

The Call of Christ

by John Ridley

The sermon emphasizes the importance of surrendering fully to God's love and will, and trusting in his power and sovereignty, as demonstrated in the story of Lazarus and Jesus.

Duration: 47:38

Scripture: Judges 3:19-21, Matthew 27:35, Matthew 27:59-60, John 11:1-43

Topics: "Salvation Call", "Urgent Repentance"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the urgency of responding to the call of Jesus. He describes the current state of the world as filled with silence, strangeness, and terrible conditions. The speaker shares a personal anecdote about giving out crackers to children and how one boy asked for another one. He then transitions to discussing the message of the Lord, calling out different individuals and urging them to prepare their hearts for salvation. The sermon concludes with a reference to Martha and her role as a missionary, emphasizing the importance of spreading the message of life.

Transcript

As I said last night, it's a real joy to be here with the Army once again. I've had several meetings with the Salvation Army down my long years of service, and I always rejoice to be with them and feel the warmth of their spirit, and to see some of their hunger for souls to come to Christ. Tomorrow will be a special day, the last day of a very big feast, on the last night where not so many gathered, and then tonight, and then the final gathering tomorrow.

I would entreat all the soldiers of the Army and friends of the Army to be here tomorrow morning. We are stepping slowly to the night meeting, and I've a special message to give you which I feel God has laid in my heart, which will surely prepare the way for the night. And then for that final gathering, you will be praying for that if you cannot be here, but if you can be here and be the friends with you, that's better still.

W.P. Nicholson used to say that, "What an evangelist of Ireland!" I don't want you telling me that I'll be there in spirit with him. I don't want your ghosts around me. I want him there in the seat.

And we're not asking you to be here in spirit tomorrow night, or your ghosts to be with us. We're asking you to be here in person if it's at all possible. We want a rally that was glorified by God at the close of the campaign.

We thank the Army friends for having taken so many invitations out, and we praise God that He is already giving some tokens of blessings, even from last night's meeting. Now a few words from the Old Testament, and then our definite readings from the New. The book of Judges, chapter 2, verses 19 to 21, concerns the judge Ehud, the second judge of Israel.

Verse 19 of chapter 2, the book of Judges. But Ehud himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal, and said, I have a secret errand unto thee, O king. Who said, Keep silent.

And all that stood by him went out from him. And Ehud came unto him, and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee.

And he arose from his seat. And Ehud took forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. God's method of judgment to a tyrant who had fallen underneath his people.

Now we turn to the sweeter message of the New Testament. The Gospel according to St. John, the eleventh chapter. You'll notice I've even just selected verses from that beautiful chapter.

Beginning at verse 1. The eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary, and her sister Martha. Therefore his sister sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.

When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but to the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

Verse 19. And many of the Jews turned to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him.

But Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died, but I know that even now, whatsoever thou didst ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus said unto her, thy brother shall rise again.

Martha said unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he be dead, yet shall he live.

And whosoever liveth and believeth on me, and calls to me, as soon as he heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was at that place where Martha met him. The Jews then, which were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her.

So she goeth unto the grave to eat there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus wept.

And then to other verses, and when he had got spoken, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that is dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose it and let him go.

May God loose that word in our hearts and let it go by the Holy Spirit through his glory tonight. We can pray. Loving Heavenly Father, we pray that the mighty love of thine heart may be revealed tonight and that the Spirit of God may take it to things of Christ and reveal them vividly to each listening one.

We ask that thou wouldst solemnize our message and ministry tonight. Times in which we live, Father, are fraught with grave peril. And we pray that for every pilgrim gathered in this citadel tonight, thou wilt direct their steps in the way everlasting, that thou wilt keep them from the impending judgment that is brooding over this world.

And by thy gracious Spirit called with the voice that wakes the dead and makes thy people hear, our Father, we look to thee that thou wilt draw by thy tender Spirit tonight and may there be a response in our gathering hearts open to thee and to thine everlasting love. And may we remember that we are on the verge of time. Eternity is drawing nigh.

We know not what a day may bring forth. Prepare our souls for the great day when we shall pass to meet our Maker. And save us we beseech of thee, O God, in infinite mercy, from coming into the august and holy presence of the Father and the Maker of men.

Without Christ and without hope, all grant that the Savior's love tonight may prepare our souls for that great day and grant that the precious blood of his sacrifice might be our covering when we praise the great Judge at last, sanctify thy message tonight, and bless the people. We ask this in the precious name of the Lord Jesus and for his sake. Amen.

Mean to you, have it captured and conquered in your soul. I take a step further tonight and I want to ask, what does the call of Jesus Christ mean to you? Has it captured and conquered in your heart? Has it captured and then conquered in your heart, the call of Jesus Christ? John chapter 11, reading part of verse 28 and 29. When she had taken, she went away and called Mary her sister, secretly saying, the Master is come and call us to thee.

As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him. The Master is come and call us to thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly and came unto him.

God moved in a mysterious way with wonders to perform. God's ways are not our ways. Heaven's above our ways.

We would have thought that naturally when Jesus Christ had been warned that Lazarus, his friend, was sick, he would have come immediately to heal him. But no. Two days delay.

Little for two days. He speaks to that Lazarus to the healing of his friend. Right? And all the ways are the glory of God.

Sickness is not unto death, he says, but to the glory of God. And the one that aims next in the glory of God, this is the divine mark that aims next in the glory of God, this is. When he did arrive at Bethany, he found a happy little girl and sadness and wailing in more radiant color than Mary.

She went forth to meet the Lord with a word of faith. Mary sat still in the house. Wouldn't it have been a natural thing for both sisters to have hurried out and greeted the great Master? Why did Mary sit still in the house and let Master go out to meet alone that healer and redirector of men? Oh, then you say, Peter, Mary, you know, was of very reserved nature.

For another says, Mary might have been overcome with grief. I'm a little doubtful. I think even grief would have been glad to go out and see the Master.

Did it ever occur to you that perhaps, I don't say for sure, perhaps there was just a little resentment in the heart of the younger sister that he hadn't come in time to save their brother? Suddenly, oh, strike this bad subject that is on a man's face, in a woman's face, in one of our country towns when I was a young bush missionary to come into our meeting. And he said, no, son, I won't be there. Oh, there was a time when I stood in the open air and preached and sang the glory song to the rest of them.

Not now. Not now. I said, what? Well, he said, I'll tell you.

He didn't deal it. He was bitten down by sickness and I prayed to God to restore him. He died before my eyes.

And so I won't go now. And took my beer at the same time and he spoke with a bitterness of heart that went to my soul. Not for a moment.

No, one of the finest characters in the New Testament is Mary of Bethany. But it might have been, I say, there was perhaps just a question mark. Why didn't he come in time? And because it's only a little thing and only a little resentment, sometimes we leave that thing, that fleece, in the heart.

Because it's only a little thing. And it was a great blessing, friends. At any rate, for once we see Martha, a practical woman, now a personal worker.

Martha, the housekeeper, now a hero of the king. Martha, in the role of a missionary. She went straight to her sister.

She got her alone, secretly. That's the way to speak to souls, secretly. And then she said to her, the master has come and called us to be.

And as soon as she heard that, she arose, quickly, and came unto him. Now, I've got to tackle Martha's task tonight. On the other hand, if maybe I've got to tackle his task tonight, passage of judgment, I have a message from God to thee.

He said to the dictator egglong, it was a message of death. Here, Martha brings a message of life. He's come and called us to be.

To be. To be. To be.

Called us to be. Yet, unfaithful friends, sitting still tonight in the house of secret sin and dissatisfaction and disappointment, I have a message from the Lord to the protein, from the resurrection and the life, to thee. A message of grand salvation.

The master has come and called us to be. To be, said one. Now, does he know I've been thinking hard thoughts of him lately? He knows it well.

But you can thank him with all your heart. He's not been thinking hard thoughts about you. To me, said another, why does he know I've got no dealings with him? Of course he knows it.

But he's still got dealings with you. You'll wish you can be forever grateful tonight. To me, said another, why did he know that I denied him with an answer? Know that only too well then, that he hasn't denied you yet and you can be deeply thankful for that.

Now, I have a message from the Lord to thee, sinner friend, sitting still here tonight. The master has come and called us to be. Called us to be friend of the woman of Sata with all your hidden sins and lusts and immorality.

From the Lord for thee, to thee, with the cleansing of his precious blood and the purifying of your heart that it might be prepared for paradigm to redeem us, the self-righteous, religious, unsaved man. I have a message from the Lord for thee. The master has come and called us to thee, that thou wouldst be born again and fit to enter his kingdom.

Back here, the money-grabbing publican at any cost making himself rich. I have a message from the Lord for thee. The man called us to thee to inherit true riches, durable riches and righteousness forever.

Ah, friend of Thomas the devil. I have a message from the Lord for thee. The master has come and called us to thee to come to simple childlike faith in those wounded hands and that wounded side until you can say, my Lord, ah, friend of John the deputy with your love of the open air, your love of fishing and swimming and your own free will and your quick temper and your bright boyish youth.

I have a message from the Lord for thee, young woman, young man, friend of John, of deputy. The master has come and called us to thee to be the disciples, beloved Jesus Christ, sitting still perhaps in a house of just a little resentment against that theotagian, just a little question mark, why? Why does he permit it? Why doesn't he do something for me? The master has come and called us to thee to come and behold his resurrection power and his transforming grace that has treated people for martyrs from the fire of the Jews, the mighty God of the ages, the man, Christ Jesus, in the fullness of time, virgin's womb, manger bed, to prove the simplicity of his childlike tender heart as you do your daily. To the shepherd's crook, the Daniel, he is the great shepherd of the sheep.

Able to guide you to the green pastures of glory and to the still waters of the city bright. To the Saviour's cross that sins, no sins, will be no sin for us who sins the just to the unjust that he might bring us to God. Call that Saviour's cross, Saviour, glossary.

Oh, remember, oh, remember, Jesus, your cross is called. Oh, that sweetness of the call of Jesus. Come unto me, oh Jesus, labor and a heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Come unto me, you saving and I will give you rest. Come! He's calling. He's called so often through the solo, through the song, through the sermon, through the slave death in the home, through the awful conditions of a world poised on a knife edge with terrible weapons such as we never imagined in our trials.

Are you ready to come at the Saviour's call? I wonder if you're as ready as the laddies I once handed a tract to in the city of Miranda or the town of Miranda. One Saturday night when we were giving out tracts and crowds of people were going up to the old-fashioned cinema, no talkies in those days, no TV, and we were passing out tracts to a crowd of them and a couple of boys passed and I gave them a tract each and in a few minutes' time one of the boys came up to me and he said, Hey mister, would you give us another one of those tracts, mister? I said, I gave you one Sunday night. He said, another bird smashed it out of her hand, mister.

Would you give us another one? Yes, and I said, Here you are. Hey mister, he said, would you care to see Christ, please? I was in the booth with him, mister, and I'd only been to tracts twice in my life. Would you care to see Christ, please, mister? Yes, and I said, I'd be so glad to do it.

Come down to our little camp behind the Methodist Church. And one of these mates came along and they had about 12 or 13 and they sat on the old one who was there with our team of third class. Christ was God in human form.

Christ came to reveal the Father. Christ revealed the nature. And Christ came to die for your sins.

And he went to the cross. You've heard about the cross. And he paid the price of your sin on the cross.

And Christ was buried and rose again and ascended up to the right hand of God. And he's alive there, and he's calling you. If you'll come to him tonight and a lot more, we are most useful, you know.

And then I finished my talk. I said, will you come, boys, and accept him? Yes, mister, they said. We didn't know this before, mister.

Won't we come down, those laddies? The Easterners! They came, blokes! Did you? Oh, you say, wait a moment now, preacher. I'm not quite sure that I heard. I don't think I heard the call as you're trying to put it over.

I'm a bit deaf, really, and I don't think I heard it. Ah, friends. None so deaf as by whom you're not here.

I want to suggest to you if the call of the Master had been come on 20,000 pounds for everyone to come, would you have understood it and come? Would you have hurried to the feet of the mighty man of grace to receive your abundance yet? I can't say. Oh, the strength of the human heart that wants something material and will let the soul die under the curse of sin. Rather than come, like Mary came, she rose up quickly and came unto him.

Oh, strange to say. Would you turn away from one who loves you so? Christian friends, all sitting here tonight in this house of opportunity, and yet it might be a house of disappointment to you in some measure. You asked the Lord to help you in a certain matter.

You sent him a special message by prayer. And he delayed longer than you wanted him to delay, and you got upset about it. It offended your heart and you lost touch with him.

You prayed earnestly for the salvation of the soul. And you saw that person carried out and buried in his sins. And you began to wonder, well, I don't think he's treating me very fairly.

And you began to go back and to go down and to get hard thoughts with Jesus Christ. Lost touch with him. I got a message from the Lord to do, Christian friends.

The Master is coming and call us to be to full surrender at his feet. Full surrender. Full surrender.

Oh, that's the great secret of the Christian power. But it often takes the dark night of the visitation of God to bring you to the light of the deeper light himself. In the year that King Uzziah died, I read in the prophecy of Isaiah, in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord high and lifted up.

And he came filling the temple and the cherubim. And I heard the voice like, whom shall I go? Whom shall I send and who will go for us? And I said, hear them all. My God, I have got this commission as a prophet of God on the very, in the very year and at the very time when King Uzziah died.

The hope of Judah died. And then he saw the Lord. And sometimes you've got to lose your eyes.

Sometimes God cannot touch your ear until you've lost something. Lost the first one. Lost your feelings there.

Lost your head and all that. This is in your heart. He said, we'll feed them all first.

What a blessing this comes when the Jewel-bearing full surrender. This is in the year when Mrs. Josephine Butler lost her only daughter, Mrs. Eva. Oh, that tragic year.

Coming back from a visit into her lovely home with Eva running out and in the balcony to lean over and welcome her mother and knock the garland and clap at the mother's feet. She died the same day. And Mrs. Josephine Butler sat stunned in her own house.

Nothing could move her. Nothing could rise her. Her mother couldn't understand it better than a man to her.

She was absolutely stunned. Then came the Mother Martha, that blessed soul, that said to her, my dear, you are sorrowing because your only daughter has been taken from you and there are many poor births in this life without a mother. But need your mother love.

I want you to go to number so and so in such and such a suit and it will be told to you that from a suit. And Mrs. Josephine Butler came to her house out of that suit box. And she arrived quickly and she went to that number in that suit.

And there started her great work with foreign girls, the finest work you can remember of a woman's tremendous wealth of influence amongst poor, broken womanhood. She had to lose her own. She had to go down strong, vulnerable, poor and fulfilled surrender.

Many a Christian life he had denied in all probability has a feeling I want something. I'm conscious I need something more. I believe I respect the Christ but there's something more I want to do and something more.

And he comes through his surrender. Yes, you follow, I don't allow him to come in but I can't give him every room in the house. I can't give him the whole house, you know, I can't lay it down before him in pieces.

And I'm reserving a certain part of my life to myself. Because the master paid a price that he knew when he went to that church. Did he deserve anything back? He'll never sin.

In darkness and in light did he begin to devote to the Father. There must be a reason not a moment. The cup that my father had given me to drink shall I not drink it? He went straight on to the batter and to the scourging and the abuse and the bitterness of men and up to Calvary and to the cross and to the last of those pictures of others of untold agony.

It is finished. Let it be done. He deserved nothing back.

Then he wept and sorrowed my soul to go. And he's come and he's calling this concern. Come and to surrender within my hands, my master hands.

It's on the keyboard of your life. And I tell you some of us read it. Left behind the doors of many a home, sometimes Christian homes in many another type of homes and hear the domestic discord, argument,

row, languish behind the scenes.

But I won't give over the keys of life to the master. We all hear it sometimes in the Christian homes, the slang of the war, the complaint that we'd expect from someone who's never touched it that the Lord was gracious. Because the keyboard, the lunch, has not been given over to those master hands to bring harmony, music, out of the discords of the past.

There are Christian friends. The master has come and called us to do. We don't give in till surrender tonight.

It's strange to say there's a cross to pay. And you look across and you see the places of the world on every side and you see all the pill of youth in you but all the richness of your flesh is concerning it. And you say the cross just came up.

Say that Benjamin was going to China as a great missionary of Christ. He was a great missionary of Christ because he was a great saint of God. And the time he said to him, David, look round this is your lovely home, your father's home.

Look at this place round it. Oh, that could have been yours. If you hadn't had this here brain stream of going to China.

Who would have thought that would have made any difference, said David. Oh, that house, that money mansion. That city, the tax polls, the regulations.

Who could have known that it was God? Those things looked very stable and strong. They'd all pass away. And finally a kind David had reached the house of money mansion.

He didn't count anything too much because his Lord the right was right. The world passes away and the left get out. But he didn't look at the devil of God to bind it together.

He looked at God with the soul surrender of the Christian heart. Can you come? Can you make it tonight? Can you be near someone? Oh, Christ the Son is eternal life. The one who loves the Son.

I want to gather up those days as Jesus Christ, by His call, captured your heart on those days. Conquered your heart, Christian friends. Have you? No? You're not sure? I want to say in closing, the Master is coming a second time.

And He'll call for you, Christian friends. He'll call for you. He'll examine your stewardship at the judgment seat of Christ.

There'll be no loss of your soul, but there may be mighty loss of your reward, mighty loss in the kingdom. You're given a chance of your stewardship to God. Let us tell Him how that will be.

The Master is coming in a moment when this is not in an hour when we're not prepared for Him. And all will depart except for us here. Because that's when we'll depart to the Spirit.

Why didn't you make that surrender? You heard my call. You heard the prudence of my messenger. The Holy Spirit will be.

Why didn't you make that surrender? In the life with the love of Christ. There'll be time that will be attained before Him if He's coming. There are others like that half-witted boy that was a faithful laddie in London in 1832 when the cloud of meteors fell and his own mother rushed in and shook him and woke him up and said, Sandy, Sandy, the end of the world for coming Sandy.

And with a hoot, Sandy was out of bed. Glory to God. Glory to God.

He said, I'm ready. I'm ready. Ready for the coming of the Lord.

I wonder if your mother woke you tonight. Your father woke you. Or somebody else woke you.

The Lord is at hand. Could you say glory to God? I'm ready. Could you? Do you know that men that vote are made at the master's rate? Freedom, great party life.

What? Brethren, what? Honestly, my young Christian friends, are you ready for the coming of Christ? What? I'm saying to you, Jesus said to the disciples, I'm saying to all, what? You can't make it so honest to tell our young Christians. You can't do it too much to tell our disciples wanting to come. Some of us would tell, oh, I'm sorry.

Come. Come, Lord Jesus. Come quickly.

Sing us in. Answer us in. The master's coming, and we're told to do the judgment.

I know it's possible for you tonight to throw back the dear call of His grace into His lips, into His feet. It's possible for you to turn your back and walk away and pray not for me. But I would tell you the call of the judgment can't be treated that way.

And I'm not going to trust in myself to give any word to my own visitor. I'm going to read to you from the inspired true word of God. Listen.

And the kind of this ignorance God overlooks. But now, now in the gospel I commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Why? Why repent? Because we have a place in the ground in which we may judge the world in righteousness by this man whom he hath done.

Whereon he hath given assurance to all men in that he hath raised him from the dead. God hath appointed a day of judgment. God hath appointed the judge, Jesus Christ.

And God hath appointed you then unto fear. To the fear that that God and judgment are. He's appointed it.

There's no stopping it. There's no refusing it. Where will they come? As you couldn't keep your death alive one moment the Lord cut you through the cord of your life.

And He's given an answer to that judgment are. Not so much to your many sins. But He's given an answer to the fact that you've heard the prayer of Christ very calmly.

And you turned your back on it. You refused infinite mercies to infinite life. And I joined for a great white throne.

And the books were opened. And another book was opened. Which was the book of life.

And the dead were judged from those three written in the book. We know the judgment shall stand on the cross. God spoke to us.

And He would not hear us. He would not see. He would not tell.

He would not come. That's why Samuel Webster, one of the greatest men of America, and he's dying. And as you can hear the voice of the victorious tonight, Michael.

But in those days he was a mighty man of victory. Every one of us will do a stunt but in respect to God. Mary arose quickly.

Mary arose quickly. But that she arose. She arose quickly.

We didn't sit there and think it over. We got a hand up to her head and say No, Martha, not just now, Martha. Tomorrow.

Tomorrow. She arose quickly. She was just an accident, she was.

She came over the house so casually that she said, Oh, she must be going to the grove to weep there. So forth. And there and behold there was a beautiful little cat in this garden with a beautiful little river.

Of course, when you make a response to a place you always pull someone with you that way. That's how you work. You see the master and Martha and the boy and they ask Mary, Oh, that is true.

That's the place to be Christian. That's the place to come to unto his friends. You saw that the feet of Jesus tonight, none shall perish there.

None shall perish there. Only come to claim Christianity. Now he said to Alexander the great and one occasion when he was master of the known world.

How did you come to the world, sir? By letter below, answered Alexander. By letter below. God now demands of everyone to repent.

Repent. Repent. The cross should repent.

The Christians should repent. One believer a hundred times more should repent. Yet it's so hard to stand the day I am dying.

I have seen the fall down. I need the master's cleansing glass and the master's notice book. I've come to dispose of the master.

Will you do it? Come. To dispose of man who suffered all to do and in his merits now hath an unfeeling plea. No vain and stupid claim to feelings do not claim.

None who do the same will ever turn away. When that cometh to me I will never, no, never, that's the meaning of the verse, in no way be not strong enough, never, no, never pass that. But you must come.

I want to take you. I want to come to Jesus. Someone in this gathering says I want to come to the master.

I want the goodness of sin. I want salvation through Christ. I am eager to come but it is a battle situation.

I would so glad to help you by praying for you if you'll let me be there. I want to come to the peace of wonder of my life as a Christian. I'm not going to look upon what Jesus endured for me and completed for me and then he accepted me or commanded me and saw me rise selfishly and sow my own rain of thorns.

I want to come, preacher. I want a re-dedication of my life to Christ. Would all that something bring to me? I want to help you, friend.

I want to pray to you if you'll let me. When we bow in a moment's time before God, I'm going to ask you when we bow just to lift a hand up and ask a prayer. That's all.

Lift a hand up to heaven. Mary would have done it quickly if that was what you request. But God says lift up your hands with your heart and to heaven.

It isn't right to lift up a hand. It's worship. You don't just lift up just humble yourself enough to lift a hand to heaven so God's presence can show and God's presence can just show to you as one interceding and you don't need to show to the mother praying.

Would you let him do that tonight? And then you'll do it like in the road that Mary did. God will bless you quickly. For he's ready to descend into the blood on his own time and time again.

Come. Come.

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