given them the sign, they see the countersign, and feel that all is well.

The story reminds you of Eleazar, the servant of Abraham, when seeking a wife for Isaac. He too had an appointed sign—the damsel would say, “Drink, and I will give your camels drink also”; and lo, Rebekah came, and just what he had asked she might do, she did, and then the man lifted up his heart to God, and blessed the God of his Master Abraham for giving him good speed on his errand.

If we would seek souls, we must follow the indications of God's will, we must be like the handmaidens whose eyes watch their mistresses; we must be anxious to detect the first sign of divine grace, to observe the kindling of the new-born life in the awakened soul, to discover the first incomings of the divine light into the thick darkness of the natural heart; and then we must follow our Master's will—not inventing this clap-trap and that excitement as new methods of revival, not fashioning new gospels of our own, but keeping close to the all-perfect gospel of our blessed God, preaching the truth of God simply after the apostolic precedent, believing that in this way, and in this way only, we may expect to see the revival which we seek.

The Master's word of power comes to men, then, by instrumentality. Dear hearers, you who are not converted, never neglect the means of divine grace, because it is through the means that God's blessing will be most likely to come to you. “Being in the way, the Lord met with me.” I have heard of a young lad who was observed to be especially attentive to the sermon, and when he was asked the reason, he said, “Because I believe that if there is anything likely to do me good, Satan is sure to prevent my hearing it if possible, and therefore I listen with all my heart in the hope that I may hear to my soul's profit.” You will not listen long in vain, if you listen so. In the pools of the gospel, men mostly catch what they fish for, and if you come to hear the word desiring salvation, you will, I trust, soon obtain it. If you resort to the place of worship merely to pass the time away, or to hear a popular preacher, you cannot expect a blessing from God; but if you come here breathing the prayer, “Lord, meet with me—Jesus, save me today,” I do not doubt that whoever the preacher may be, God will visit you through him, and hear your prayer.

In the third place, although we are now speaking of Christ's effectual power, yet *the man's will was consulted*. Peter and John said to him, “The Master says, Where is the guest chamber?” They did not push themselves into the guest chamber, and say to the owner, “We take possession of this parlor in the Master's name whether you like it or not; we have come here, and we mean to stay here; our Master sent us, and we shall not go away.” Nothing of the kind! The man's chamber was his own, and the Lord Jesus Christ respects the man's household rights by calling him “the good man of the house”—the master, the proprietor, the landlord of it. So it is in conversion. Men are brought to God by the effectual power of divine grace, but grace never violates, though it subdues, the human will. They make a great mistake who think that God treats men as if they were logs—God knows they are not logs, and never treats them so. He has made them in His own image, to be free, intelligent agents, and He acts upon them as free agents. It is difficult for some men to understand how grace can be effectual and Almighty, and yet man can still be a free agent. Now, if persons cannot see this, we are not bound to give them understandings, but the two things are consistent enough: prejudice creates the difficulty, there is none really. A man may be free enough, and yet he may be so overwhelmingly persuaded to a certain course that he cannot do otherwise; such moral power does not at all interfere with true liberty. If we taught that men were saved against their wills, and that physical force was put upon them to make them Christians, we would deserve to be denounced as talking nonsense, or worse; but the power which we speak of is moral, spiritual, persuasive, and operates in strict accordance with the usual laws of mind. The grace of God does no violence to the will, but sweetly overcomes its obstinacy, making it a willing captive. The force that we speak of at any time when we speak of the power of divine grace, must be understood by you all to be a force in consistency with the original constitution of manhood; and evermore, although our Lord works upon men according to His own will, yet He always so works upon them as thinking, judging, willing men, and not as substances which are to be hammered, broken, or twisted by brute force.

My hearers, you must not expect that you will be dragged into heaven by the ears, or whirled into salvation by the hair of your heads; if you are ever saved, the heart must be changed, and your whole being must freely consent to the rule of grace. If you are ever born-again, you will be made willing in the day of God's power. His grace will come to you to remove your prejudices, to overcome your obstinacy, and to make you willingly obedient to the divine sway. How anxiously I wish that you had such a will this morning! May the Lord bow your will by the divine power of His love, and may you say today, "Lord, I will to be saved; *I am willing to renounce sin and lay hold on eternal life.*" You shall never find God's will behind yours. Where He *gives* a willing mind, think it to be the indication of His own merciful willingness. When grace has brought you to be willing to accept Christ, then be not afraid, but believe at once.

But now, in the next place, although his will was consulted, yet, *through a mysterious power exerted by our Lord, the householder raised no question*, but at once cheerfully and joyfully opened his guest chamber. He was not compelled to give up his upper room, but yet he did it as surely as if force had been used. We do not observe the slightest hesitation. He acted as if he had said, "Come in, and welcome; I owe too much to your Master to refuse." Perhaps this man had seen his child raised to life; perhaps he had been a leper, and been healed; perhaps he had been lame and been restored; at any rate, he was a friend of Christ. Who he was, and what he was, we do not know, but he joyfully accepted the honor which the Redeemer proposed to confer upon him. By this shall we know today, who are the Lord's chosen and who are not; for when the gospel comes to some, they fight against it, and will not have it, but where men receive it, welcoming it, and blessing God that it has come to them, this is a sure indication that there is a secret work going on in the soul, and that God has chosen them unto eternal life. Are you willing, dear hearer, to receive Christ? Are you this day content to take Him and hold Him to be your all in all? Then there is no difficulty in the way; you may have Him; His own power is working with you, making you willing, and the invitation is, "Whoever will, let him take of the water of life freely."

As for this man, I may say in conclusion, that *he had the unspeakable honor of entertaining Christ* in his upper room at the last supper at which our Savior sat before His death; and, O brothers and sisters, if you and I receive Christ into our hearts, what an honor to entertain the Son of God this side of the stars! The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, all the glories of paradise are too little for the splendor of His person and the dignity of His merits, and yet He condescends to find a house within our narrow hearts! We are not worthy that He should come under our roof, but what an unutterable privilege when He condescends to enter, for then He makes a feast, and causes our souls to feast with Him upon such royal dainties as Solomon in all his glory could not spread! We sit at a banquet where the food is immortal, and gives immortality to those who feed on them. If you have ever feasted with the Well-Beloved, I am sure you will wish the festival would never break up; you will long for the time when you may eat the bread of heaven in heaven, and drink the wine of the new kingdom in glory, and go no more out, but abide with the Father world without end. Happy, thrice happy is the man who entertains the angels' Lord.

Thus have I outlined the story of effectual grace. Christ's grace comes to us while we are yet dead in sin: we are called by it; instrumentality is used, yet the secret power of God does it all; and as a result of it, we by entertaining the Savior, are greatly honored and eminently blessed. Now, is there not here, for believers, a theme for earnest praise? Brothers and sisters, if Christ has entered into your hearts and mine, and that entrance was effected wholly through His grace, let us magnify Him exceedingly!—

*“’Twas the same love that spread the feast
That sweetly forced us in;
Else we had still refused to taste,
And perished in our sin.”*

Let us extol the amazing love which has worked in us so mightily to redeem us from our natural hardness of heart. Let those refuse to sing who have never known their obligations to sovereign grace; but those of us who feel our debt, must praise the lavish hand which has dealt so bountifully with us.

And ought not this, moreover, to encourage every worker for God? Beloved, if the Master can thus find a banqueting house when He seems to be altogether destitute, and find it with but a word, let us never despair of the salvation of any man; let us go forth to our labor for souls, believing that the Lord will still find Himself a lodging within men's hearts. What if nine out of 10 of the unconverted here

should say, "We will not admit the Savior," yet there is a remnant according to the election of grace who will welcome Him! We may be content to be rebuffed with a 100 negatives, if but one soul is obedient to our message. If we had to preach to thousands year after year, and never rescued but one soul, that one soul would be a full reward for all our labor, for a soul is of countless price. Let us be of good courage, the Master may give us all our hearers as our hire if He wills to do so; He can subdue the most hard heart with a word, and make our ministry, which has been barren up to this moment, suddenly become fruitful to His glory. God grant that many this day may learn what effectual grace is, and Christ shall have all the praise.

II. During the second part of our discourse, we shall regard the question of the text as the AFFECTIONATE INQUIRY OF THE LORD'S SERVANTS.

We have not, this morning, any verbal direction as to any special person in this house. I am not told to speak especially to that young man, or to yonder young woman; I am not directed to address the appeals of the gospel to those who may be sitting in this area, or to those in the galleries; I am not at all directed, as were Peter and John; still the directions to the gospel-preacher are very sufficient and plain; here they are, "Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." I am not called to preach to the elect alone—I do not know them. I know that my message will be of no service to any but the chosen, but, in order that it may come to these, it is our work to address it to all; we cast the net into the sea, and the Lord sends us what fish He wills. To one and all, therefore, of you who have not known Christ, I have this question to ask—"The Master says, Where is the guest chamber?"

I will explain the question first. Christ Jesus would have entertainment in the human heart. He says, "Where is the heart in which I may dwell? Where is the soul that is ready, this morning, to open its gates that I may enter in and dwell there?" Now, observe that I am not asking you the question, "Where is Christ?" for your answer would be a very distressing one—you have not found Him. There are, I hope, many scores and hundreds here who have admitted Him into the inner chamber of their spirits, and are now enjoying fellowship with Him, but to you unconverted ones I put no question as to that matter, for you are strangers to communion with Jesus. Nor am I asking, "Where is there a feast for the Master, where will He find a festival of virtue and good works?" No, but, "Where is there room for Him?" *He* will bring the feast—the chamber is all He asks. Christ asks nothing good from you—he only asks the empty room in which He may spread the good things which He will bring with Himself. The Master asks you not to prepare the feast, for you are penniless in your natural estate; you have absolutely nothing upon which He can feed, for you have not even food for your own soul; and you have spent your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfies not. He asks for an empty chamber—this is all. Room for the Savior! Room for the Savior! Room for the Savior to enter and dwell! It is not your virtues, your excellences, nor anything good of you that He asks for, but simply the empty room in which you are willing to entertain Him. The question is, simply and alone, "Where is the guest chamber?" Not, "Where is the guest chamber that is sumptuously decorated, and made fit for the great King?" Not, "Where is the chamber that is glittering with gilded panels and pavements of mosaic?" Jesus seeks no lofty chamber in which to lodge; no, if there is one of you who has a heart lofty and proud, Christ will not come to you, for all the splendor of your pretended goodness are faded and stained in His sight. He dwells not with the proud, nor with the great; but if you have a broken heart and a contrite spirit, "to this man will I look, and with this man will I dwell, says the Lord." Are you guilty? Well, that need not keep the sin-atonement Priest away. Is the guest chamber of your heart all soiled and foul? Is it full of evils? Jesus Christ does not inquire concerning that; He only asks you if you are willing that He should come in and dwell there, and if you say, "Yes," it will be His business to cleanse the chamber and fit it for Himself. Only, "Where is a guest chamber?" Is there a heart here, this morning that is open to Jesus? Is there a man or woman who has room for the Lord of glory?

Still further explaining the question, let me remark that some offer Christ a room which He cannot accept as a guest chamber. Yes, they will receive Christ into their heads, they have no objection to believe the truths taught in the Bible concerning Him with a notional faith. My Lord will not eat the Passover there. No, you may be very orthodox indeed, and exceedingly sound in doctrine, but when Jesus comes into the house, He will have the best parlor, namely, the *heart*. Not here in the cold attic of the brain, but there in the warm parlor of the heart, there must Jesus dwell. Are you willing this day to have Christ to be your Lord *and* Savior? Soul, soul, are you willing to trust Christ with your eternal interests? Are you willing, now, to hang upon Him as the vessel hangs upon the nail, having no other dependence?

Are you willing to become His servant, to do what He bids you? Are you willing to be His friend, to find your best solace in fellowship with Him? Are you willing now, all guilty and defiled as you are, to accept His righteousness as your righteousness, and His blood as your cleansing? Does your mind bring out the keys of the heart's castle, and offer them to the King, and do you say, "Come in, my Lord, come in! I have too long stood out against You, and resisted all the invitations of Your grace, but now lift up your heads, O you gates, and be you lift up, you doors of my spirit, that the King of glory may come in"? That is all I ask of you. No merits am I sent to seek after, nothing good am I bid to seek in you; only if you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of this land; if you are willing to trust Him, then I have found out the man with whom Christ is predestinated to dwell. God has given the will—He will surely work the way. He has made you cheerfully to be His host; He is equally willing to be your guest. Where is the guest chamber? I cannot very well come round to all of you and take you by the hand and say, "Is there a guest chamber, my friend, in your heart?"—it might take too long a time to pass from pew to pew to ask you the question, but I do desire to ask it (and to press it very earnestly) to each one, "The Master says, Where is the guest chamber?"

Did you notice, when I read the passage in Luke just now, that it ran a little differently from what it does in Mark?—"The Master says *unto you*, Where is the guest chamber?" I trust He says that to some of you in the singular, and with singular power. The Master says to *you*, this morning, this day of grace, this hour of love which you have been spared to see, though you might well have been cut down in your sins, the Master says unto *you*, "Mary, John, Where is the guest chamber?" Take my advice and give a speedy affirmative answer to that question, and may this be the day when Jesus shall enter in triumph into your soul.

I will tell you, in a minute or two, why it is that I feel earnest to press this question, "The Master says, Where is the guest chamber?" I press it first for His sake—yes, all His true servants long to get Him entertainment in human hearts. Sometimes I have thought upon my own ministry, and I have said, "Yes, during the time in which I have been pastor of the church, we have carried out many great works; we have built a vast house for prayer, erected houses for alms-women, orphanages for the young, and carried on the college, but what would all this be if these were the only results of gathering this people together, and preaching to them from Sunday to Sunday? *The only success that is worth having is the winning of souls!* If we do not see souls brought to Christ to bow at His feet, and acknowledge Him as King, we go back to our closet, crying, "Who has believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Christ must be crowned in men's hearts or we pine with grief. We cannot be satisfied to see Him stand in the street, His head wet with dew, and His locks with the drops of the night—we must have the Son of God entertained, for oh, it grieves us even unto brokenness of heart; it troubles us exceedingly that He should be treated so badly who loved us so well; that He should be rejected who gave up heaven and all its glories that He might redeem us from going down to hell. By the wounds of Christ, and by the bloody sweat that covered Him when He redeemed us from our sins, we do beseech you listen to this voice, "Where is the guest chamber?" and reply, "Lord, that guest chamber is in my soul today."

We press this upon you also for our own sake. We are afraid lest we shall be found unprofitable servants. If you can be won to Christ, so much the more joy and rejoicing to us, for what is our crown of rejoicing? Is it not *you*, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ? But most of all, we press this upon you for your own soul's sake. O beloved, if you do but entertain Christ, you will have entertained heaven. You will be no losers by loving Christ, but unspeakable gainers. Trust in Jesus, and your sins are forgiven you, a bright future is secured, and the vile past is blotted out. Get Christ, and if you are ever so poor, or ever so full of pain, yet are you to be envied; but oh, if you live and die without Christ, we scarcely dare to picture the scene around your dying bed—imagination refuses to lift the curtain, and to view your soul in a disembodied state driven forever from hope; but we recollect that dreadful text, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." We cannot bear it that you should know the eternity of God's wrath; that you should have to feel the perpetual flame of the divine anger! Oh, for your own sake, if you have any true self-love, and would be delivered from eternal misery, open wide your heart, that Jesus Christ may enter in.

Do you still ask, "But what do you mean by 'Where is the guest chamber?'" I will answer it yet again. Jesus Christ deserves from you a simple, personal, immediate, undivided faith in Himself. Wherever Christ comes, He comes to be trusted; you must trust Him wholly, rejecting all confidences of your

own; trust Him at this moment, and do not postpone or put off faith to a more convenient season. If Jesus Christ is to be the guest in the guest chamber of your heart, you must now give yourself up wholly to Him, for—

*“Know, nor of the terms complain,
Where Jesus comes, He comes to reign,
To reign, and with no partial sway—
Lusts must be slain that disobey.”*

If you trust Christ, you must then obey Christ. In the power of the Spirit sin will have to be cast out, for Christ will not eat the Passover with sin reigning in the chamber. All the lusts of the flesh must be renounced: He will make you to renounce them, for Christ will not feast with you while you enjoy the dainties of sin. Christ will have no fellowship with Belial: He will not sit at the same table as the devil. Are you willing now? It is all I ask. Has His Spirit made you willing by His power to give up favorite sins, to renounce secret lusts, to be molded and fashioned by the divine hand, and made to be vessels fit for divine use? Are you willing to have Christ for your *Master and your Savior*? Where, where is the guest chamber? My Master, You know! Would God some voice would say, “Here it is!”

For, remember (and then I have done), if you entertain not Christ now, the day will come when you will wish you had, but wish in vain, in the day you shall see Him upon His throne, and He shall say to you, “You rejected Me, and now I reject you. You heard the gospel—you were invited, you were pleaded with; but you had no ear to all My invitations.” In that day, when He has no ear for you, but when He deals out the thunderbolts of His just anger, you will wish that you had listened to Him! Oh, I would to God I could make men look upon their Sabbaths and the sermons they hear as they will look upon them another day. How many there are today wringing their hands in torment, and crying, “O that we could hear the gospel again! O for another invitation to come to Christ! But it is past now; the hour of mercy is struck, and we have come into the eternity of vengeance, where there are no acts of pardon passed, and no hopes held out for souls to escape from their everlasting misery,” O be wise, now! “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” Today, while yet His Spirit pleads with men, make your souls guest chambers for Him, and, if you admit Him now, you will rejoice exceedingly in that day when He comes in His glory! It will be no mean joy to the believer to say, when He sees His Lord in the clouds of heaven, “By His effectual grace I have known Him before; I received Him into my heart when men spoke evil of Him; when He was rejected, I accepted Him; when He walked through the streets, and they were miry, and He was clothed in rags, I took Him in; He was hungry and I fed Him; He was sick and in prison, and I visited Him, and ministered to Him.” Oh, it will be joy unspeakable for the soul to hear Him say, “Inasmuch as you did it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you did it unto Me; you have been with Me in My temptations, you shall be with Me in My glory; you shared My tribulations and humiliations, and now you shall partake in all My triumphs; you shall sit at My right hand forever and ever.” May this be the portion of every person within these walls, and may God be glorified in each one of us, not in His justice, but in His mercy, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—LUKE 22:1-30.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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