Repeated Phrases of Jesus: “Come” and “Go”
August 23, 2026

Today we continue our sermon series on repeated phrases of Jesus. The two words we will concentrate on this morning are “Come” and “Go.” Here are our focus verses for the day. (Matthew 11:28-30) "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." (Revelation 5:12) "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"

Our repeated words of Jesus today are the words “Come” and “Go.” Though the two words are virtual opposites, Jesus used them both frequently, and sometimes he used them together. In fact, as you will see, the words, though polar opposites, actually are closely related. At least they are in the way Jesus uses them. And the interesting thing about most of Jesus “come” and “go” statements is that they speak about things that are not natural, at least, not natural to sinful people. But let’s start with a “come” statement of Jesus that speaks about something that is totally natural to sinful people.

(Mark 7:21-23) “For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come – sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.” Who here can claim to be without evil thoughts? Who here can claim to be without greed? Who can claim a lifetime completely free from deceit? Who has never been guilty of envy or slander? Who has never been at least a little arrogant? “All these evils come from within, out of peoples’ hearts and defile a person.” That is our natural condition. We are by nature sinful, and consequently, our sinful nature keeps churning out sin, one after another after another. A little greed here, a little envy there. A little deceit here, a little slander there. A little malice here, a little arrogance there. A little lewdness here, a little sexual immorality there. One evil thought after another, many of which lead to evil actions. That’s what comes from within us, from our sinful natures. That’s what comes naturally from us, sin!

And we know that about ourselves. People know that about themselves. Though many tell themselves that they’re trying hard, and that they’re better than a lot of other folks, they still know that they have fallen far short of God’s demands. And that makes them very uncomfortable. People recognize that they need help. They realize that they need a solution. And so they look for anyone, or anything, that can offer them some comfort.

But there is only one way to peace for troubled sinners. There is only one way to comfort for the transgressors. There is only one way to heaven for the damned. The only way to peace, and comfort, and salvation, is through faith in the only true Savior, Jesus Christ. (John 14:6) Jesus [said], “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. Which is why Jesus states this in our focus verses: (Matthew 11:28-30) "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Only in Jesus will our spiritual weariness be erased. Only in Jesus will the spiritual

burden of our sin be removed. Only in Jesus will we find rest for our souls. And we find it by an unnatural manner, by coming to Jesus.

But here's the issue. Even though as sinners we recognize that we need a Savior, it is unnatural for us to come to Jesus. Our sinful nature in its sinful pride will not let us do that. Our sinful nature is convinced that we must make it good with God on our own. In fact, our sinful nature makes it impossible to come to Jesus on our own. Jesus makes this very clear. (John 6:44) "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." So Jesus did something even more unnatural, He came to us! Remember that famous prophesy about the Savior being born in Bethlehem? (Matthew 2:6) "`But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.'" And here's another famous prophesy: (Zechariah 9:9) Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Now think about this a moment. God promised to send Israel the Christ, the ultimate shepherd, the absolute ruler, the King above all kings. God promised that Israel's king would come to them, bringing salvation. Now kings do not go out of their way to approach the lowly people. Kings do not come to their subjects. If there is to be any association between the two, the subjects come to the king. And often even that is not allowed. But Jesus, the righteous king, came to an unrighteous people. Jesus, the holy king, came to a sinful people. And listen to what he says: (Matthew 9:13) … I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (John 10:10) … I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

How incredible! How unnatural! Jesus, King almighty, God himself, came to earth to bring salvation. But something even more unnatural than that occurred! Jesus, King almighty, came to earth to become a human. And he came to earth to die as the God/Man, in the place of humans! He came to die as the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the world. He came to die as the ultimate sacrifice for our sins! He came to die, and rise from the dead, so that all who believed in him would have life, would have salvation. Some of the people of Jesus' day recognized this. After Jesus raised the widow of Nain's son back to life, the people, were all filled with awe and praised God." God has come to help his people," [they cried.] (Lk. 7:16) Or as Martha said to Jesus before he raised Lazarus back to life: (John 11:25-27) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." Jesus in love came to sinners to be the sinners' Savior. What marvelous love! And Jesus in love still comes to unworthy sinners. (Revelation 3:20) Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

The Gospel invitation still rings out for sinners around the world, and the Holy Spirit still opens the doors of people's hearts to bring Jesus in. Jesus, the King, still comes to people through his holy Word. Jesus body and blood still enter believer's bodies in the Lord's Supper. And Jesus, the King, still comes to sinners who believe in him whenever

they gather around his Word and to do his work. (Matthew 18:20) For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Jesus came to earth once to be the Savior of sinners. Jesus still comes to sinners through his Word and Sacraments.

And Jesus the King will come again to take sinners with him to heaven on the last day. As Jesus told his disciples: (John 14:2-3) In my Father's house are many rooms. … I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. Oh, the grace of God, that Jesus the King would come, and still comes, and will come again to sinners like us! But God's grace doesn't end there. In mercy and grace, Jesus the King invites us, his sinful subjects, to continually come to him for spiritual comfort. As Jesus invites us in our focus verses. (Matthew 11:28-30)"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Jesus says, "You can't find lasting comfort in your families, or in your friends." You can't find lasting comfort in your achievements, or in your money or possessions. Nor can you find it in sexual gratification, or in drugs or booze. The only comfort to be found for a guilt-ridden conscience, the only peace to be secured for a terror-stricken mind, the only help for weary and burdened sinners, the only true rest for your souls, is found in Jesus.

And that's why he urges us to come to him. And that's why, with the Holy Spirit's aid, we come. The Lord himself moves us to come to him! How astounding is that? We know about our greed and envy, about our deceit and our slander. We know about our malice and our arrogance, our lewdness and sexual immorality. We know about our evil thoughts, and how they have led us to evil actions. So the Holy Spirit brings us to Jesus. We come to Jesus to be comforted. We come to him to be forgiven. We come to him to find rest for our souls. And in him we find comfort, and forgiveness, and rest for our souls. In him we find cleansing for our sin-stained lives. In him we find the peace that surpasses understanding. And that's why we come. By God's grace, we respond to Jesus' invitation to come to him now as we live. And by God's grace, we will respond to Jesus' gracious command to come to him after we die.

Remember Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus? For four days his dead body lay in the tomb. And then Jesus showed up. Do you remember what Jesus said to that lifeless body? (John 11:43-44) … Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Just as Jesus told the 4-day-dead Lazarus to come out of his tomb, so Jesus will call forth our dead bodies from their graves on the last day. "Come out of the ground. Come out of your coffins. Come out of your burial urns. Come out, dead bodies, from your state of death, and live again." And after our bodies and souls are rejoined. And as we stand before the throne of God in heaven on the last day. And as we await the holy judgment of Jesus, the King, we will hear these words: (Matthew 25:34) "Then the King will say to

those on his right, `Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

How beautiful is the word “come” when it is spoken to us by our Savior. But there is another very important word that our Savior uses, perhaps even more often then “come.” Though it has a very different meaning than “come” yet it is closely connected. It is the word “Go.” You see this connection, at least in a symbolic way, in the raising of Lazarus. First Jesus told Lazarus’ dead body to “Come out! Come to me! Come to life!” And then Jesus said about the newly raised man:"Take off the grave clothes and let him go." Let him go, so that he can live a new life, a life of gratitude to me. Jesus tells us over and over again to come to him for life and for blessing. But then, after receiving new life in him and abundant blessing through him, Jesus also tells us to go and show our thankfulness to him in the way we live our lives. Jesus says: (John 15:16) You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit -- fruit that will last.

What might this fruit be that, after coming to Jesus, we go and produce? Certainly, one of the fruits of faith is repentance. As Jesus said to the adulterous woman: (Jn. 8:11) “Go now and leave your life of sin.” As weary and burdened sinners, who have come to Jesus and found rest for our souls, we do not go from our Savior’s embrace and dive eagerly back into our favorite sins. No. We abhor sin. We denounce our sins. We strive to avoid sin. We fight against the temptations that assail us. To the best of our ability, we leave our lives of sin. And to the best of our ability, we leave our love of the world as well.

Consider Jesus’ words to the rich young man: (Matthew 19:16-22) Now a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "… Jesus replied. "… If you want to enter life, obey the commandments." He said this because the man was looking to earn God’s favor with his own righteousness and Jesus was about to show him he couldn’t. "Which ones?" the man inquired. Jesus replied, "'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'" "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. As people who are blessed to have Jesus, the greatest treasure in the world, we learn to abandon our love of earthly treasures.

And here are some other fruits we bear as we go in our Savior’s love. (Matthew 18:15) "If your brother or sister sins against you, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. And, in similar fashion, (Matthew 5:23-24) "… if you …remember that your brother or sister has something against you, go and be reconciled to them. In other words, Jesus tells us to deal promptly and directly with hurts and wrongs that others have caused to us, or that we have caused to others (which is exactly the opposite of the way we typically handle such things). And then there is perhaps the most famous “go” statement of all: (Matthew 28:19) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

By God's grace, we have come to our Savior and received his comforting love. Jesus tells us now to go and share that love with others. Go to others who need that comforting love and invite them to come to the Savior too. How blessed we are, by God's grace, to have Jesus come to us. How blessed we are, by God's grace, to come to Jesus through the Holy Spirit's work. And how blessed we are, by God's grace, to go with Jesus and to go for Jesus, to live lives of love, to serve him in thankfulness, and to demonstrate what a great Savior we have so others may look to him and find the rest Jesus wants them to have.