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Sermon Notes

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## **The Spirit and the Bride Say, “Come!”**

### **Revelation 22:17**

This morning, we are going to focus our attention on one verse...

***Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.***

We are going to immerse ourselves in the marvelous mysteries of the gospel call... of evangelism, of calling thirsty sinners to faith in Christ

Every single day, we are surrounded in our region by unsaved people... The Raleigh-Durham area is one of the fastest growing metropolitan regions in the country; people are pouring in here because of the Research Triangle Park, and the major universities, and the excellent medical care, and the mild winters, and many other attractions. But many of them know nothing about the Savior... they are without hope and without God in this world. Though they don't know it, they are walking around daily under the wrath of God. Every day that they continue in this lost state, they store up more wrath against themselves for the day when God's wrath will be revealed.

They are desperately seeking something... some meaning, some purpose in life; they are drinking from the cup of the world, trying to find joy and pleasure and satisfaction, and they will just end up empty in the end

We are left here in this city to call people to the only water that satisfies... as we saw in Isaiah 55

***Isaiah 55:1-2 "Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. <sup>2</sup> Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me,***

***and eat what is good, and your soul will delight in the richest of fare.***

FBC Durham is positioned to reach hundreds and hundreds of people every year with the gospel... and to see many many more baptized and disciplined than we presently do. We need to embrace this OPEN DOOR of opportunity... to train ourselves and get ready to meet the challenge of winning people to Christ

This sermon is about EVANGELISM... our cooperation with the Holy Spirit in calling people from the desert of sin to drink the living water of salvation in Christ

## I. God's Final Invitation

A. We Come to the End of the Bible, and with it, God's final invitation to sinners to find salvation in Christ

B. God's Invitation to a Heavenly Wedding Banquet

***Matthew 22:2-5 "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup> He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. <sup>4</sup> "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' <sup>5</sup> "But they paid no attention and went off-- one to his field, another to his business.***

C. God Has Been Beckoning to Lost People Throughout the Centuries to COME IN while there's time

1. Sinners are BORN OUTSIDE the Kingdom of heaven

2. We remain outside until we COME IN to the feast

Hans Christian Andersen's classic short story, "The Little Match Girl" of a poor, barefoot girl who sells matches on the streets of the city... she is freezing to death, but lights each of her matches one at a time and in the merry glow sees herself invited into the rich merchant's house where there is steaming roast goose stuffed with apples and dried plums; where there is

also warmth and the twinkling lights of tapers on a lavishly decorated Christmas tree. But it's ALL IN HER IMAGINATION! She is on the outside looking in through the glass windows. And she dies out in the cold

3. However, the parable of the Wedding Banquet has a different bent... there, the happy King who wants to throw a lavish wedding banquet for his Son can't get anyone interested enough to bother to come

***Luke 14:18-20 "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'<sup>19</sup> "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'<sup>20</sup> "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'***

- a. Unlike the little match girl, who is desperate to come in, but no one will invite her or open the door or welcome her, in this case the tragic figure is the King who is putting on the banquet and he can get no one interested in it
- b. So the King send MORE MESSENGERS to compel people

***Luke 14:23 "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and COMPEL them to come in, so that my house will be full.'***

4. God stands day after day beckoning and inviting people to come into his banquet of salvation

***Romans 10:21 "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."***

- D. Some People Feel Like there's always going to be MORE TIME
  1. They see the steadiness of God's gracious invitation, day after day, year after year
  2. They drive by churches and it all feels so secure and solid
  3. Churches will always be there, giving that consistent message of salvation in Jesus

4. BUT there will come a time when it will all be over... the last invitation will be extended
- a. That is true of every individual who dies suddenly and there is no further opportunity

John Bunyan: "A Few Sighs from Hell" (based on Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus; and also the Rich Fool)

***Luke 12:16-20 "You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." 20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you.***

THIS VERY NIGHT!! The time has come to an end!!

The man, instead of thinking of death, he thought how he might make his barns bigger. But, in the midst of his business in the world, he lost his soul before he was aware, supposing that death had been many years off. But God said unto him, 'You fool,' you trouble yourself about things of this life, you put off the thoughts of departing this world, when this night your soul shall be taken from you. ... And hence it is again, that you have some in your towns and cities that are so suddenly taken away, some from visiting the ale-houses, others from frequenting the whore-houses, others from playing and gaming, others from the cares and covetous desires after this world, unlooked for as by themselves or their companions.

SUDDENLY IT IS ALL OVER! IT ALL COMES TO AN END!

And we can well imagine one of the groans, and sighs and laments that will come from many damned people: **"I always thought I would have more time! I always thought I would have one more chance!** I always figured I would be able to time it, that when I had my last chance to hear the invitation to free grace in Christ, that I would seize it."

E. This is God's Last Invitation in the Bible

***Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.***

At some point in your lifetime, you will hear the gospel invitation for the very last time... for you personally, that will be the end

At some point in human history, some gospel preacher will preach the free grace of God in Christ for the very last time... and for the human race, that will be the end

REDEEM THE TIME!!

***2 Corinthians 6:2 "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.***

F. Invitation to COME DO WHAT?

***Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.***

1. Come and drink the free gift of the water of life

***Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb<sup>2</sup> down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.***

2. Come to be refreshed and live

3. Are you THIRSTY? Has sin left you parched, like you're crawling in a desert

4. Specifically, COME TO CHRIST = Believe in Christ

***John 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.***

## II. The Spirit and the Bride BOTH Say, "Come!"

A. This is a MARVELLOUS VERSE on the COOPERATION between the Spirit and the "Bride" (the church of Jesus Christ) in inviting lost sinners to come and drink from Christ and find life... BOTH the Spirit and the Church are instrumental in bringing them in

1. The Spirit calls sinners to Come... and the Bride calls sinners to Come!
2. Even those who are thirsty and are coming and drinking are inviting other thirsty people to come to the waters and drink!

B. The Spirit Says Come Generally

1. The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity
2. The Holy Spirit inspired the scriptures in which is woven the gospel of our salvation

***Romans 1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.***

***Romans 3:21-24 a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup> This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.***

The Law and the Prophets testify to the gospel:

***1 Peter 1:10-12 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, <sup>11</sup> trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. <sup>12</sup> It was***

*revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.*

So, the Holy Spirit wrote the Old Testament through the prophets... and he also wrote the New Testament through the apostles

***John 14:26 But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.***

3. The Father and the Son sent the Spirit into the world to complete the redemptive plan of God
  - a. Without the powerful working of the Spirit, not one single person would ever be saved
  - b. Jesus' atoning work would actually save no one
  - c. The blood of Christ has to be APPLIED by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit
4. By the Spirit, the gospel goes out into all the world
5. By the Spirit, the CHURCH also is moved to preach the gospel

***Acts 1:8 you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."***

The Spirit COMPELS Christians to go out and witness

Hudson Taylor in England in 1860 for an extended furlough; recuperation, recruitment, training, translation of the Ningpo New Testament; and the overwhelming vision of the "accusing map" which led to the formation of the China Inland Mission

Hudson Taylor had seen a map of the INLAND REGIONS of China, totally unreached with the gospel... Christian mission stations were only on the coastal areas, and he knew there were

teeming hundreds of millions of Chinese who had NEVER HEARD of Christ:

“On Sunday, June 25, 1865, unable to bear the sight of a congregation of a thousand or more Christian people rejoicing in their own security while millions were perishing for lack of knowledge, I wandered out on the sands alone, in great spiritual agony, and there the Lord conquered my unbelief, and I surrendered myself to God for this service. I told Him that all the responsibility as to issues and consequences must rest with Him; that as His servant, it was mine to obey and follow Him — His to direct, to care for, and to guide those who might labor with me. Need I say that peace at once flowed into my burdened heart.”

Taylor founded the CIM in 1865 to reach the vast majority of unreached in China

His overwhelming BURDEN to preach the gospel of Christ in the inland regions of China came from the Holy Spirit

Like Paul:

*Acts 20:22-24 "And now, **compelled by the Spirit**, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. <sup>23</sup> I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. <sup>24</sup> However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me-- the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace.*

Do you have a COMPULSION of the Spirit to share the gospel with lost people?

If not, you need to plead with him to give you one!

### C. The Bride Says Come Generally

1. The bride is the CHURCH... the followers of Christ

2. The Spirit AND the Bride say COME to all the lost people... it is a JOINT EFFORT

*John 15:26-27 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. <sup>27</sup> And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.*

3. We are to preach the gospel to anyone and everyone... we are to preach it indiscriminately, because we CANNOT TELL who is elect and who will eventually respond favorably to the gospel

Adoniram Judson was called to be a missionary to Burma... he eventually was instrumental in leading thousands of Burmese to faith in Christ, either directly or indirectly...

But he was not always effective... in one town, he gave out over 500 gospel tracts and only one person came to faith in Christ!

4. Our job is to share Christ with as many people as we can... to keep sharing the gospel, no matter how many or how few respond

George Whitefield was the most powerfully faithful open-air preacher of all time... preached relentlessly, day after day, year after year, to thousands of people in his lifetime

BUT he also shared Christ personally, one on one, with as many people as he could in daily life

"God forbid that I should travel one quarter of an hour with anyone and not share Christ with him."

5. The Bride says "Come" by evangelism... by sharing the gospel with lost people
6. NOTICE that the future laborers for the harvest field are those who were at one time PART of the harvest field; people leading others to drink the living water have themselves been drinking from the living water

***Revelation 22:17 The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!"***

D. The Spirit Says Come Effectively

1. The Spirit gives a GENERAL CALL to the entire world by the Bible
2. The Spirit moves Christians to give a GENERAL CALL to specific people at a specific time, sharing the gospel
3. But then the REAL WORK of conversion happens... the Spirit speaks truth into the heart of a sinner and transforms them and makes them able to see and love Christ and see and hate their sins

***Ezekiel 36:26-27 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.***

***2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

***John 3:3-8 Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." <sup>4</sup> "How can a man be born when he is old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!" <sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. <sup>6</sup> Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. <sup>7</sup> You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' <sup>8</sup> The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."***

4. This is the doctrine of EFFECTUAL CALLING... what some have called IRRESISTABLE GRACE; everyone drawn by God through the Holy Spirit will most certainly come to Christ

E. Whoever WISHES May Come

***Revelation 22:17 Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.***

1. This text, like many others, speaks of anyone who WISHES to drink of the water of life may come and drink
2. The free gift of the water of life is indeed ETERNALLY SATISFYING... it is open to anyone who wants it
3. But Satan, the god of this age, has so powerfully blinded and deceived people that they cannot see how delightful and desirable the water of Christ is

***2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.***

4. NO ONE WILL NATURALLY WISH TO DRINK THIS WATER... Satan has deceived people into thinking the water Jesus offers is pleasure-killing poison
5. The Spirit alone can HEAL this!

F. Whoever the Father Draws WILL COME

***John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.***

See!! If the Father doesn't draw sinners, they will NEVER COME!

BUT... if the Father DOES draw by the Spirit, they will most certainly come

***John 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me***

The doctrine of effectual calling, or irresistible grace

The Spirit makes sinners willing by healing their hearts and making them see their true need for Christ

100% effective!!

## G. The Marvelous Cooperation Necessary for the Spread of the Gospel

1. The Spirit AND the Bride are both essential to the calling of thirsty sinners to Christ

***Romans 10:13-15 "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." <sup>14</sup> How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? <sup>15</sup> And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"***

## III. Let Christ Make you a Fisher of People

### A. Christ's Command: Follow Me

***Matthew 4:19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."***

1. Part of Christian discipleship is evangelism... learning to be an instrument in the hand of God to lead lost people to Christ
2. This is not normal or natural... it is something Christ has to TEACH us
3. It flows out of our imitation of Christ... he was constantly seeking to win the lost

Like after he brought the tax-collector Zacchaeus to faith, he said

***Luke 19:10 ... the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.***

### B. Understanding God's Sovereignty

1. We've already noted it above... the HOLY SPIRIT alone can raise a spiritually dead person to faith in Christ
2. The Holy Spirit alone can take out the heart of stone and give the heart of flesh
3. The Father DRAWS sinners to faith in Christ by the Spirit... without that, no one will come to Christ

### C. Understanding Our Responsibility

1. God has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation

***2 Corinthians 5:19-20 he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.***

2. Without human messengers of the gospel, we cannot assume anyone will be saved... as we saw in Romans 10... HOW CAN THEY HEAR WITHOUT SOMEONE PREACHING TO THEM??
3. Who knows that God has prepared you specifically to be a witness to a co-worker or neighbor... "for such a time as this"? Like Esther, positioned by God to save perishing people

***Esther 4:14 if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?***

### D. Understanding the Gospel Message

Will Metzger, Intro to *Tell the Truth*: "Picture this: a runner in ancient Greece arrives exhausted before the emperor. Gasping, he blurts out, 'My lord, I was given an urgent message, but... I am afraid I have forgotten what it was!'"

1. So many false gospels out there, which are really no gospels at all
2. Even evangelicals seem to be muddy and weak on the gospel message
  - a. Forsaking the gracious command of an awesome, holy King to a wicked, sinful world to repent and find grace and mercy at the cross of Christ...
  - b. They choose instead a man-centered message of Jesus as a life-enhancer, something to give you meaning and fulfillment in your life

Metzger: “Without grace-filled, God-centeredness, evangelism will evolve into nice people being nice to other people in the hopes that they will be nice to God... a compromised gospel with a mild God who exists to benefit me.”

### 3. God-Man-Christ-Response

#### 1) GOD

God is **Creator**. *Genesis 1:1*

God is **King**. Psalm 47:7 = LAWGIVER

God is **Judge**. *Psalm 96:13*

#### 2) MAN

Man is **Created by God** the Creator. *Genesis 1:27*

Man is Rebellious Against God the King

Man is Under Judgment by God the Judge

Judgment Day: *Matthew 12:36*

Judgment Penalty: Romans 6:23... eternal DEATH

#### 3) CHRIST

God's Fourth Title - **Savior** *Isaiah 33:22*

Jesus' Supernatural Life

God-man: *John 1:14* ... Miraculous... Sinless

Jesus' Substitutionary Death

Jesus' Saving Resurrection

Jesus' Salvation Gifts

Total Forgiveness of Sins: *Ephesians 1:7*; Eternal Life: *Romans 6:23*

*"What must I do to be saved?"*

#### 4) RESPONSE

What You Must Do

***"The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:15***

Repent: U-Turn: Away from sin; turn toward God

Believe the gospel: Believe that it's true; believe in Christ

What You Must NOT Do

Do Not Work For It: *Ephesians 2:8-9*; Do Not Wait For Tomorrow: *2 Cor. 6:2*

Eternal Life Now (on Earth)

New Creation by the Creator: *2 Cor. 5:17*

Joyful Servant to the King: *1 John 3:24*

Completely Pardoned by the Judge: *John 5:24*

Adopted by the Father: *John 1:12*

Eternal Life Forever (in Heaven)

#### IV. A Varied Menu of Evangelistic Opportunities

##### 1. Family

[parents to children; grown children to parents; sibling to sibling; extended family]

##### 2. Your Neighborhood

[immediate surroundings of home address]

##### 3. Daily Life

["as you go"; shopping, restaurants, airplanes, schools, libraries, workers who come to your home, etc.]

#### 4. Workplace

[fellow workers, vendors, clients, customers, patients]

#### 5. Church's Neighborhood

[immediate surroundings of church; schools, mercy ministry, city development, "hot button" issues, actual demography]

#### 6. Event

["Come and see" events; VBS, Health Fair, revival meetings, Christmas concerts, Sunday morning worship, special speakers, retreats]

#### 7. Long-term Relationship

[most costly in terms of time, energy, commitment; sometimes called "friendship evangelism"; International Connections, sports teams, music, drama, adopting a school, foster care, volunteering at the YMCA, "Big brother/big sister"; disaster relief; literacy programs, etc.]

#### 8. Bold initiative

[street witnessing, contact evangelism, spiritual surveys, etc.]

### V. A Call for Extraordinary Prayer for Durham

#### A. Understanding the Role of Prayer

1. Prayer for the worldwide spread of the gospel
2. Prayer for yourself
3. Prayer for specific lost people you are seeking to reach
4. Prayer for FBC to be fruitful

## B. Extraordinary Prayer Always Precedes Extraordinary Fruitfulness in Evangelism

### 1. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

“Every revival of religion... is really a repetition of what happened on the day of Pentecost.”

*Acts 1:8 you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

*Acts 1:14 They all joined together constantly in prayer*

*Acts 2:1-6 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

### 2. Businessmen’s Prayer Revival, 1858

**The Businessmen's Revival of 1857-1858.** In 1857, the North Dutch Church in New York City hired a businessman, **Jeremiah Lanphier**, to be a lay missionary. He prayed, "Lord, what would you have me do?" Concerned by the anxious faces of businessmen on the streets of New York City, Lanphier decided to open the church at noon so businessmen could pray. The first meeting was set for September 23--three weeks before the Bank Panic of 1857. Six attended the first week, 20 the next, then 40, then they switched to daily meetings. Before long all the space was taken, and other churches also began to open up for businessmen's prayer meetings. Revivals broke out everywhere in 1857, spreading throughout the United States and world. Sometimes called **The Great Prayer Meeting Revival**, an estimated 1,000,000 people were added to America's church rolls, and as many as 1,000,000 of the 4,000,000 existing church members also converted.

## C. How Can We Gather Ourselves to Pray for Evangelistic Fruit?

D. After We've Prayed, We Need to Act Boldly... be Courageous!