

The Master is come

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Date: 01 January 2000

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[0 : 00] We shall now turn into words we are personally read in the Gospel according to John 11, verse 28.

John 11, verse 28. And when she had so said, she went her way and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee.

And these words especially spoken by Nasa, The Master is come and calleth for thee. This is a story, no death, with which most, if not all of us, are very familiar.

It was a time of sorrow because of bereavement in a particular home, the home of Mary and Nasa and Lazarus of Bethany.

Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Nasa, had died. And as you know, there were a family who had befriended the Lord Jesus in his journey to and through as he went about ministering to the people.

[1 : 44] And we shall try and meditate on these words of Matthew this evening.

And not so much as we plan primarily to the situation of that home at that time.

But I hope more as we relate to ourselves as individuals. But first of all, I would like to draw attention to the manner in which Nasa speaks of the central character in the story.

The Lord Jesus, who must always be given the prime place in any scene in which he plays a part.

She calls him the Master. When she had so said, she went away and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, the Master is come and calleth for thee.

[3 : 17] And we shall try also to think on these two verbs that she uses of the Master.

First of all, that he is come. And secondly, he calleth for thee. Now, the word Master is a word for which there are six different New Testament or Greek words.

And this one here, the word didascalus, means literally teacher.

Teacher. That is how Nasa regarded the Lord Jesus Christ. In the previous verse, you remember, she had confessed to himself, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

And in bringing this message to her sister Mary, she says that the Master is come. Now, it is very interesting, I think, for all of us who have a real interest in the Bible, in the Lord Jesus Christ, to know something about the people amongst whom Christ was raised up.

[5 : 21] And there were people with whom the idea of teacher, and amongst whom individuals who were teachers, were very familiar.

Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus of Nazareth, obviously became known, very soon after his public ministry began, he became known as one of this class, whom they regarded as teachers.

teachers. He outwardly conformed to that class of people in their manners and customs and in the kind of ministry they fulfilled.

And we had the disciples, for example, God of Brandon, just as John the Baptist had.

And John, obviously, also had become known amongst them, in this way, as a teacher. And men who would be addressed also as rabbis, you know that that was the, or a common Jewish word, or the most common Jewish word, for this class of peasants.

[6 : 52] And we find that even the way his disciples served the Lord Jesus during his days and that made him fit, as it were, into this class of people amongst the Jews.

They followed what you might say was the general custom of disciples in their attitude and service toward their master, their teacher.

And the disciples, for example, could be described as boatmen for the Lord Jesus Christ. They distributed at his command food among the multitudes of people who kind of trying to hear him teach in circumstances where they were in need.

They hungered and he asked their master did not suffer them to go hungry. He commanded his disciples to feed them.

They, you remember, made preparations for the Passover which he ate with them when he appointed the sacrament of the Lord's supper, including, for example, the slaying of the Passover lamb.

[8 : 26] and like other teachers amongst the Jews, Jesus of Nazareth, our Savior, the Lord of glory, who finally was crucified in the hands of wicked men for a time he gained respect and honor, in a sense at least, amongst those people of his generation.

It was customary for people amongst the Jews to regard teachers with reverence. We are told about some of them, one called Rabbi Akiba, that when he returned home after having gained great fame as a teacher of the Jews, his wife and his father-in-law kissed his feet, showing that even although in a sense men like parents, such as parents, fathers, were in a sense superior to the teacher, there was a true sense in which they looked up to him as superior to them.

In fact, there read as one Rabbi Ishmael whose own mother sought permission to wash his feet and to drink the very water with which she had washed them.

And when he forbade this as a transgression of the fifth commandment, she said that she saw in her action a honoring of herself through her son.

I point that out in order to show that there was amongst the Jews a particular attitude of respect and reverence towards those they classed teachers as teachers or masters.

[10 : 37] And we find in this category, for example, the women who followed Christ and ministered to him of their substance. It was something that was common among the Jewish people of the time.

And some of us have noticed how even the scribes, who proved ultimately to be violent enemies against the Lord, how they could confess in his own hearing that they knew that he was true and taught the ways of God truly.

But then this particular master differed greatly from others. And he differed infinitely from others in this sense that he was not only a teacher sent from God, but a teacher who identified himself with the God whose will and mind he taught, he identified himself with him.

And therefore we find that he was a teacher who did not dispute with those who wished to reason against him. He was not someone who was at any time willing to surrender his own absoluteness, as it were, as one who claimed that not only was he the way to God, not only was he the life that people needed, but who claimed unashamedly that he himself was the truth.

He did not speak as one of the prophets of old, or as Moses. He spoke as the only begotten and eternal son of God, who, when he made reference to laws known amongst the people.

[12 : 40] He could refer them to the prophets and to the fathers amongst the people who had made interpretations of the law, and could say of himself, as it were, in contrast, contrast with these interpretations such as we have in the sermon on the mount, of the will of God, as the very Lord himself, and I say to you, no matter with what authority anyone else has spoken, I may agree or I may contradict, but you have to pay attention to this, that I claim authority over your thinking, over your understanding, of the will of God, as the very Lord himself, who is a master in a sense that others cannot be, because they are mortal men, they may, some of them, have been sent from God, but in so far as they carry out their commission from God, they are doing so in obedience to me.

He is in that sense unique, notwithstanding the many similarities outwardly, in his state of humiliation with other teachers.

They were compelled, you remember, to ask whence have this man, this wisdom, and these mighty works, that he could say also, as it were, in response to that general questioning, neither knoweth any man the father save the son, and he to whomsoever the son will reveal him.

As a master teacher, he was alone, he was unique in his boldness, in his competence in dealing with all men, however exalted they may have been in their own eyes, or in the eyes of the people generally.

He cared not as they confessed of him for any man, nor regarded the passion of any man. And you remember how he showed his mastery over them and over all men in so far as their belief regarding truth was concerned, and he warned them that there was to be no such thing amongst them, that is amongst his followers as a pope, as a one who assumed mastery amongst the rest.

[15 : 28] None of them were to assume that mastery and require submission of the others. Be not ye called rabbi, he declared, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.

And call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ.

Now, these words apply to you and to me. But perhaps there are some present who say, what about the ministers? And what about the ministers of the free church?

Well, all who carry out the commission given by the free church as a church, they denounce with the authority of Christ's own words, all who assume positions of authority over the minds and consciences of their fellow men because they claim that authority for the Lord Jesus Christ alone.

Now, there is one other aspect of this designation given by Martha of the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

[16 : 54] And that is that although the term master here strictly means that he was a teacher, yet we find that his mastery as teacher was accompanied with mastery in other ways also.

For example, we have clearly taught here in the story the mastery of Christ's love.

The mastery of Christ's love. father. This was a master who had clearly won over men's hearts, some men's hearts and some women's hearts equally.

When they had sent a message to him concerning the affliction in their family circle, they had said of Lazarus, he whom thou lovest is sick.

We are told that Lazarus' sister Mary had anointed him with ointment and that she had wiped his feet with her hair.

[18 : 22] and in this narrative we discover that Martha herself is the most prominent of all, initially, in welcoming the Savior to their home.

He had perhaps often been a very welcome guest in that home. They loved him. He was not a master who domineered in the sense of giving offence to pure hearted men and women.

He was a master whose spiritual influence was such that he wooed their hearts, drew them to himself, and not only to a degree that other teachers failed to do, but he captivated their hearts so that he became the supreme object, and you might say ultimately the only object of their heart's love, in the sense that their hearts went forth to others with true, genuine, pure, spiritual love, just to the extent that they loved him, that they loved him.

Now that applies to you and to me too. We love others, just to the extent to which we love him. He had one mastery then over their hearts, because he, as the Bible so often points out to us, because he first loved them.

Just as his mind, his human soul, in terms of understanding, was filled with knowledge, all the knowledge that they needed to know, so his human soul, like his divine nature, was filled to overflowing with love and with affection, that captivated the hearts of those people in Bethany.

[20 : 51] We find that he is one whose mastery in teaching is accompanied with masterliness, you might say, in wisdom.

Now we find this especially indicated here because when the message is sent to him that Lazarus is sick, nothing is added as far as we can learn from the account given here by way of explaining to Jesus what ought to be done.

He is simply told Lazarus is sick. There is a problem in this home, a very serious problem, a problem that affects each member of the household, one that brings sorrow, one that brings their horizons, as it were, that brings a cloud of gloom over them as a family.

but they are not telling this master what ought to be done about the situation. They simply tell because they know him as a master possessed of wisdom sufficient to deal with any situation.

No, there is not a lesson there for you and me. I cannot help but think that there may be some individual and perhaps more than one within these walls tonight in whose family circle there are problems and difficulties involving sorrow, pain of heart and gloom in regard to the future.

[23 : 02] The threat of failure, of disappointment over which no one can exercise any control whatsoever.

Now, I think if I am addressing any particular passion here tonight that I ought to point out to you if you have come to a point in your experience as an individual or as a member of a family where you realize that circumstances have developed to a point beyond your control God has taught you a very useful lesson.

He has taught you a very useful lesson. But I do not point that out to you in order to leave you to rest in a sense of your own helplessness.

I point it out to you in order to draw your attention to the fact that there is a master who not only knows the details of your circumstances inwardly in your heart and outwardly but what appears to be utter darkness to your intellect and understanding is as light to him.

There is no problem to him. His knowledge and wisdom have already resolved all the difficulties that you visualize in the present and for the future in your own particular life.

[24 : 47] That is why Paul could remind believers in Corinth that they would not be tried beyond what they were able to bear because God is faithful and how shall God manifest his faithfulness by providing for you a way of escape.

You have to remember that it is his wisdom that has been engaged from everlasting in bringing all of your circumstances to be what they are and just as surely as he has done so he also has provided already in his own eternal purpose the way of escape that you need.

But there is a big question remaining with all of us day after day is that our confidence? Is he our confidence?

Do we in other words of the faith to rest all of our burden upon him? Well obviously the sisters Mary and Martha considered that he was wise as a master over all of their circumstances.

And not only so but clearly they regarded him as masterly in his power just as he could teach as none other could teach with authority and not as the scribes and Pharisees.

[26 : 36] They believed obviously that he had the power to deal with this particular situation. Difficult though it was insoluble to any other mind and beyond the strength of any other man they knew that there was something within his power to deal with it.

I was thinking in this connection in the afternoon that supposing Lazarus was living their dearly beloved brother and he was away from home and one of the sisters had died supposing Mary had died then obviously Martha's main hope and confidence and the human level would be in the arrival of Lazarus her brother who else would be most likely to relieve herself in her time of distress but I say that in order to place in contrast even with our dearly beloved brother this master whom Martha declared now to her sister was come and was calling her however beloved however trustworthy he was however frequently he had proved his love and his ability to console and comfort and relieve in times of difficulty and distress

Lauren Martha well knew that Lazarus could not compare with this master in fact that Lazarus nor any other man was no master at all in that sense he had no power over circumstances really any more than you have or than I have but this master had and this master still has.

So I appeal to you, you who are so lacking in trust, lacking in faith, whose faith often seems to be non-existent, and shows its weakness in that you are constantly looking to yourself.

How can I resolve this difficulty? And when I find things beyond me, I turn to this man and that man or this woman or that woman.

[29 : 24] Pour out my heart before them in hope that they, if they cannot provide me with counsel, that surely they shall remember me in their prayer.

But the teaching that comes to us from this account in John chapter 11 is that there is a master who, if we are wise, we shall look to at all times, because he, and he alone, has the power to deal with our circumstances and with ourselves, and with ourselves, who experienced these continuous changes in life.

He was a master who showed mastery over events in a sovereign way. He did not have to seek counsel of anyone.

He did not have to ask Mary or Martha or anyone else how he ought to deal with this situation. Our friend Lazarus, he said to the disciples, sleepeth.

And then later on, he declared that he had died. His knowledge of the circumstances was as detailed as if he had been present in the home in Bethany.

[31 : 00] There was no cloud of darkness. There was no need to await more information as to what had transpired.

He knew. He even shows us that he knew the purpose of this event.

Now, there are many events in our own lives, and whatever we can understand of them, we can have no idea to their purpose, often. But we can see no good coming from them.

We can see them only as dark aspects of God's sovereign rule over our lives. But when we turn into this particular incident, and we examine it in the light of the sovereign knowledge and rule of the Lord Jesus Christ, we find that the sorrowful death in the home of Bethany was for the glory of God.

That the Son of God, the Savior, the Son of God, himself might be glorified thereby. That is the purpose of it.

[32 : 25] How often we must confess we will drop God of his glory and we will drop the Son of God of his glory too. Our only hope for time and for eternity.

We do not see things often in our lives for the glory of God. and we murmur and we resist and we would cast from us many of his peculiar dealings with us where his glory is to be very peculiarly revealed even to our own eyes as happened in the case of Mary and Martha.

They themselves were soon to see what the Lord meant when he said that their brother was for the sake of God's glory and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

If he abode still we are told two days in the place where he was and we find that his delay was very pleasing to some pleasing to his disciples.

We find also that it was grieving to others to Mary and to Martha but again we see the mastery of Christ over circumstances.

[33 : 54] He does not determine his action on the basis is so and so pleased with my action or not nor does he base it upon the answer to the question is so and so offended by my action it is based upon infinite wisdom and upon infinite love.

He knows what is for your good and he shall perform his purpose irrespective of whether it causes offense to you or whether you are well pleased with it.

It is exercised in love that is his sovereignty his masterhood is exercised in love to his people and we see that it is exercised irrespective in those days of his humiliation irrespective of the cost to himself.

His disciples say unto him master the Jews of late sought to stone thee and goest thou thither again. Jesus answered that there are not twelve hours in the day for any man walk in the day he stumbleth not because he seeth the light of this world.

He was not afraid to face persecution shame and reproach in fulfilling his purpose of grace towards his people for the glory of God.

[35 : 48] The presence of other comforters did not deter him he knew that he was needed.

Has that thought ever been of comfort to yourself that forever stoneth your desire for the Lord's presence in order that you might have help in time of need the Lord knows your need infinitely better than you know it yourself and he never forgets.

And in Martha we are told had gone to meet him and we find his mastery in both respects as Lord of events and as a master teacher combined in his own words to Martha in which he tells her at the end of their conversation I am the resurrection and the life.

You see how his teaching and how his sovereign rule over events even over death and the grave come out together as be a title fit for none less than the son of God.

Not the kind of person we hear about who did not presumably because he could not overcome death and the grave.

[37 : 37] Secondly a word about his coming. Now this master who came to the home in Bethany being God manifest in the flesh is someone who is present everywhere at all times.

Now that is a truth that we must keep hold of in regard to the glory and the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ in that he is God. He is one of whom we can say and must say from thy spirit whither shall I go and from thy presence fly ascend thy heaven lo thou art there there if in hell I lie.

But then there is another sense in which he can come and in which he does come. And we find this repeatedly throughout the scriptures in Christ's relationship to his own people that it was shown in his coming to them at different times and for different reasons.

We find him coming to Abraham for example when he is revealing to Abraham the covenant that he has made with his that God with Christ has made in eternity Christ comes to Abraham to show him that covenant to show him the future progress of Christ's own kingdom on the earth.

Unto thy seed for example he told Abraham will I give this land he told him that he was to have a son when he had reached the age of 99 a son through whom that covenant was to be fulfilled.

[39 : 40] that he was to be the father through him of many nations. We find revelations of his glory even when he is coming to execute judgment against sin and sinners such as the cities of the plain.

You remember how Abraham one day as he sat at the door of his tent beheld three men approaching him and we know that one of them was the Lord.

He appeared to Abraham as if he were already in fashion as a man but we know that the fulfillment of that particular purpose was to await the fullness of the time and that at that time he was revealing himself in such a fashion that to the likes of Abraham it seemed that a man had truly come to visit him.

He appeared you remember to Jacob at Bethel when he was fleeing from home. He appeared to him especially at Peniel when an angel the angel of the covenant wrestled with him as if a man were wrestling with him until the break of day.

You remember how he appeared to Moses and called him up to the mount so that the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

[41 : 12] And we remember occasions such as that in the experience of Isaiah in the year in which the king Uzziah died how he beheld the Lord on his throne high and lifted up and the seraphim in his presence crying one to another holy holy holy is the Lord God of hosts the whole earth is full of his glory.

He seemed at times to appear in a form that suited the very circumstances of those he was pleased to visit. You remember how Joshua on one occasion saw him near Jericho and he was told by the Lord Jesus as captain of the Lord's host am I now come for Joshua was then the leader of the armies of Israel about to occupy the promised land by defeating those seven nations upon whom God's judgment had fallen for their sins.

the Lord Jesus had come of old conquering and to conquer and so he continues down through the ages and will do to the end of time as captain of the Lord's hosts.

These in ancient days were what we call theophanies revelations of the glory of the Lord in his covenant relation with his people long before the days of Martha and Mary and Lazarus and that is the one who is now come to them one who is man indeed that is one way in which we should think of this master he is the Lord of glory but he is a true man the only true man that we shall ever get to know in this world a man possessed of strength of character uprightness and integrity described in this one word sinlessness could it no sin neither was guile found in his mouth but at the same time possessed of tenderness a heart always filled with tender compassion toward the suffering and the needy of this world he it is who has come who had come forth from

God you remember how he spoke of himself as one sent from the father as the living father hath sent me and I live by the father and at the same time regarding his earthly appearance you remember how Micah the prophet had said of Bethlehem out of thee shall come a governor that shall rule my people Israel and he himself had said for judgment am I coming to the world and yet he had come also not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance there was a sense in which he had come not to judge the world but that the world through him might be saved no sacrifice nor offering it's though at all desire these are his words in the 40th psalm a thousand years prior to his visit to this home in

[45 : 30] Bethany and quoted by the writer to the Hebrews then to the Lord these were my words behold I come and see within the volume of the book it's written is of me that is the master who had come to the house of Mary and Martha Isaiah had said many things about his coming for example that the redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jero out of Zion we read in the 50th Psalm David declared out of Zion the perfection of beauty God hath shined and perhaps some of you can recall words in the Song of Solomon where we see the longing of the Old

Testament sins oh that thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother I would lead thee the church says and bring thee into my mother's house who would instruct me while he is standing the fulfillment of that prayer and desire in the heart of the church of old is standing in the presence of Martha when she goes and declares secretly to her sister Mary the master is come and call it thee he is come indeed he knew that their grief was great their main human support had gone but one better than Lazarus was no come and finally he call it thee he call it thee now

I shall just try and deal briefly with that particular purpose of his coming and of Martha's being sent to Mary that the master is come and call at thee there is a common call now I said at the beginning that I would think with you on these words in a way that is applicable to ourselves there is a calling from the Lord that we call the common call of the gospel there is a call of the Lord that comes to us by other means and there is an effectual call there is a call which results in salvation inevitably in the experience of all who hear it the effectual call of

Christ by the gospel now what do we mean by the effect of the call which is effectual well we can only know by examining the holy word of God and we discover for example that it is a call of God by grace it is God visiting us in grace Paul speaks of God the Father as one who separated me from my mother's womb and called me by his grace he refers there to his natural birth and life as being from God but there was another in a sense greater experience in the course of

Paul's natural life the call that came to him from God unto salvation and that was a call by grace it means that God is exercising peculiar love he is revealing special goodness a very special manifestation of the infinite eternal goodness of God in the effectual call which is by grace it means that there is conveyed in that call from God a voice as it were that declares God and shows God to be dealing not only differently with a sinner from what the sinner deserved but in a way that is in direct contradiction of what the sinner deserved a call by grace means for example one is called from the brink of hell and everlasting destruction to eternal glory that is involved in the call of God or of

[51 : 11] Christ by grace it is a calling that brings to being what was before non-existent have you ever thought that that is true divine truth regarding some of your fellow men and women and boys and girls who have been brought into a state of salvation that it is God who quickens the dead and calls those things that are not as though they were in other words that particular creature as a living spiritual member of Christ's mystical body never before existed but he is called by the God who quickened him from the dead or her and us one of those who were not but are now in existence and shall continue forevermore to be it is a call from a

God who is faithful God is faithful Paul tells us who have called you to the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ sinners are united to the very source of life God himself through being bound together in a bundle of life through the power of the Holy Spirit in the call of the gospel and brought into union with the Lord Jesus Christ in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the God of the God bodily and therefore they are called we read to liberty but they are commanded not to use their liberty for an occasion to the flesh but by love that is by the love of God by pure holy love to serve one another and we discover also that they are called out of darkness and they are called into

God's marvelous light he out of darkness did them bring and from death shade them take these bombs wherewith they have been bound a thunder quite he breath they were in a darkened prison house and they have been delivered and delivered into the kingdom of light the kingdom of God's dear son through the call of God in Christ he has called them into his kingdom and called them into his eternal glory as Peter says and blessed we are told by John in Revelation are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the lamb age of everlasting destruction hastening fast unto a lost eternity and suddenly the effect of the call of

God's grace in Christ set them free so that they are now marching onward in the narrow way that leads them to life into possession of eternal glory and to join with the saints in the marriage supper of the lamb it is a call that comes personally to sinners he doesn't address this call to a multitude a mass of people who are nothing to him but numbers it is a call that is sent directly there is no call that one has ever heard in this life from any of his fellow men or women that comes as directly addressed to you as an individual fear not I say as as the Lord says through him for

I have redeemed thee I have called thee by thy name thou art mine he lays claim upon you as one effectually called directly and personally to be his personally as someone who is now wedded to him who has a legal claim upon you I am the good shepherd he declared himself and know my sheep and am known of mine and he also says of the good shepherd he calleth his own sheep by name I could mention your Christian name John or Donald Mary or Margaret or Joan or Catherine or any other Christian name that you may bear but I am asking you in conclusion here tonight have you heard the voice of

[56 : 28] Christ calling you not audibly hearing your own Christian name but have you heard the voice of Christ within your heart knowing that it is being addressed to you to the exclusion of every soul of man in heaven or on earth laying hold upon you as Christ's very own have you heard that call there is no question that Christ has been calling you he has been calling you in so many ways he has given you trials in life he has given you testings in life that you would have escaped as you would have escaped from a plague but

Christ caught up with you and Christ was thereby calling you to himself he has given you favourable pleasant well pleasing circumstances in life and the goodness of Christ in your life ought to lead you to repentance at his feet he has spoken to you through your conscience perhaps last night perhaps this very day perhaps as soon as you wakened from your sleep the first thing assailing you was the voice of conscience condemning your sin it it was the voice of Christ calling you to himself you have read his word so often you have so often read maybe your head are both turn ye turn ye from your evil ways for why will ye die

O house of Israel you