

Pastor Geoff Boyle
Memorial Service for Esther Nelson
8 July 2011
Matthew 11:25-30

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

“**Come to Me**,” says the Lord in today’s Gospel.

Come to Me—
you who labor,
you who sweat,
you who have it hard in this life—
Come to Me.

Come to Me—
you who are frustrated, angered, or hurt,
you who are broken or lost,
scared or confused.

Come to Me you who are burdened by the cares and the weights of this world,
“**and I will give you rest**” (Mt 11:28).

Jesus offers Himself to the poor, the weak, the empty, the broken, the hurting, the sick, and the dead.

If you’re not those things, then you don’t need Jesus.

If you’ve got it all figured out—
if you’ve managed to treat your neighbor as yourself;
to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength,
if you’ve managed to get through this life without suffering, or pain, or distress;
if you’ve found a cure for death on your own—
then this Jesus isn’t for you.

Jesus is for sinners only.

He’s only for the sick and the dying,
the weak and the lost,
the poor and the burdened.

Again, if you’ve got no sin—
then you need no Jesus.

But—
if you find yourself among the broken of this world,
then this Jesus is for you!

A Jesus who is God Himself in the flesh for you—
a Jesus who lives entirely for others,
and a Jesus who *dies* entirely for others.
This Jesus is *for you*!

No one has it easy in this life.
 No one's free from troubles.
 No one's without loneliness and abandonment and fear.
 No one goes without suffering.
 And so there isn't anyone who doesn't need this Jesus.

Esther never beat around the bush—
 she never had any false pretense of not needing this Jesus.

She knew she was weak and couldn't get by alone.
 And she delighted in her weakness,
 for she knew that this Jesus was for her.

She was quick to confess her sin—
 for she knew that this Jesus,
 who called her by name,
 who washed her in the font of Holy Baptism,
 who gave His life for her on the cross,
 and who put His own body and blood into her mouth for her forgiveness and life,
 she knew that this Jesus loves her.

The Jesus that loves Esther,
 loves you too.

And here He is today, at Esther's Memorial,
 inviting you to Himself.

**Come to Me all who labor and are heavy laden,
 and I will give you rest.
 Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me,
 for I am gentle and lowly in heart,
 and you will find rest for your souls.
 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light”** (Mt 11:28-30).

“Come to Me,” He says, and let's trade.

Let Me have your stress and anger,
 your bitterness and frustrations.
 Let Me have your fear, your anxiety, and your sadness,
 your illness and weakness.
 Let Me have your sin—
 your hidden secrets, your darkened conscience, your troubled past—
 and I will give you rest.

I will take your burden onto Myself—
 I'll put it on My shoulders.
 I'll bear the consequences—
 not you!

I'll die the death you deserve—
 just come to me and live!
 The Lord Jesus pleads with you—
 He begs you—
 don't try to go it alone.

Don't keep your anger inside to yourself,
 let the Lord take it.
 Don't hold on to your struggles as simply something that everyone must bear on his own—
 God became Man in order to bear them *for you*.

“*Come to Me*,” He says, and remember your baptism.
 Remember the water that dampened your head,
 while the Word was spoken into you.
 Remember the promises that our God attaches to this baptism:
 The forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38),
 the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38),
 regeneration, renewal (Titus 3:5-6),
 and new birth from above (Jn 3:3-5),
 salvation (Mk 16:16),
 and a resurrection from death to life (Rom 6:4)
 All of that comes with Baptism!

And that is why our Lord Jesus tenderly invites us to *Come*—
 He invites us to the places where He promises to be *for us*:
 Holy Baptism,
 Holy Communion,
 and wherever the Gospel is preached—
 put simply, He invites us into His Church.

He's invited you here, today.

And today He pleads with all of you to *Come*—
 just as Esther gladly and joyfully came throughout her life,
 and even now in her death she still comes—
 she comes without burden or care or weight or sadness.
 So you also,
Come,
come to Christ,
 and rest from your labors.

His yoke is easy,
 His burden is light—
 and He willing trades all He has for you.

“**Come to Me**,” says the Lord,
 “**and I will give you rest.**”

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit