

Title: **WHY DON'T PEOPLE
COME TO CHRIST?**

Text: John 5:39-40

Subject: *Man's Unbelief*

Date: Sunday Morning — March 1, 2009

Tape: John #43

Reading: *Matthew 9:1-38*

Introduction:

Faith in Christ is set before us in many different ways in Scripture.

- Faith is looking to Christ. — *“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else”* (Isaiah 45:22). — *“Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the LORD our God, until that he have mercy upon us”* (Psalms 123:2).
- Faith is trusting Christ, as a son trusts his father. — *“O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee”* (Psalms 84:12).
- Faith is seeking Christ, as a man seeks something he has lost.
- Faith is laying hold of Christ, as a drowning man lays hold of a life-line.
- And **saving faith is described in Scripture as coming to Christ.** — **The Lord Jesus is able to save to the uttermost all them that come to God by him.** — Believers are described by Peter as a people coming to the Savior. — *“To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious”* (1 Peter 2:4).

How often poor, needy sinners came to Christ, or were brought to him, in desperate need, while he walked on the earth. And **as often as a needy soul came to our omnipotent, ever-gracious, all-merciful Savior, they obtained the healing power and saving mercy they needed.**

- The Leper (Matthew 8:1-3)
- The Paralyzed Man (Matthew 9:1-8)
- The Woman with an Issue of Blood (Matthew 9:20-22)
- Jairus' Daughter (Matthew 9:18-26)
- The Two Blind Men (Matthew 9:27-31)

Are you listening? — Salvation is obtained by coming to Christ. — The Lord Jesus is able to save all who come to God by him. — In the Gospel narratives, every poor sinner who came to Christ obtained the salvation he

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sought. — And here's another thing: **The Lord Jesus has promised that he will save all who come to him.**

(Matthew 11:28) “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

(John 6:37) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

(John 7:37-38) “In the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. (38) He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

Now, I want you to turn to our text — John 5:39-40. Our Lord Jesus is talking to religious people, people who went to church every week, people who read and studied the Bible. Now, watch what he says...

(John 5:39-40) “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (40) And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

These were Bible thumping, conservative, religious, church going people, people who read, memorized and studied the Word of God. Yet, our Savior said to these religious people...

(John 5:39-40) “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. (40) **And** (not but — **And**) ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

Throughout the Word of God there is a clear-cut message of redemption through the blood of Calvary's cross. There is absolutely no salvation from sin except through the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. Like these Pharisees, many who state their belief in a supreme being, in a Divinely inspired Bible, and even in an eternal heaven and burning hell, yet perish in their sins without hope and without God. For the Word of God clearly says, “*without the shedding of blood, (there) is no remission*” of sins (Hebrews 9:22).

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- Christ is “*the Way*,” all without him are lost, wandering in the wilderness of sin.
- Christ is “*the Truth*,” men and women without him live a lie.
- Christ is “*the Life*,” all without him are dead in trespasses and in sins.
- Christ is “*the Light*,” men without him are utter darkness.
- Christ is “*the Vine*,” those who are without him are withered branches to be cast into the fire.
- Christ is “*the Rock*,” if you are without him you will be carried away by the flood of judgement.
- Christ is “*the Bread*” and “*Water of Life*,” if you are without him, you must hunger and thirst throughout eternity.

When these truths are so plainly written, and clearly recorded in the Word of God, and when they are faithfully preached day after day from the pulpit, the radio, television, the printed page and the internet, I cannot help asking, — Why don't people come to Christ? That is my subject. — **WHY DON'T PEOPLE COME TO CHRIST?** If Christ is able to save, if salvation is to be had by coming to Christ, if the Lord Jesus promises to save all who come to him, and if all who ever came to the Lord Jesus Christ obtained salvation by him, in him and with him, Why don't you come to him? Why do people continue to live in unrest, unhappiness and sin, when to come to Christ means rest, joy and salvation from sin? To find the answer to this question, we must go to the Scriptures.

The Son of God declares, “*And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*” Let me show you from the Book of God why it is that people will not come to Christ. If you do not come to my Savior, if you do not trust the Lord Jesus as your only, able and all-sufficient Savior, it is because of these five facts revealed in the Word of God.

SPIRITUALLY BLIND

First, the Word of God shows us plainly that all the sons and daughters of our father Adam are spiritually blind. Yes, man's problem is that he is blind, so blind that unless and until he is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. He cannot see, discern or understand anything spiritual.

Men do not come to Christ because they are spiritually blind and **the gospel is hid from them**. Paul says, — “*If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds of*

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them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). — A blind man has no appreciation for the beautiful mountain scenery of the Smokies. — A deaf man has no appreciation for the glorious music of the symphony orchestra. — And the spiritually blind sinner, the person who has no spiritual eyes to see, receive and rejoice in spiritual things. These things, the things of God, are foolishness to him.

All mankind are in a lost and perishing condition through sin. Every child born into this world is born in sin. Conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity, each one goes forth from the womb speaking lies.

Blessed be his name God will save a multitude no man can number! Some have been chosen and redeemed, and shall be saved, out of every tribe, tongue and nation.

- God the Father chose them in eternity.
- God the Son redeemed them at Calvary.
- God the Spirit will call them irresistibly and effectually.

God will save all his elect, but the rest will be lost forever, never seeing the truth, never knowing God, without Christ, because their eyes are blind and they are given over to a reprobate mind to continue in those things that are not convenient (Romans 1:28). Every vessel of mercy shall be prepared unto Glory and every vessel of wrath fitted for destruction, according to God's eternal, unalterable, sovereign purpose (Romans 9:11-28). — **This is both a matter of divine justice and a matter of divine sovereignty.**

(Romans 1:28) "And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient."

(Romans 9:11-28) "(For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) (12) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. (13) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. (14) What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? God forbid. (15) For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. (16) So then *it is* not of him that willeth, nor of him that

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runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. (17) For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. (18) Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and whom he will he hardeneth. (19) Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? (20) Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed *it*, Why hast thou made me thus? (21) Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? (22) *What* if God, willing to show *his* wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: (23) And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, (24) Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (25) As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. (26) And it shall come to pass, *that* in the place where it was said unto them, Ye *are* not my people; there shall they be called the children of the living God. (27) Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: (28) For he will finish the work, and cut *it* short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth.”

Therefore we hear our Savior saying to the unbelieving Jews of his day...

(John 5:40) “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

(John 10:25-26) “Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. (26) But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.”

The Church of Christ must not cease from its labor until it has preached the Gospel to every creature! We must give ourselves to missions, evangelism, and witnessing, thereby fulfilling the great commission of our Savior. But we will not add one name to the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. And all our labors, our most fervent and faithful labors are less than vanity, without the blessing of God the Holy Spirit. Let

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us ever pray that he will bless our labors, ours and those of our brethren around the world, to the salvation and consolation of God's elect. He alone can take the things of Christ and show them to men. He alone can give sinners eyes to behold and hearts to believe the Gospel (John 16:8-11).

(John 16:8-11) "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (9) Of sin, because they believe not on me; (10) Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; (11) Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

All the tricks, gimmicks, pleadings and begging of churches and preachers to get lost men and women to make decisions and professions are useless, worse than useless — it is a mockery of God and a mockery of men's souls!

Unless God the Holy Spirit performs a Divine operation on their blinded minds, and opens their eyes to receive God's truth blind sinners shall remain blind! None but God the Holy Spirit can "lead men to Christ." Only God the Father can "draw men to the Son." **Sinners will not and cannot come to Christ of their own accord, because they are blinded and cannot see their condition and their need of Christ.** Natural men do not see that they are wicked and that "*God is angry with the wicked every day*" (Psalm 7:11). They do not know the plague of their hearts. They cannot understand that salvation is in the blood of Christ. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them. All of these glorious truths are revealed and known only by the work and power and operation of God the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel.

We must preach, yes, but we must wait upon the Spirit to convict and convert. The emphasis today is not upon the faithful preaching of all the Word of God, but it is placed upon getting sinners to "make a decision," teaching them to say "the sinners prayer," and pressing men to "accept Christ" — all terms that never appear in the Word of God! Nowhere in the Bible do we find God's preachers going around begging the wicked to "decide for Christ," and "accept Jesus." No! in the Bible, you find God's prophets delivering "the burden of the Word of the Lord," condemning sin, calling sinners to repentance, holding their feet to the fire until, smarting under the pricks of the Spirit, they cried, "*What must we do to be saved?*"

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The knowledge of these truths does not lead to fatalism nor to an anti-evangelistic spirit, but will lead us to properly emphasize “all” Bible doctrine and will correct our unscriptural methods so often used to enlist great numbers of unsaved Church members, who have made a decision for Christ but who have never been born of the Spirit. In the mad race for numbers and praise from men churches around the world are following the religious tom-foolery churches in the United States.

- Decoys to walk down the aisle.
- Prizes for soul-winners.
- Preachers eating gold-fish.
- Scary movies.
- Religious entertainment.
- Contemporary worship.
- Morality crusades.
- Political crusades.
- Family crusades.

When these modern deceivers of men’s souls have compassed land and sea to make one disciple or a million disciples, they have done nothing for the benefit of any, but only make them twofold more the children of hell! As a result of all the religious carnival acts in them, the churches of this reprobate age are filled with sinners who are trying to live the Christian life without Christ; who are trying to act holy without having holiness; and who are “*the blind*” trying to “*lead the blind*.”

It is time for preachers and churches to start being honest. — It is a sin against God and sinners to trick and talk men into profession without faith, and decisions without regeneration. The Lord Jesus said...

(John 5:40) “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

(John 6:37-44) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. (38) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. (39) And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. (40) And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. (41) The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. (42) And they said, Is not this Jesus, the

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son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? (43) Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. (44) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

SPIRITUALLY DEAD

Why don't people come to Christ? You will not come because you are spiritually blind; and, secondly, you will not come because you are spiritually dead. Men do not come to Christ because they are dead in trespasses and sins and must be quickened by God's Spirit.

- In the heart of man, there dwells no good thing.
- In the soul of man there is no spiritual life.
- In the mind of man there is no longing for or seeking after God.

Men out of Christ are dead. They are just as dead and helpless spiritually as a corpse is helpless physically. I would as soon expect a dead man to get out of his casket, go into the kitchen and get himself a drink of water as expect a sinner to rise out of his sins and come to Christ who is the Water of Life, without the quickening and regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

If a man is ever saved from sin, he must first be effectually quickened by the Spirit of God. Paul in writing to the Ephesians calls their attention to the fact that they were “*quickened*” to life (Ephesians 2:1) by the Spirit. God does not perform this effectual work of the Spirit in the hearts of all men, but only in the hearts of those he has purposed to save. “*Salvation is of the LORD*” (Jonah 2:9) from the beginning to end. He saves men on purpose. There are no accidents with God.

This talk of “God has done his part, now you must do your part” completely destroys salvation by pure grace, making it to depend on the works of man, which is no more grace but works. Man made his decision in Eden, he chose to disobey God and serve Satan. That decision still controls the hearts of unregenerated men. Now God is calling his people out of every nation under heaven, the people redeemed by the precious blood of his dear Son. God does not tell us that the destiny of any man rests upon our success as soul-winners; but he has sent us out, telling us to preach the Gospel to every creature. The work of regeneration is in his hands, the hands of the Spirit's omnipotent grace!

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I suppose every preacher in the country has a sermon on the words of Pilate, — “*What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?*” (Matthew 27:22). They use it to try and prove to the sinner that the salvation of his soul rests entirely in his deciding for against Jesus. But very few preachers ever are fair enough to preach on the reply the Lord Jesus made to these words of Pilate. He said to Pilate, “*thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above*” (John 19:10).

There you have it, sinner, you are in the hands of a God who does as he pleases and he is responsible to and answerable to no man for his actions. He said to Moses, “*I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy*” (Exodus 33:19).

SPIRITUAL ENMITY

Why don't people come to Christ?

1. They are spiritually blind.
2. They are spiritually dead. And...
3. Their hearts are filled with enmity against God.

Sinners, whose hearts are enmity against God, are filled with spiritual enmity toward the Gospel, and are violently opposed to God's terms of salvation. Be honest, if you can. That's why you don't come to Christ. Isn't it?

- People despise the fact that God declares them to be doomed, damned, dead sinners, without any ability before him. — **Total Depravity**.
- Men hate the fact that salvation is by the will and choice of God alone. — **Unconditional Election**.
- Oh, how men hate the fact that salvation comes to sinners by the merit of Christ's effectual redemption. — **Limited Atonement**.
- Sinners everywhere despise being told that salvation comes only by the effectual call of God the Holy Spirit. — **Irresistible Grace**.
- And sinners hate being told that salvation's security is completely assured to all who trust Christ because, and only because, we are preserved and kept by grace. — **Perseverance of the Saints**.

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Men do not come to Christ because of his terms of Salvation. The average man would be willing to accept a salvation from the fires of hell if he could have it and keep the reins of his life in his own hands; but that will never happen. The Son of God demands that we surrender to him as our Lord. Faith in Christ is nothing less than the surrender of myself to him (Luke 14:25-33).

(Luke 14:25-33) “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, (26) If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (27) And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? (29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, (30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (31) Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. (33) So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

There are two kinds of faith. There is a faith that centers in me, and what I can get from God. And there is a faith that centers in God and his glory. If my faith is primarily concerned with me, and what I want, then the object of my faith is me. I really worship myself. If my faith is primarily concerned with God and his glory, then God is the Object of my faith. I worship him.

Martin Luther once defined salvation as “the realization of God’s will and purpose, what ever it might be, rather than the satisfaction of human need.” He saw that true faith is not seeking something from God, but bowing to the rule of God. — **Calvin** said, “True faith is having confidence in God, regardless of profit or loss.” It is the heart’s willing affirmation of God’s right to be God. This is the one issue between God and man.

Illustrations: “Chief give himself to Jesus!”

The Pearl

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The Preacher and the Business Man

Sinners will not come to Christ because they hate his terms and will not submit to them. They will not lay down their weapons of warfare and their arms of rebellion until the Spirit of God has laid bare their hearts, stripped them of their self-righteous rags, and destroyed all their false foundations.

ANOTHER REFUGE

Turn to Isaiah 28, and I will show you a fourth reason why sinners will not come to Christ. You who are yet without Christ, you who this day harden your hearts and will not hear his voice do so, you choose not to trust the Son of God because you have another refuge.

(Isaiah 28:14-20) “Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which *is* in Jerusalem. (15) Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.”

What is your refuge? Where are you hiding? What is your covenant with death?

- Your good works?
- Your decision for Jesus?
- Your experience?

There is only one refuge for your soul; and that Refuge is the one God himself has provided for sinners, Jesus Christ the Lord.

- His Blood!
- His righteousness!
- His Grace!
- His Intercession!
- His Faithfulness!
- His Acceptance!

(Verse 16) “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner *stone*, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”

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God give us some preachers today who will rout sinners out of their refuge of lies and exalt the God of the Bible!

(Verse 17) — “Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place. (18) And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it. (19) From the time that it goeth forth it shall take you: for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night: and it shall be a vexation only *to* understand the report. (20) For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*.”

WITHOUT GRACE

God back to our text, and I will show you the fifth reason why sinners will not come to Christ.

(John 5:40) “And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

Turn over one page to chapter 6, verse 44. Our Savior is still talking to these self-righteous Pharisees, these religious hypocrites. He tells us plainly that the reason men and women will not come to Christ is that they cannot come.

(John 6:44) “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

You will not come; and you are to be blamed for that. It is the perversity, the depravity, the bondage of your will to your nature that keeps you from Christ. You will not come because you hate God. You will not come because you love sin. You will not come because you don't want to come.

Still, when all is said and done, the reason why you don't come to Christ is this. — You do not come because you are yet without grace! If you now come to Christ, your coming is proof that you have been given grace to come. If you do not come, it is because God almighty has left you alone, and you are without grace.

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(1 Peter 2:3-10) “If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious. (4) To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious, (5) Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (6) Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. (7) Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. (9) But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (10) Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”

Amen.