

We all get junk mail. Once I got a flyer from an auto dealership with a scratch to win spot on it. If my number matched the one on the other side of the flyer, I was guaranteed to win one of their wonderful prizes, ranging from \$15,000 cash to a flat screen TV to \$100 cash. No purchase was necessary. All I needed to do was to bring that mailer to their dealership. It sounded too good to be true. In fact, in the very fine print it said there were only four big prizes among all of the dealerships that used this mailing. Everyone else would get a token prize.

In the Word of God before us, Jesus holds out before us an invitation that also sounds too good to be true. To all of us who are weary and burdened with the problems of this life, He stands there with arms open wide, and says, COME TO ME. But, unlike the promise made on that flyer I received, not just a few people will benefit, but all who come to Him in faith will receive His blessing. So, as Jesus invites us to come to Him, we are reminded to I. Accept this invitation in child-like faith, and only then will we II. Come to know the rewards offered to us.

The flyer I received was meant to entice me to come to their dealership, and my good senses knew that there had to be a catch involved. So I read the fine print, found out what the catch was, and decided that I did not want what they were offering to me. Jesus had just been speaking about how the people of Capernaum had rejected Him and His message. But now Jesus turned His attention and began to speak about those who were trusting Him when He prayed to His Father in heaven: **“I praise you because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.”** (25) What Jesus is saying is that the wise and learned of this world were not willing to accept what Jesus is offering to them, or to trust what He has to say. That is why the way of salvation remains hidden for them. It is not that Jesus wants to keep it hidden from them, but they refuse to listen to the one and only way of gaining eternal life in heaven.

The wise and learned in Jesus’ day were probably the scribes and Pharisees. They thought that they knew the Bible better than anyone else. And they thought they knew how to gain eternal life in heaven — by their own keeping of all of the commands which the Lord had given in the Old Testament (plus the many which they had added to those which God had given). Since they were so wise and learned, they felt that they were able to do everything that God had asked of them, and therefore they did not need what Jesus was offering to them.

The wise and learned of this world still act the same way. They think that they have figured everything out in this world, that they know what is right and wrong, and they figure they know what they have to do to make God happy with them so that they will get to heaven. Since they have figured it out for themselves, they feel no need to trust what Jesus has to say to them. In other words, they do not believe Jesus when He speaks of the one way to heaven, and that is through faith in Him alone. They refuse to accept Jesus’ verdict that we daily sin much and need a Savior from those sins. They feel that if they do the best that they can, then God will be happy with them, and that is all that they will need to get to heaven. But, in effect, all of this is nothing more than calling Jesus a liar since Jesus said that He had to die for the sins of all people, and that He is the only One Who can take them to heaven. So the wise and learned in the ways of this world do not accept Jesus’ invitation to come to Him for the blessings which He offers.

But on the flip side, those who are like little children do accept Jesus’ invitation, for they trust Him and the promises which He offers to them. That is why Jesus often describes faith by pointing out a little child. A little child has simple trust and confidence, without demanding to know the reasons why. Just because someone they trust said it, they believe it. That is what Jesus wants from us as His dearly loved children. He desires that we simply trust Him and what He has promised that He has done for us. Even if we do not understand and cannot figure out just how it all works, He asks us to trust Him and to believe that what He tells us is true. In other words, we are to put our faith in Him and trust that our sins have all been washed away in His blood, and that we have been given the gift of eternal life with Him in heaven.

He stands there with His arms open wide, inviting us to trust Him and His promises, and that they will then be ours.

We are not to be skeptical, trying to figure out what the catch is. But with simple, child-like faith, we are to accept Jesus' words and begin to enjoy all of the blessings which He desires to give to us.

And what tremendous blessings they are! Jesus begins by reminding us: "**All things have been committed to me by my Father.**" (27) As true God, He always possessed these things. But also as true man, He has been given everything under His power and control. So He sits at God's right hand in heaven right now using that power for our benefit. And since He is the Savior Who laid down His life to wash away all of our sins, we know that He is going to use that power for our benefit to bless us in everything. Jesus reveals the Father's love and forgiveness to us, and promises us that we will not be sent away to hell because of our sins.

That is why He continues with one of the most precious invitations in the Bible, "**Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.**" (28) The weariness and burdens which we are forced to carry in this life are the result of all of our sins. There is no way that we can carry them ourselves, for they weigh heavily upon our spirit. So Jesus invites us to come to Him for rest from these weary burdens. Through His own sacrifice, He promises us perfect rest for our souls, for He will assure us that all of those sins have been washed away, never to be brought before our Father in heaven. We receive rest for our souls knowing that God is not angry with us, but in love He desires us to live with Him in heaven throughout eternity. In fact, through Jesus' invitation, we know that we do have this in our possession even now. Child-like trust in Jesus allows us to realize the rewards which Jesus offers to us. These rewards begin even here in this life, but they will be perfect for us only when we are taken from this sin-filled world to live forever in the perfect bliss of heaven.

But let us not overlook the blessings which this invitation also offers for this life. Since Jesus is in control of everything even in this life, and since His love for us is indisputable, we know that we can even take our earthly burdens to Him, and He will help us to bear them as well. That does not mean that we will have the same perfect rest from our earthly troubles as we have for our souls, but we do know that He will not abandon us, but will protect us even through the trials and burdens of this life.

So let us hear Jesus' invitation, and come to Him for the rewards which He alone can provide for us. We will find out about these rewards as we listen with child-like faith to what He has to say. That means that we will want to read and study His Word so that we can learn of all of the promises which He makes to us. And we will not be disappointed in any of those promises. The rewards are for now and throughout eternity.

I have to admit, that through the years I have been taken in by some slick advertisements. That is one of the reasons why I am so skeptical whenever anything comes in the mail that sounds too good to be true. I do not want to be considered gullible. Sad to say, that same defense seems to pop up when I hear about Jesus' promise to me as well. We need to guard against that. When it comes to putting our faith in Jesus and His invitation to come to Him alone for all of our eternal blessings, we need to approach His promise with child-like faith. That means we will not doubt His promises, but cling to them, even when appearances would seem to contradict those promises. But as we cling in such a child-like faith to His promises, we will be able to come to know the rewards which He has promised, and which He will not deny to His children. Take Jesus up on His invitation to come to Him.