

"Come, For All Things Are Now Ready"
Luke 14:17

A Sermon by Charles Spurgeon

This invitation was first of all made to the Jews, but it seems to me to have a peculiar appropriateness to ourselves. It is later in the day than when first the Lord was here, and therefore the supper time is evidently closer at hand. The shadows lengthen, the sun of the present dispensation is nearing its setting. The fullness of time for the marriage supper of the Lamb must speedily arrive, and therefore it behooves us to be more than ever earnest in delivering the message to the invited guests.

Very emphatically, at this time all things are now ready and the supper awaits the guests. Dear reader, I pray do not begin to make excuses but be prepared to follow us when we bid you come. Go with us when we seek to bring you in, or at least to yield to our entreaties when with all the sacred violence of love we would compel you to come in.

There are two things clearly in the text, and these have a close relation to one another. A plain invitation--"Come," and then a forcible argument--"for all things are ready." The argument is fetched from the divine preparations: "My oxen and my fatlings are killed, come to the supper." The readiness of everything on God's part is the argument why men should come and partake of his grace. The readiness of the feast of mercy is the reason why men should come to it at once.

I. We will begin our meditation by laying down the first statement which shall make our first division of discourse: ***IT IS GOD'S HABIT TO HAVE ALL THINGS READY***, whether for his guests or his creatures. You never discover God to be behindhand in anything. When the guests come there is no scrambling to get the table arranged and the food prepared, but the Lord has great forethought and every little point of detail is well arranged. "All things are ready."

It was so in creation. He did not create a single blade of grass upon the face of the earth until the soil and the atmosphere had been prepared for it, and until the kindly sun had learned to look down upon the earth. Nor did God prepare one single creature that has life until he had prepared its habitat and made ready its appointed food.

Take another event in providence, such as the going down of Israel into Egypt. God had determined that Jacob and his seed should sojourn awhile in the land of Ham, but how wisely he prepared the whole matter. He sent a man before them, even Joseph, and Joseph was there upon the throne clothed with power to nourish them through the famine. He had been there years before, all in good time to store the wheat while the seven years of plenty lasted, that they might be well fed during the seven years of famine.

So was it when the tribes migrated into Canaan itself. God did not take them to the promised land until all things were ready. They were made to wait for the fitting time, for the Lord said, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Not till the inhabitants of the land had passed the bounds of mercy, and were condemned to die, were the Israelites brought upon the scene to be at once their executioners and successors.

Now the fact that in the great gospel supper all things are ready teaches us, first, that ***God's***

thoughts go before men's comings. "Come, *for* all things are ready." It is not, "If you come, all things will be ready," but "they are ready and therefore come." Grace is first, and man at his best follows its footsteps. Long before we ever thought of God, he thought of us. Yes, before we had a being and before time itself began, in the bosom of the Eternal there were thoughts of love toward those for whom the table of his mercy is now spread. He had planned and arranged everything in his august mind from of old; he had indeed foreknown and predestinated all the provisions and all the guests of his supper; all things were settled in his eternal covenant and purpose before there was ever the earth. Never think, oh sinner, that you can outstrip the love of God. His thoughts are before ours and so are his acts, for he does not say "All things are planned and arranged," but "All things are ready." Jesus--the great sacrifice--is slain, the fountain for our cleansing is filled with blood, the Holy Spirit has been given, the word by which we are to be instructed is in our hands, and the light which will illuminate that sacred page is promised us through the Holy Ghost. Things promised ought to encourage us to come to Christ, but things already given ought to be irresistible attractions. All things are already completed by the sacred Trinity before we come to cry for mercy. This should make us very hopeful and eager in our approach to the Lord. Come, sinner, come at once! This ought to encourage you, since all that God has to do in your salvation is done before you ever have a thought of him or turn one foot toward his abode. All things are ready. Come!

This also proves how welcome those are who come. If you are invited to see a friend, and when you reach his house you find the door locked, and after knocking many times no one answers, for there is no one at home, you reckon that there is some mistake or that the invitation was not a sincere one. Even should your host come to the door and let you in, but find himself embarrassed for there is no meal provided nor arrangements made for your rest that night, you would, like a wise man, quickly leave; for had you been welcome, these things would have been prepared for you. But oh, poor soul, if you come to God all things are ready! How freely does Jehovah welcome you, how genuine is the invitation, how sincere the desire that you should come to feast with him.

II. Our second statement is: ***THIS READINESS SHOULD BE AN ARGUMENT THAT HIS SAINTS SHOULD COME*** continually to him and find grace to help in every time of need. Oh children of God, I will lift the parable away from the immediate use which the Savior made of it to employ it for your good. You know, beloved, that whenever the Lord Jesus Christ invites his people to come to him and to taste of his bounty, all things are ready. It was a beautiful scene by the sea of Tiberias when the Lord spoke to those who had been toiling on the lake at fishing, and said to them "Come and dine." The invitation was not a vain one, for it is written, "They saw a fire of coals there and fish laid thereon, and bread." Whenever, therefore, your Lord and Master (by his blessed Spirit) calls you to come near to him, you may be quite sure that all things are ready for your immediate enjoyment. You need never pause or hesitate, but approach him without delay. I want to caution you against replying, "But, Lord, I do not feel ready." That is most true, but that is not an argument which you should use to excuse yourself in holding back. It is ***his*** readiness that is the main thing, not yours; and as all things are ready, come whether you feel ready or not. I have heard of some Christians who have said, "I do not feel in a proper frame of mind to pray." My brother, pray till you do. Some have said, "I do not think I shall go up to the house of God today, I feel so unhappy and so cast down." When should you go so much as then, in order that you may find comfort? "Still," says one, "you would not have me sing a hymn when my heart is heavy?" Yes, I would indeed. I would have you sing yourself up from the depths of the sea when all God's billows have gone over you. David often did so, when he began a psalm in the deeps and then gradually rose and rose till he was in a perfect rapture of delight

before the psalm was over. All things are ready with your Lord; therefore, come whether you happen to be ready or not.

Note the times when this truth ought to have power with you. Are you in spiritual poverty? Are you needing strength? Do you need consolation? Come to the mercy seat in prayer; all things are ready there. The mercy seat is sprinkled with the precious blood of Christ. Let us therefore come with boldness to the throne of heavenly grace, because everything there is ready for the pleading suppliant. You have no need to bring anything with you. Notwithstanding your carelessness and indifference or whatever it may be that you have to complain of, the throne of grace is ready. Therefore do draw near to it and find the grace you need.

I think the same thought ought to cross our minds with regard to every daily duty. We wake up in the morning but we do not know exactly what lies before us, for God's providence has constantly new revelations. But in the morning I like to think that all things are ready for my pathway through the day; that if I will go out to serve God in my ministry, he has prepared some ear into which I am to drop a gracious word, and some heart in the furrows of which I shall sow some blessed seed effectually. Behold, all providence with its mighty wheels is working together with the servant of the living God. Only go forward in zeal and confidence and you shall find that every step of your way is ready for you.

One of these days it may be that you and I shall either be grown very old or else disease will lay hold upon us, and we shall lie upon the sickbed watching and waiting for our Master's coming. Then there shall suddenly appear a messenger from him, who will bring us this word: "All things are ready, come to the supper." And closing our eyes on earth, we shall open them in heaven and see what he has done, who so sweetly said, "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also."

III. THE PERFECT READINESS OF THE FEAST OF DIVINE MERCY IS EVIDENTLY INTENDED TO BE A STRONG ARGUMENT WITH SINNERS WHY THEY SHOULD COME AT ONCE. Soul, do you desire eternal life? Is there within your spirit a hungering and a thirsting after such things as may satisfy your spirit and make you live forever? Then listen while the Master's servant gives you the invitation. "Come, for *all things* are ready." Not some, but all. There is nothing that you can need between here and heaven but what is provided in Jesus Christ, in his person and in his work. All things are ready--life for death, forgiveness for your sin, cleansing for your filth, clothing for your nakedness, joy for your sorrow, strength for your weakness. Yes, more than all you can want is stored up in the boundless nature and work of Christ. You must not say, "I cannot come because I have not this or that." Are you to prepare the feast? Are you to provide anything? You do not know your own true condition or else you would not dream of such a thing. The great Householder himself has provided the whole of the feast; you have nothing to do with the provision but only to partake of it. What more would you provide when God has already provided all things? It would be a great presumption to compete with the provisions of the great King, and this he will not endure. All that you need between the gates of hell, where you now lie, and the gates of heaven, to which grace will bring you if you believe, is provided and prepared in Jesus Christ the Savior.

Notice the word "now." "All things are *now* ready." Just now, at this moment. Right now, when your heart is so heavy and your mind is so careless. Right now, when you have never thought of these things before. Though your sins are as the stars of heaven and your soul trembles under

an awful foreboding of coming judgment, yet "all things are now ready." After all your rejections of Christ, after the many invitations that have been thrown away upon you, come to the supper. While the Spirit lingers and still strives with men, while mercy's gates still stand wide open that "whosoever will may come," while life and health and reason still are spared to you and the ministering voice that bids you come can still be heard, then come now--come at once!--all things are ready. Delay is as unreasonable as it is wicked, now that all things are ready.

IV. Now I am going to pass on to my fourth and last point. ***THIS TEXT DISPOSES OF A GREAT DEAL OF TALK ABOUT THE SINNER'S READINESS OR UNREADINESS,*** because if the reason why a sinner is to come is because all things are ready, then it is idle for him to say, "But I am not ready." It is clear that all the readiness required on man's part is a willingness to come and receive the blessing that God has provided. There is nothing else necessary. If men are willing to come, they may come; they will come. Where the Lord has been pleased to touch the will so that man has a desire toward Christ, where the heart really hungers and thirsts after righteousness, that is all the readiness which is needed. All the fitness he requires is that first you feel your need of him (and that he gives you), and that, secondly, in feeling your need of him you are willing to come to him. Willingness to come is everything. A readiness to believe in Jesus, a willingness to cast the soul on him, a preparedness to accept him just as he is--because you feel that he is the Savior that you need--that is all. There was no other readiness, there could have been none in the case of those who were poor, blind, halt, or maimed, yet they came to the feast. The text does not say, "You are ready, therefore come." That is a legal way of putting the gospel. It says, "All things are ready, the gospel is ready, therefore you are to come." As for *your* readiness, all the readiness that is possibly needed is a readiness which the Spirit gives us, namely, willingness to come to Jesus.

Now notice that the unreadiness of those who were bidden arose out of their possessions and out of their abilities. One would not come because he had bought a piece of land. What a great heap Satan casts up between the soul and the Savior! Others of them could not come because they had so much to do. Thousands are kept away from grace by what they have and by what they can do. Emptiness is more preparatory to a feast than fullness. How often does it happen that poverty and inability even help to lead the soul to Christ. When a man thinks himself to be rich, he will not come to the Savior. When a man dreams that he is able at any time to repent and believe, and to do everything for himself that is needed, he is not likely to come and by a simple faith repose in Christ. It is not what you don't have, but what you do have that keeps many of you from Christ. The man who feels himself guilty may for awhile be kept away by his guilt, but the man who is self-righteous will never come. Until the Lord has taken his pride away from him, he will still refuse the feast of free grace. The possession of abilities and honors and riches keep men from coming to the Redeemer.

Trust Jesus Christ, that is all, just as you are, with all your unfitness and unreadiness. Take what God has made ready for you--the precious blood to cleanse you, a robe of righteousness to cover you, eternal joy to be your portion. Receive the grace of God in Christ Jesus, oh, receive it now! God grant you may, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.