

Sermon Outline: Come, Ye Sinners

Sermon Scripture Anchor: Matthew 11:28-30 & Luke 5:30–32; 15:18-20

Sermon Thesis: Our only qualification for the grace of Jesus is our desperate need for Him. If we wait until we are clean to come to Him, we will never come at all.

Introduction: The Trap of "Fitness"

- **The Problem:** Most people carry a hidden rulebook. We believe we must fix our habits, clear our guilt, or achieve a certain level of "spiritual fitness" before we can truly approach God. Or even worse, we fake it as if we have it all together.
- **The Hymn Context:** In 1759, a former skeptic and heavy drinker named Joseph Hart wrote a hymn born out of his own agonizing years of trying—and failing—to make himself good enough for God.
- **The Core Truth:** The Gospel completely flips this logic. God does not demand our perfection; He requests our poverty. He invites us back to life through his life.

I. The Only Condition Required: Feeling Your Need (Luke 5:31-32)

"Come, ye sinners, poor and needy, weak and wounded, sick and sore... All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him."

- **A. God's waiting room is for the sick.**
Jesus explicitly stated that He did not come for the healthy, but for the sick. The church is not a museum for saints; it is a hospital for sinners.
- **B. The delusion of self-improvement.**
The hymn warns us: *"Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream."* Dreaming of fitness means believing we can contribute to our own rescue. Conscience becomes a trap when it tells us we are too dirty to pray.
- **C. The danger of delay.**
"If you tarry till you're better, you will never come at all." Delaying surrender in order to "clean up first" is actually a form of spiritual pride. It is a refusal to let Jesus be the savior. Legalism is the idea that "we clean up" for God and he accepts us but this is not taught by Jesus. Do we clean fish before they are caught?

II. The Only Sufficiency Provided: The Work of Christ (Matthew 27:45-46)

"View Him prostrate in the garden; on the bloody tree behold Him! Hear the dying Savior cry, 'Sinner, will this not suffice?'"

- **A. Look to the Garden and the Tree.**

When we doubt God's willingness to receive us, the hymn tells us where to look. Look at Gethsemane, where Christ sweat drops of blood under the weight of our brokenness. Look at the cross, where the full price was paid.

- **B. The ultimate question.**

The Savior asks from the cross: *"Will this not suffice?"* Is Christ's sacrifice enough to cover your worst days, your deepest regrets, and your recurring failures? To say "I am too broken for God" is to accidentally declare that Jesus' blood wasn't strong enough.

- **C. Grace is already bought.**

The hymn reminds us that God's mercy is a *"true belief and true repentance."* Even the ability to turn to God is a gift given by Him, not a work manufactured by us.

III. The Only Response Demanded: Full ongoing Surrender (Luke 15:18-20)

"I will arise and go to Jesus, He will embrace me in His arms... Venture on Him, venture wholly; let no other trust intrude."

- **A. The Prodigal's Resolution.**

The refrain borrows directly from the Prodigal Son in Luke 15: *"I will arise and go to my father."* Notice the son didn't wait to buy new clothes or wash off the pig pen before walking home. He got up exactly as he was - poor and needy, sick and sore. And after "coming to his senses" he rehearsed his confession and went to his merciful Father.

- **B. The posture of the Father.**

Jesus does not stand with a clipboard checking your record. He stands with open arms. The hymn promises: *"In the arms of my dear Savior, oh, there are ten thousand charms."* The old English phrase "ten thousand charms" means the "quality, attribute, characteristics which attracts one" to be excited about, love toward, and admiration for the object it points to. When our dear Savior is the object of attraction there are "ten thousand" reasons to come to Him.

- **C. Venture wholly.**

To "venture" means to risk everything on a single truth. We are called to cast our entire eternity onto Christ, letting "*no other trust intrude.*" No backup plans, no self-righteous safety nets—just total reliance on Jesus. This is hard to do in a culture like ours with so many other attractions - many of them good but not eternal.

Conclusion: The Invitation

Do not look at your wounds today as a reason to stay away from God. Do not look at all the poor choices one has made to keep you from Jesus. Look at them as your invitation to come to Him. Jesus is able, Jesus is willing. Arise, step out of the pig-slop of this world and the intoxicating drink of self-reliance, and let Jesus embrace you today. Let Jesus operate on you and order the steps of our life. All our restless longing finds rest in Jesus who comes for the sick and those wounded by the fall.

The Hymn follows this flow of thought:

The Condition: Establish the reality of our state—weak, wounded, sick, sore, and ruined by the fall. Salvation demands honesty and vulnerability.

The Invitation: Highlight God's free bounty. True belief and repentance are not things we manufacture to buy grace; they are the *graces* that draw us near.

The Sufficiency: Point to Christ's work. Look at Him prostrate in Gethsemane and bleeding on the tree. Ask the hymn's haunting question: "*Sinner, will this not suffice?*"

The Response: Ends with the beautiful certainty of the refrain. Jesus does not stand with a checklist; He stands ready to *embrace you in His arms*. Full of pity, love, and power to save and create a new person.

To read more about the writer of this Hymn, this hyperlink will carry you to the life and death of Joseph Hart. <https://www.baptists.net/history/2023/07/the-life-and-death-of-joseph-hart/>

Rise and Go to Jesus,
Preston