

**SO COME  
AND WELCOME  
TO JESUS CHRIST**

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Douglas Wilson, *So Come and Welcome to Jesus Christ: A Morning and Evening Devotional*

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SO COME  
AND WELCOME  
TO JESUS CHRIST  
A MORNING & EVENING DEVOTIONAL



DOUGLAS WILSON



*This book is for Randy Booth,  
and a friendship formed in a remarkable way.*

## PREFACE

OVER THE LAST FOURTEEN OR SO YEARS, SINCE SHORTLY AFTER THE time Christ Church went to a weekly observance of communion, I have been giving a short exhortation that accompanies each administration of the Supper. This devotional is a collection of those exhortations, gathered for daily use, both morning and evening.

We publish this book in the recognition that not every church practices weekly communion, but do not believe that this will affect its suitability for private devotions. I believe that it may provide a great help and blessing for saints who are preparing themselves for communion, however frequently their church observes it. Meditating on the Supper daily is a good way to gain more from the observance itself, however often it happens. And quite independent of frequency of communion, the book is intended to be used simply as a daily devotional.

So, the main thrust of this book is devotional, and should be edifying for any evangelical reader. At the same time, my doctrinal commitments with regard to the Supper do come through in places, and so I thought I should register up front what those commitments are. If I do that in this preface, a Zwinglian reader will not spend his money only to be sorely disappointed when reading in March sometime, for example. I am a sacramental Calvinist, and for the most part the teaching of the Westminster Confession of Faith summarizes my views nicely. This means that for some Baptist or Lutheran readers, certain readings will not be quite as uplifting as the one the day before was. But we must all learn that we were not put in this world for pleasure alone.

As regards broader subjects, I am a pastor in the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches (CREC), exhorting a congregation in the CREC, and this does come out theologically from time to time. For those unacquainted with the CREC, I am a Presbyterian, the kind that believes the Bible. While differences with

saints in other traditions may be apparent, I trust the devotional will not be bristling with contentious issues.

Some of the readings are geared to the church calendar, and such readings are put in approximately the right part of the year. But because most of those days float from year to year, the chances are pretty good that there will be a number of times when a particular reading (for Pentecost, say) will not land on the exact day. Similarly, occasional references to the corporate context of a church service shouldn't be irrelevant for an individual's daily readings and may even be a blessing throughout the week.

Permission is hereby granted to any pastor who would like to use any of these meditations in leading the worship of his own congregation. I would only ask that the requirements of honesty be maintained, in that the appropriate people know the exact wording is not your own. But I do not expect to be given credit, or to be named — in fact, I would rather you didn't. The Supper is no place for footnotes. And permission is also granted to modify any of the thoughts here, putting them into your own words, and no further permission need be sought for that kind of use either.

The title of the book and the invitation at the end of each meditation is *"So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ."* This is largely borrowed from John Bunyan, with many thanks.

DOUGLAS WILSON  
Christ Church  
Christmas 2016

The Word of God promises that the suffering Servant will come to see the travail of His soul, and *He will be satisfied* (Is. 53:11). We too often draw the wrong conclusions from the doctrines of depravity, or from our distress over the current conditions of the Church. We *are* fallen, and the Church is in a dreadful way. We have sin to confess, and we have confessed it.

But we miss the whole point of Scripture if we do not see the *promises*. One of the promises is that after the passion of the Lord Jesus, and after His resurrection, He will look at the fruit of His cross, and He will be satisfied.

He is not ashamed to sit down at table with us. He is not ashamed to call us brothers. He is not ashamed of our table manners.

As we learn this — as we grasp what free grace really means — this sets us free to *learn* our table manners.

This table, this communion, is not a reward that we get for being worthy. It is a means of grace, it is one of the means God has ordained to make us worthy. We eat and are nourished. We are not to strive to grow healthy and strong, and then seek food as a reward. We are weak, trembling, and in need of what He gives.

But please know that He is not ashamed to give it. He is satisfied with the table He has set, and, because He is satisfied, it is possible for us to eat and be satisfied.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*



I want to explain something that I say at the conclusion of these little exhortations, and that is, *“So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.”* What do I mean by that?

First, the Scriptures teach us that when we partake of the bread and wine we are partakers of the Table of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 10:21). When we come to His Table, we are coming to Him. As we come, God in His grace has determined to grow us all up into the perfect man, the Lord Jesus, and for us to partake together in love at this meal is one of His instruments for accomplishing this. When we come here in faith, we are coming to Jesus.

Another important word I use is the word “welcome.” To get to this Table, you don’t have to get past a bunch of suspicious security guards with metal detectors. If you are baptized, and not under the lawful discipline of the church, then you are welcome. You are not being given bread and wine for being such a good person, you are being given bread and wine so that you might grow up into a good person. You are welcome, not for what you have done, but because of what God in His grace intends to do.

And last, I use the word “come.” This is an invitation to everyone. For those not baptized, it is an invitation to be baptized. For those unrepentant, it is an invitation to repent. The only barriers to this Table are found within the confines of the sinful human heart.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*

Jesus commands us to labor for the food which endures more than just a short time — food which endures to everlasting life. He tells us also *not* to give ourselves in idolatrous labor for that food which necessarily perishes.

Jesus says that the Son of man will give us the bread that does not perish because God the Father has sealed Him and gloriously honored Him beyond every name that can be given. Because of this, we honor the name of Jesus Christ as well.

*But how do we work for this bread?* the disciples wondered. Jesus answered that the work which the Father does in us is that we *believe* in Jesus Christ (Jn. 6:28–29).

So you are to feed, by faith. You are to sit down at this table, by faith. You are to meditate on the meaning of the table, by faith. You are to eat, by faith.

In a very real sense it is true that we are what we eat. If, by faith, you feed upon the Faithful One, then God multiplies His grace to you and in you. If you show contempt for Him in your partaking, then God uses the Table as a moment of judgment. But no sinner ought to want to hasten any day of judgment at all. Rather, we look to the one who received judgment on our behalf in His death on the cross. We look away from ourselves, and away from our own faithlessness, and to the One who gave Himself for sinners.

So look, now, in faith, and you will see the food of the gospel.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*

Jesus teaches that all men whom the Father gives to Him will in fact come (Jn 6:37). He also says that no one can come on his own authority, at his own initiative.

This meal is an “invitation only” event. At the same time, the whole world is invited — Jesus Christ is the bread of God which gives life to the *world*.

Our Lord is the bread of life. But He is also the invitation *to* that bread. No one can come in his own name. Anyone in the world can come through the name of Jesus Christ, but no one can come with a counterfeit invitation.

The reason men try to counterfeit the invitation, when the invitation was issued to the entire world, is so that they might come and sit down at this Table with their pride and self-respect intact. But this is the one impossible thing.

The flour that made this bread was ground in all humility, and so this bread and a proud stomach do not go well together. So, come, with your own name, choices, reputation, wisdom, and pride cast far away. Come, sit, at the invitation of Jesus Christ Himself.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*

The cross of Jesus Christ attracts those chosen by God, and that same cross repels those who are perishing (1 Cor. 1:18). The words of life are delicious to those who are being saved, and they are repulsive to those who rest in their own wisdom.

In His discussion of His body and blood, the Lord Jesus scatters the worldly wise. He gives an affront to those who want to reign over a religion that makes sense to them. His cross attracts — drawing all men to Himself. His cross repels those who are perishing. Preaching the cross calls out the elect. Preaching the cross offends the sophisticates of this world. Eating the cross, which is what we do here, nourishes the people of God. The idea of eating the cross is repellent to those who insist on separation from the people of God.

In the years since Jesus spoke these words, many have avoided this Supper in just this way. They stay away, and there is no mystery about their rebellion.

But there is another way to run from the Supper. This is to cling to the outward forms of it, while teaching or countenancing lies concerning it. One lie is that Jesus Christ is sacrificed over and over again. But another lie, much more common among evangelicals, is that our Lord does not nourish His people in any special way — the elements of the Supper do not present Christ to us so that we might respond to Him in faith. But the Supper does do this, and so we must take and eat with the mouth of faith. Not faith in bread. Not faith in wine. Faith in God, and in His Christ.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*

EVENING ● FAITH IS NOT  
UNDER YOUR SEAT

JANUARY 3

The apostle Paul tells the Corinthians that he would not that they should be ignorant. As we deal with holy things, ignorance is dangerous (1 Cor. 10:1).

Paul wanted them to know that their fathers were all under the cloud, and they all passed through the sea. The *Jews* in the wilderness are called the *fathers* of the *Gentiles* at Corinth. There was a covenantal identity between them — they, together, constituted the people of God. This is how we, who are not descended from Abraham in the ordinary way, can be considered as sons and daughters of Abraham. The thing which unites us is the covenant, and the heart of keeping this covenant is *faith*. Faith brought the Jews to the banks of the Red Sea. Faith brought them to the shores of their baptism.

But this by itself does not settle the matter. The Corinthians, and many Christians since, have assumed *automatic* blessings in the presence of God. But it was in the presence of God that Uzzah was struck down, Uzziah was afflicted with leprosy, Nadab and Abihu were consumed, and many Corinthians got sick and died.

Enormous blessings are set before us here. But we do not want you to be ignorant. Blessings are appropriated by faith, and faith is not automatic. Faith was not handed to you at the door. Faith is not under your seat.

Faith receives like a child. Faith is not up in heaven so that you might wonder how it might be retrieved. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. *And this is the Word of God*. Here is the body of Christ, broken for His people. Here is the cup of the new testament, the blood shed for the remission of sin. Do you believe? Then take, and eat.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*

The apostle tells us that *all* the Jews in the wilderness drank the same spiritual drink. They *all* drank from the same spiritual Rock that followed them, the Rock that was Christ. But with *many*, he says, God was not pleased. They were overthrown in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:3–5).

In the same way, certain members of the church at Corinth were overthrown in their wilderness, and did not enter into the promised land of the Christian eon. They came up out of Egypt, but (in a figure) died during the forty years between the crucifixion of Christ and the destruction of the old Jerusalem. They did not enter in because of unbelief. But the fact they did not enter in to the promised land did not keep them from communing with Christ in the wilderness. They did commune with Him in their unbelief, just as the Jews had done in a type.

When we look at the Jews in the wilderness and the Corinthians in their wilderness, we want to draw a contrast — everything must be different in the new covenant, we say — but Paul teaches that in *this* respect, everything is the same (1 Cor. 10:6, 11).

And so we reason by analogy to a third set of circumstances. The bread from heaven was Christ, but so was the bread of the land, so was the milk and honey.

This is our situation. Everyone in this room who partakes of the bread and the wine partakes of the *same* bread and the *same* wine. Christ is not present for the one who has faith, but absent from the one who does not have faith. Rather, He is present *covenantally* for both. His covenant presence is an enormous, glorious blessing for those who come in simple child-like faith. His presence is terrible for those who trifle with Him, and who think that He does not see.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*

Our presence here at this Table makes a claim on us. Because we are here, we must not become idolaters, as some of the Jews did in the wilderness. We must not eat and drink at *another* god's table, and then rise up to play.

The golden calf, however, was not called another god. Aaron tried to have it both ways — he tried to have a festival to *Jehovah* around the image that came out the fire, as he claimed, all by itself.

But this was not adequate. When Moses came down from the mountain, he was not prepared to be reasonable. He did not enter into ecumenical dialog with those who wanted to argue that the calf was not an idol, but merely a pedestal, a platform, for the invisible Creator. He jumped to conclusions, as some of our modern theologians might say. He broke the tablets of stone, and did irreparable harm to the cause of ecclesiastical and ecumenical negotiations.

His approach was so *severe*, we might want to say. He did not take the time to carefully research the arguments of those who had spoken so winsomely to Aaron. But if this is severity, then may God grant the grace of giving us more of it.

So let us guard our hearts. As we celebrate before the Lord, as we learn to rejoice before *Him*, as we learn to suck the marrow out of the bones, let us at the same time be vigilant. We often do not know what manner of spirit we are of, and when we rise up to play, if it veers toward fornication, then let us remember the twenty-three thousand who fell. God calls us to celebrate before Him, but this is to be done in the beauty of holiness.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*

We know from the Word of God that the ways of the flesh and the ways of the Spirit cannot be reconciled (Gal. 5:17). As long as God is holy, and as long as sin is filthy, the two will be at odds. That is to say, they will be at odds everlastingly. Paul pictures this in Corinthians as a matter of eating at one of two tables. You may not, he says, partake of the table of demons and the table of the Lord (1 Cor. 10:21). One may physically do it, certainly, but such a one may also physically die or get seriously ill.

The antithesis between good and evil extends into everything, and this antithesis is marked by how we eat and drink. The point is not that you may not eat here if you have sinned at all (for all sin is in some manner partaking of what the devil has cooked for you). The point is that you must not eat here with the formed and settled intention of continuing to eat from both tables. That is high-handed arrogance, of the kind that God strikes.

But of course, the point of such warnings is not to chase you from the Lord's Table. Realize the force of the argument here. If you are baptized, and have not been lawfully excommunicated from the Church, then you are not just invited to come and partake. Rather, we insist that you come, and we do not do this on our own authority. The Lord of the Table, the Lord Jesus, insists that you come to Him, and partake with Him, and in Him. If you are baptized, you must come.

At the same time, you may not deliberately partake of both tables. And this means that there is only one real option for you. If you are clutching to any known sin, you are not just invited to repent. Rather, this solemn and joyful moment constitutes a *command* that you repent.

Bread in hand, the name of this sin that must be forsaken is the sin of divided loyalties. Garden variety sins are confessed in the first part of the service. Divided loyalties must be dealt with here.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*



The Table of the Lord is a rich Table, one that is filled with all good things. We who have been invited to that Table are not filled with all good things. The point, one that Scripture makes over and over again, is to bring about a transfer. What God has, He gives to us. What we do not have, is given to us.

One of the ways it is apparent that we are not filled with good things is the ease with which we believe lies about whether this Table is a Table of blessing. In other words, believing lies about the graciousness of God is one of the ways that we reveal how readily we tell lies.

But acknowledging this is not the same as wallowing in it. We have already confessed our sins. We have seen victory and growth over the course of our lives, as God is transforming us from glory into glory. We do not come here in order to go over our lives with morbid interest. Indeed, we come here because we serve a God who is interested in changing us so that we might stop doing this. His lovingkindness endures forever.

What this means, in practical terms, is that when you come to this Table you are charged to meditate on the goodness and greatness of God, and the goodness and the greatness of what He has given to you. You are charged to repent of unbelief, the attitude that says that God is not really giving you anything here.

But our God is a God of grace. He is no skinflint. He is no miser. His Son, our gracious Lord, is at the head of the Table, and He has given orders that ensure that the food will never run out.

*So come, and welcome, to Jesus Christ.*