

Revelation 22:12-20

Day in and day out mothers are always bidding their children to come. “Hurry and come downstairs; it’s time for school!” “Come here right now and clean up your mess!” “Turn the TV off and come to the table; it’s time to eat!” Being a mother and using the word *come* seem to go hand-in-hand. But it’s not just using that word. Mothers are equipped with a special gift in how they use it. It’s called love. They are forever calling to their children, “Come,” because they love their children and they want them to grow up receiving the care, the nurture, and the gifts which they need.

On this Mother’s Day we thank God that He called to us through our mothers to come, day in and day out, and receive all that He was providing for us through our mothers...or, for those of you who are still under the care of your mother, we can put these words in the present tense. And as we do this, we also thank God for our precious mother who gave us birth through Holy Baptism into the family of Christ; our mother the church. Our text in Revelation calls her *the Bride*, for this is who she is - the Bride of Christ. And this dear mother, just like our human mother, is forever calling to us, “Come.” Listen to verse 17 of our text: “*The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who hears say, ‘Come.’ And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.*”

This Bride of Christ, our mother, also uses the word *come* in love; love for her children. This love is connected to the call to come. Suppose that a human mother prepared a meal, but did not call to her children who were outside playing in the yard. When they came in from playing, the meal was over, the food was gone, the dishes were washed and put away. “Why didn’t you call to us!” they would cry. And rightfully so. A mother’s love moves her to bid her children to come to the supper table. This is why the church keeps calling to her children. “Come!” she invites again and again. “Come,” she calls because she loves her children and wants them to receive Christ and all His gifts.

It’s not just our mother who calls. Our text says: “*The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’*” The Holy Spirit does not call to us apart from the church. He calls to us through the church where God’s Word is taught and proclaimed; where Christ promises to be present and active in the Gospel. So when our mother is calling, it is the call of God. It’s not the pastor, and elders, and concerned members who are calling the church’s children to come...“Come to worship...Come to receive...” It’s the Holy Spirit who is saying *come* through these people.

It’s like when mom sends an older brother out to gather all her children for supper. “Mom says to come and eat!” he tells them. If they ignore him, they are ignoring mom. He is not speaking for himself; he speaks for mom. And so with the church. “*The Spirit and the Bride say, ‘Come.’*” These two are in agreement. When the church says, “Come and be baptized,” it’s God saying it. When our mother the church bids us to come to church, to Sunday School and Bible Class, it’s the Holy Spirit who is saying *come*.

Sometimes mom gets upset, doesn’t she? She gets tired of having to always say *come* to her children because they ignore her call, or they say, “I’m not hungry!” Or they don’t want to stop what they’re doing and come. She feels unappreciated; unloved sometimes. Being a mother is not easy. They need our love and support, and our prayers.

And this is just as true of our mother the church. Do you think that the Bride of Christ ever becomes frustrated over her children who refuse to come when she calls? Who refuse to bring their children to Baptism and to Sunday School? Who refuse to study the Word after the age of confirmation? Who refuse to receive Christ and His gifts in Word and in Sacrament? Do you think that the Bride of Christ ever feels like throwing up her hands in despair over her children who say, when she calls, “I don’t need to come; I’m not hungry!” who say, “I can’t come; I have something more important to do!”

And yet our dear mother continues to call. She calls because she loves her children...all her children, even those who refuse to come when she calls. The Bride simply does not know how to stop saying *come*.

“And let the one who hears,” says our text, *“say ‘Come.’”* That’s how it works at home, too. Mom calls out the backdoor that it’s time to come and eat. One of her children hears and calls out for the others to come, and those who hear call out for still others to come. You are here today...you have come to eat, and receive Christ, because someone else heard the call to come, and they called out to you. And they heard that call to come from someone else, and they from someone else. The Bride of Christ calls to her children, and her children call to each other. This is the Holy Spirit at work; God’s love at work. This is how God fills His house here, and in heaven. “Come,” He calls, through us to one another.

Now you know that after mom would call her children, and they would all come into the kitchen, she would, with a stern face, tell them, “No one sits down to eat until you have washed!” And so with the Bride of Christ, our mother the church. *“Blessed are those,”* says our text, *“who wash their robes so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.”*

You and I have been outside playing in the mud. We’ve soiled ourselves with lust, covetousness, greed, idolatry, and every form of wickedness. Your mother is loving, but stern. Repentance must come before absolution. Only those who are washed may enter the gates of the heavenly city. You are washed clean in your Baptism. This is a thorough cleansing. God declares you clean of all sin and wickedness. But what about last week when you and I were out there playing in the mud again? Baptized children sin like everyone else. The children of the Bride of Christ come in to eat with filthy hands, with a heavy heart, with guilt written all over their faces.

And so we begin our worship by returning to our Baptism with the words: *“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”* And we then confess our sins to God, and publicly before each other. And then, through the mouth of the Bride, God speaks His word of forgiveness, and you are forgiven. We have been washed, sanctified, in the blood of Christ shed for us, and our mother bids us to sit at her table and receive the meal prepared for us.

This meal is without price...for you, that is. It cost Jesus everything. He gave Himself up for you on the cross. And now the meal of salvation is served here for you. You do not have to earn it. Jesus earned it for you by His sufferings, death, and resurrection. You do not need to live in such a way to make this meal yours. It is yours because Jesus says so: *“For you, He says, “for the forgiveness of your sins.”* And eating this meal, receiving Christ’s gifts, the Holy Spirit will help you live as God’s children.

The Bride is forever calling out *come*. But not just to her children. She also calls out to her Lord. *“Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”* are the last words of our text. This is why your mother keeps calling to you *come*. Because Jesus says, *“Surely I am coming soon.”* Your mother loves you so much that she wants you to be prepared when Jesus comes. That’s why she calls you to come today to sit down faithfully at her table and receive the gifts of Christ. Jesus comes to you now through Word and Sacrament so that when He comes in glory, you will not be unprepared, but you will be ready to enter the gates of the heavenly city with Him.

A mother wants what’s best for her children. Your mom is not, or was not, perfect. She doesn’t always say *come* in the kindest way. But she always says it with love, nonetheless. And so with your mother, Christ’s Bride. She wants what’s best for you. She wants heaven for you. Does she always call out *come* in the kindest way? No. But she, too, always calls to you with love. Amen.