

(Topics and Lead-in Below)

Come, My Friends!

Matthew 11:28-30

♩ = 96

E \flat F \flat m A \flat F \flat m B \flat 7 A \flat E \flat

1. Come to Me! Don't be a stran - ger! Come, My friends from
2. All you trou - bled, tired, and bro - ken, Come and find the
3. Come to Me! The door is o - pen. Learn of Me, and

A \flat B \flat A \flat E \flat /G C sus C \flat m F \flat m B \flat 7/D

near and far! I'm at home in low - ly man - gers.
rest you seek! I can feel your hurts un - spo - ken.
lose your fear. Come and live where love is spo - ken!

E \flat A \flat M7 A \flat M9 E \flat /B \flat B \flat C \flat m A \flat E \flat F \flat m B \flat 7 E \flat

Hushed! *rit.*
Come and rest your wea - ry hearts. You can come just as you are!
I will heal and set you free. I am gen - tle. Come to Me!
Peace will grow from year to year. Come, My friends, for life is here!

WORDS: Ken Bible
MUSIC: Traditional Folk Tune and Ken Bible

CHRIST'S INVITATION
8.7.8.7.7.

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TOPICS: Assurance & Comfort; Calls to Prayer; God's Love; Healing; Invitation; Peace in Christ

LEAD-IN: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30, NIV)

LEAD-IN DEVOTIONAL READING:

Living Without Guilt

I know about guilt. I know about the shadow deep inside, the heaviness, the darkness. I know about being deeply, unforgettably aware of the wrong I've done.

I've tried to deal with that guilt in a variety of ways.

I've tried to deny it: "It's just a state of mind...an emotion...it'll pass."

I've tried to rationalize it: "Everybody does wrong once in a while...I'm no worse than most people."

I've tried to blame it on others and escape it: "It's just the way my parents raised me...society's false standards...If I ignore their rules, I'll eventually get past this feeling."

I've tried to make up for it somehow: "I will be nice to people...do good deeds...give money...That will make up for the wrong I've done...My good deeds will outweigh the bad."

But none of that lifts the blackness. None of it makes me clean. None of it changes the person I know I am. My wrongness is not a feeling, or a fiction, or a passing phenomenon. It's a fact.

But thank the Lord, I also know what forgiveness feels like. Years ago friends told me about Jesus. At first, hearing about Him only made the guilt worse. I felt painted in a corner. My wrongness, my sin, was bigger than ever. It loomed over me. It stared me in the face.

Finally, in desperation, and in feeble hope, I turned to Jesus. I just opened myself to Him. I admitted how wrong I was. I asked Him to help me.

And you know what happened? He didn't scold me. He didn't punish me. He just forgave me. Forgave me! Freely, completely, unconditionally forgave me! I was a brand-new person, bathed in His love inside and out.

I cannot describe the freedom. I cannot describe the cleanness, the joy, the rightness of life.

I'm not talking about a feeling. It was a fact. I was a different person, and everyone who knew me knew I was different.

No, I wasn't perfect. I'm still not perfect--not by a long shot. But I'm learning to trust Him, and He's helping me to live a clean life, a loving life, above the wrong that once dragged me down.

And when I fail, I just ask Him to forgive me, and He does, as freely and completely as ever.

If you're living with guilt, let me tell you: you don't have to. You don't need to deny it. You don't need to rationalize it. You don't have to make up for it. Jesus forgives sin. Jesus takes away guilt completely. Jesus makes new people. Jesus can make you a new person.

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