

"THE MASTER IS COME AND CALLETH FOR THEE"

"And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee." John 11:28

It was a sad day in the little home in Bethany when Lazarus died. Mary and Martha had neither a husband nor a father. They loved Lazarus all the more. They not only loved him, but they leaned on him, and depended on him. We may suppose that he made the living for the family. The atmosphere of their home was one of peace, understanding, and sweet fellowship. Jesus often came to their home because He loved them.

When Lazarus died, his sisters were heart-broken. They thought, "If Jesus had been here, our brother had not died." They so stated to Him. They had not learned the blessed truth that God has sweet uses for sorrow. Jesus knew that Lazarus was sick, but He stayed away deliberately. He wanted to wait until Lazarus was dead and all human hope was gone. Then He planned to weep with the sorrowing sisters, after which He would arouse their faith in Him, and then call Lazarus from the grave. We often feel that God has forgotten us when accident, disappointment, sickness, or sorrow come. That is not so. Jesus said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." When Martha went to meet Jesus and talk with Him, He soon gave her hope and comfort and faith. When she was comforted, she ran to call Mary and say, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." John 11:28. He is calling you as He called her. I hope that you will be as attentive and obedient as she. "As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him." John 11:29. Christ is always calling. His compassionate heart is always seeking sinners, wooing them to Himself. To every sinner God is calling.

I. God Calls Through The Bible.

Martha carried the direct word of Jesus to Mary. This is the call of God for sinners through the Word. "Come" is one of the most prominent words. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18. A pleading Saviour urges every man to stop and reason. If you will reason, you will get your sins forgiven.

"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." That is God's call. No one else can forgive man's sins or save his soul. God calls man to Him in order that He might give him forgiveness and peace. "Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Isaiah 55:1

God knows the thirst of the human heart. He knows how unsatisfying are the dregs of the cup of sin. He invited us to come to Him and to drink. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but the wicked turn from his way and live." God does not hate sinners, but He loves them. God does not delight in punishment, but in mercy. He is grieved in His heart by the sins of men, and He is longing seeking, and pleading for men to return to Him and to be saved.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus promises rest for the weary, ease of heart to the burdened, and peace to the troubled. Jesus encourages people to come to Him. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. His constant grief is expressed in John 5:40 -- "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." He always begs sinners to come to Him. When He was about to close the canon of the scriptures, He finished with one more plea to sinners. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. All these scriptures say:

"Come!" The Bible warns people, invites people, urges people, and pleads with people, to come to Christ for mercy and forgiveness. One who does not come to Him is without excuse. The only reason that any stay away from Christ is because of their love of sin.

II. God Calls Through Christians.

Jesus sent Martha to tell Mary, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." It has always been God's plan that those who had heard His call should tell others. The invitation, plea and persuasion of a Christian constitutes the call of Christ to sinners. Paul said, "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." We are ambassadors for Christ. Unsaved friend, heed the pleading of the saved. Their invitation is God's call. He speaks to your heart through your loved ones.

III. God Calls Through His Goodness.

"Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4. His goodness is always calling men to be saved. When Jesus sent the word by Martha to Mary that she should come and see him, there must have come to Mary's mind at once one thousand tender memories that bound her heart to Jesus. She thought of how she had sat at His feet when Jesus visited their home. She recalled the tender deeds which she had seen Him do; how He had healed the sick, given sight to the blind, and forgiven sinners. How different her home had been since Jesus began to come by and spend the night with them. Life had been so much sweeter. What a friend Jesus is! The memories of God are as fresh as dew, and are new every morning. "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." Psalm 103:3-5.

God's blessings should cause all of us to be Christians. As we think of our good health, His protection, and our families, we recall "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4. For all the goodness of God, you owe Him your love and affection and praise. Accept God's mercies, heed His call, trust Christ, receive Him as your Saviour, surrender to Him, and dedicate all that you have and are to Him.

IV. God Calls Through Trouble.

Those sisters could not see any good in the sickness and death of Lazarus. It was the old sadness, "It might have been." It was unthinkable to them that Jesus had planned this just so, and had stayed away when He could have come; but He rejoiced with His disciples over this opportunity to glorify God. "Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him." John 11:14, 15.

Jesus had holy plans in the death of Lazarus. He used this sorrow to call Mary to Him, and to teach her to trust Him more and to love Him better. God calls through sorrow those who will not heed his pleading and bountiful goodness nor listen to His Word. Some who love business will not listen to Christ until their business is smitten. God calls through sorrow and grief. David said, "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."

We do not like trouble; we cannot feel that there is any good in suffering. We shrink from sorrow. Sometimes God has to seek our hearts through trouble. "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." Hebrews 12:6.

God calls through disappointment, poverty, trouble, and sorrow. What we call accidents are often planned dealings with the hearts of sinners. Give a loving testimony to those who are in trouble. Wherever there is a broken heart, there is always an opportunity to speak for God. "The Master is come, and calleth for thee." The Master has come and calls for you. Will you hear Him and come to Him as we sing the hymn of invitation?