# Come Back to God's House

Genesis 35:1-15

Halifax: 14 August 2016, 10:30 AM

#### **Introduction:**

Sometimes, it is rather remarkable the way God's providence brings together whatever subject I am preaching on with what is going on in our congregation.

- So often, I find that I am speaking to people who are going through things during the week that are very similar to what I am preaching about on Sunday.
- This week is no exception to that!

Today, we have three individuals we are welcoming to sit with us at God's communion table.

- One of them is a young man who grew up in the church and has now been received as a communicant member.
- The other two are a married couple who have not been members of a church for some time, but have just been received into the house of God.
- For each of these three, it is a major, climactic change in their lives.
  - It is, in a certain sense, an arrival to a destiny!

And today, in our sermon series, we have Jacob coming to a major climactic point in his life—finally, he returns to Bethel.

- It has been thirty long years since he fled from his brother Esau and went to Padan Aram to find a wife—
  - Thirty years since God had appeared to him and promised to take care of him and bring him back safely!
  - And thirty years since Jacob made a vow in response that if God brought him back safely, God would be his God and he would worship Him at Bethel.
- We have seen Jacob delay again and again.
  - We saw him make foolish decisions in Haran that delayed him, and we saw him delayed by his cheating uncle.
  - But at last, after 20 years there, we saw him coming back to Bethel.
    - We thought that he would fulfil his vow.
  - But instead, we saw him dilly-dally for something like ten years.
    - He seems to settle his family at Shechem—which proves to be a great disaster.
      - To make a long story short, his daughter hangs out with the ungodly people and ends up getting laid by prince Shechem himself...
      - And then Jacob, who had little regard for Dinah because she the daughter of his unloved wife Leah, leaves it to Simeon and Levi, her brothers who were barely twenty, to deal with the situation...
      - And they end up dealing deceitfully with the Shechemites and killing them all and taking their wives and children and possessions as booty.

As we come to chapter 35, we have Jacob in a time of great discouragement.

- He rightly declared that Levi and Simeon had made them stink to all their neighbours in Canaan...
  - and he expressed his great fear that all the other Canaanites would surely unite in retaliation and destroy his whole household.

- We might wonder (if we were reading this story for the first time) if Jacob would ever get back to Bethel to fulfill his vow!
  - Surely Jacob was wondering if he would—he'd made such a mess of things!
  - But in the narrative before us today, we see that he does return to Bethel—to the house of God!
    - God always eventually brings His people to His house, even when they have drifted away!

Our text is in Genesis 35:1-15.

- Let me read it to you now.
- Genesis 35, beginning in verse 1.
  - Pay careful attention because this is God's Holy Word.

Genesis 35:1-15: Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother." 2 And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone." 4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem. 5 And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him. 7 And he built an altar there and called the place El Bethel, because there God appeared to him when

he fled from the face of his brother. 8 Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth. 9 Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and blessed him. 10 And God said to him, "Your name is Jacob; your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. 11 Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. 12 The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." 13 Then God went up from him in the place where He talked with him. 14 So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. 15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel.

May God bless to us the reading of His holy and infallible Word.

We are going to look at three things that suggest themselves to us out of this text...

- First, at our heavenly Father's tender call to us to come to His house!
- Second, at your response as a son set free by God's welcoming call.
- Third, at the warm welcome you receive when you come home.

Precious things for us to look at today! Let's get started!

- I. First, see here our heavenly Father's tender call to us to come to His house!
  - This wonderful call to Jacob is found in the very first verse...
    - Gen 35:1: Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."
- A. God always calls His people to come to Bethel, the house of God—
  - Remember: Beth means house and El means God—So Bethel is the house of God.
  - 1. Bethel is the house that God prepares for His people where we may dwell with Him.
    - a. In the Old Covenant it was a place in the Promised Land,
      - It was sometimes referred to as the place where He would cause His name to dwell—it was later the place where the tabernacle was and then it was at Jerusalem where the temple was built.
    - b. In the New Covenant, after Jesus came, the house of God in a sense moved to heaven, where King Jesus sits at the Father's right hand,
      - But it is also the church on earth that Jesus Himself set up by calling ministers of the word to preach the gospel and to shepherd His people.
        - He calls them together with the elders to baptise His people, to lead them in praise, to preach the Word to them, and to watch over their souls in every community,
        - And He calls all of His disciples to come into His house in their local communities—it is here that we dwell with God.
    - c. And Jesus told us that He was also preparing a place for us in glory—
      - At the end of the age, He will raise us from the dead and bring us together in His house which will fill the whole earth in an entirely renewed earth where there will be no curse—and where we will dwell with God forever.
  - And that is the point of God's house—it is the place where we dwell with God.
  - 2. Notice that God calls us and Jacob to go up to Bethel and dwell there!
    - a. We are not merely to visit—His house is to be our dwelling place.
      - We are to go there and to dwell there.
      - The place is not always the same—but it is always His house.
        - He told His people of old to go and offer their sacrifices at the place where He called His name to dwell—that was His house.
    - b. And now His house is where His people are gathered in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour in spirit and truth.
      - But in the New Testament we have no other pattern than that of individuals assembling in Jesus name under the oversight of apostles and then of ministers and elders of the gospel.
        - They submitted to local elders as those who watched over their souls for Jesus' sake.

TRANS> Our heavenly Father calls us to enter into His house!

- B. The timing of God's call is always just right!
  - 1. There is a sense in which His call is constantly upon His elect.
    - a. He works in us from our birth by His Spirit, drawing us to His house...
      - over the years showing us that He is there—
      - preparing us for the gospel—
      - convicting us of our sins—
      - in time bringing His Word to us so that we believe and receive it.
    - b. Have we not seen this with Jacob?
      - At his birth as a covenant child, there were promises...
        - And as he grew up, there were yearnings and desires for God and His promises—ill formed, but there all along...
      - And then there was Bethel, and there was the call from Padan Aram to return to Bethel, and that call remained, tugging away at Jacob so that he left Padan Aram and boldly faced Esau despite his fear.
    - c. The LORD works in all different ways with each of His elect people,
      - but if we look back, we can see how God was working throughout our lives to prepare us to come to His house.
  - 2. But as I reminded you in the introduction, Jacob was slack about coming.
    - a. He seemed to settle down in Shechem—only 25 miles short of Bethel!
      - The vow pulled at him and the call of God from the past pulled at him, but he did not go.
        - Was he hesitant, perhaps, because his family was not fit to go to God's house—what with their idolatry and strife?
        - Was it that the world was holding him back—the opportunities that he saw for prosperity at Shechem?
        - Did he comfort himself that he would go in time?
    - b. Well, God has His ways of making us willing to go!
      - The rape of his daughter and the odious behaviour of his sons that made him terrified erased all the carnal security and false comfort he had in the world.
      - But in another way, it made him feel far from God—
        - How could he go to God after all his years of negligence—and the mess he had made of his household?
        - And besides, he would surely be killed along the way.
  - ➤ Often when God calls us, it is after bringing us to a place of almost total despair.
  - 3. And that is where we see all the beauty of God's call to Jacob!
    - a. Right when he was feeling as if he had ruined everything, hopeless, discouraged, and with nowhere to turn, the Lord comes and says:
      - Jacob, return to Bethel.
      - Jacob, come back to the house of God—come back to My house!
    - b. Now what about some of you?
      - Perhaps this very day you are discouraged because you have been drifting.
        - Oh yes, you may physically be here at the house of God, but you have not been in communion and fellowship with your heavenly Father.

- Your heart has been in Shechem, but you do not belong there!
  - You have not been living for God.
  - There are idols in your life.
  - Your prayers are cold, and you are full of despair and bitterness.
  - Instead of leading others to God, you repel them.
- c. All you that are weary and heavy laden—do you hear your Saviour's call?
  - "Come unto me all you that are weary and heavy laden and you shall find rest for your souls—rest in My house!"
    - Have you made vows to God in the house of God?
    - So had Jacob—and it was time for him to return to fulfill those vows that he had made in God's house...
      - and it is time for you to return!
  - We have these new members who will repeat the vows they made—some of you need to renew the vows that you made when you united with the church!
    - You vowed that you would be faithful in God's house!
- ➤ How gracious our heavenly Father is to call us when we are weary and heavy laden under the load of our sins—
  - Go up to My house and dwell there!
    - Meet me at My house!
- C. And you see that He calls Jacob to build an altar at Bethel...
  - 1. An altar!
    - The altar is the place where sacrifices are made for sin!
      - It is the place of forgiveness and of acceptance by offering.
    - Jacob made an altar of stone but we have an altar made without hands!
      - We have our LORD Jesus Christ who was offered on the cross and whose sacrifice was offered in the heavenly place!
      - We have full acceptance through His offering—full remission of sins through His blood that was shed.
  - 2. What encouragement to come—and build an altar at God's house!
    - That is how sinners like us who have let God down can come to God.
      - Our altar is built by confessing Jesus Christ as our only Saviour!
      - We come to Him, calling upon His name who was crucified for the forgiveness of our sins and we know that God accepts us.
        - It is the altar He appointed for us for that very purpose!
  - 3. Do not dilly-dally at Shechem!
    - You have made vows to the LORD and you have an altar that is not made with hands in God's house!
      - Come to Bethel and to the altar that Jesus has for us there!
    - What? Are you one who has never been to Bethel?
      - Then if you have ears to hear, hear God's call and come for the first time.
        - Bethel is God's house and He will welcome you at His altar if you come trusting in the Jesus Christ who was crucified.

- Weary soul, beaten down, discouraged, afraid, ruined, without hope—hear the call of Jesus to come and His promise that you will not be cast out!

TRANS> Now let us turn to our second point...

## II. See the response of the soul set free by God's welcoming call.

- A. When that welcoming call comes to you, you can no longer resist it.
  - 1. Like Jacob, you set out at once.
    - You cannot do otherwise, for your heart has been captured!
    - You must go. Despite all doubts and fears, you must go.
  - 2. You realise that all your hopes and all your dreams are in God's house.
    - You see the vanity of all the world—what good would it do you if you gain the whole world and lose your own soul?
      - In your Father's house is eternal blessing, full forgiveness, joy and peace and security and eternal life.
      - Here riches of grace are to be found that are better than silver and gold.
        - This is your life, this is your destiny—to ever be with the Lord, beholding His glory in the holy place.
    - Like Peter you say, "Where else can I go, you have the words of eternal life?"
      - There is nothing else to live for...and you know it.
- B. And so you prepare yourself and your household to go to God.
  - 1. In verse 2, Jacob speaks of this preparation when he says:
    - Gen 35:2: "Put away the foreign gods that *are* among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God..."
    - a. There were foreign gods? Idols! In Jacob's house?
      - Yes there were! Jacob had not been tending to his household!
      - The people of Syria where Jacob's wives and servants came from worshipped one God—in a way—they recognised a supreme God…
        - But they had what is equivalent to the saints and angels and the Virgin Mary that the Roman Catholics call on today...
          - They were seen as God's helpers.
          - But God did not call us to pray to saints and angels.
        - But Jacob had let this slide in his household...
          - But now he has heard God's call and he knows that these idols are not acceptable.
          - It is to God, not to saints and angels that he must go.
    - > So He commands them to put away all of these superstitions.
    - b. And then he calls for them to purify themselves.
      - Indeed yes—they have been defiled—
        - Defiled by their sin, defiled by the shedding of innocent blood at Shechem—they were murderers...
          - Dinah had been defiled by Shechem...

- And who could tell all the other ways that they had been defiled.
- When you come to the true God you know that you need a good washing.
  - That is why we are baptised at the door to God's house—it is a ceremonial washing that represents the washing we need from sin.
- c. And he tells them put off their filthy defiled garments...
  - What are those filthy things that you are clinging to that have no place in the house of God?
    - Those filthy habits, those sinful lustful thoughts, that selfish pettiness that makes you so easily offended, the greed and covetousness, the drunkenness...
  - Cast them off and put on new clothes...
    - None of these have a place at Bethel!
- 2. There is a great picture of this same thing when John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord
  - a. He proclaimed that the Kingdom of God—the house of God—Bethel was at hand!
    - And what did he preach?
    - He preached a baptism of repentance!
      - That was how he prepared the way of the Lord—how he prepared disciples to enter into God's house.
  - b. You must put away the foreign gods—the idols you cling to...
    - You must be washed at the door—
    - You must put off the filthy garments and receive the new garments!
- 3. Now don't misunderstand—the point is never that you can take away your own sins!
  - a. Don't forget about the altar—Jacob tells his family—
    - even as he tells them to put away their gods and to wash and to change their clothes—
      - that he is going to build an altar Bethel.
      - It is only the blood of the covenant that can take away your sins and make you right with God.
  - b. Let me speak plainly...it is only faith in Jesus Christ that can take away your guilt in God's house!
    - Without the cross, your repentance is totally worthless.
    - You are full of arrogance and pride if you think you can wash away your own sins...
      - What will you offer? What will you use to cleanse yourself?
  - c. But Jacob's message and Christ's message is a message of repentance.
    - It is your coming to the place where you want God's house instead of your sins, and you turn from them all...
      - You come to be cleansed from them all and to receive new clothes in the house of God.

- You know you cannot drag your idols and your filth into God's house, so you cast them off and come to Jesus confessing your sins, looking to Him for full forgiveness through His blood.
- C. And you see that Jacob and his household follow through with all of this...
  - 1. They bring their foreign gods to Jacob, and he buries them.
    - A mere call to repentance does not do anyone any good...
      - There must be a follow-through...
      - And when God has called you, there will be—you will be ashamed of your ways and you will confess and forsake your sins.
        - You have come to dwell at God's house!
  - 2. And they take their journey to Bethel.
    - a. And look—God gives them miraculous safety—
      - 1) Nothing can stop you when you are going to God's house!
        - Your enemies are unable to assault you.
        - God will never let any enemy prevent His elect children from coming home to Him when He has called!
      - 2) Jacob was surely right—the Canaanites wanted to destroy him after what his sons at done at Shechem...
        - But verse 5 explains the miraculous way that God held them off: And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him.
        - Matthew Henry comments that we do not even realise all the times that God holds off our enemies in this way!
    - b. I don't mean to say that it is always as easy as it was for Jacob this time.
      - God has different ways of protecting you—and sometime it is not by holding your enemies off, but by strengthening you to resist their fiercest assault...
        - You are given strength like Sampson to overcome them.
        - Sometimes He will use others to protect you.
        - Sometimes, He will simply turn your enemies' hearts so that you find favour in their eyes—as He did with Esau—so that you make peace with them.
  - ➤ The thing is, one way or another, God does not allow our enemies to prevent us from coming to dwell in His house.
  - 3. And Jacob also follows through and builds an altar there.
    - a. That is a huge problem today—so many will try to come to God while forgetting Christ crucified to atone for sin.

- It is the fashion in the modern church, and has been for many years, to come to God without the altar—without the blood of the covenant in which there is remission of sins.
  - The arrogant presumption is that God ought to accept us with such things.
- It is taught that Christ is a man with cause whose example we follow with His dedication and His love for others...
  - His cross is not denied by them as something He did because He stood up for what was noble and right...
  - But it not a cross where atonement is made to God.
    - It is not a cross where God's wrath is turned away from us and put on His Son, because that teaching offends modern man...
      - Modern man wants God to have no wrath.
- b. And I tell you, those that fill the ranks of the church where there is no altar for atonement are churches that will perish under God's wrath.
  - They dare to come before the holy God as if He ought to accept them.
  - They deny that they are sinners who need forgiveness.
  - They, in fact, make a mockery of Christ, and count the blood of the atonement as a common thing or a profane thing.
    - There is no salvation in that.
- c. But Jacob did not forget the altar when he came to the house of God.
  - He came and he built the altar and no doubt he offered sacrifices on it.
  - When you truly respond to God's call, it is always to Christ crucified to atone for sin to whom you come.
    - There is salvation in no other...

TRANS> So here you are, like Jacob, arriving at God's house.

- You are at Bethel, you and your family have repented, your enemies have not been able to stop you, and you have your altar of atonement...
- D. But do not expect that there will be no sorrows at Bethel...
  - 1. In this world, being in God's house does not mean that we escape from sorrows.
    - In verse 8 we are told that Rebekah's beloved nurse dies.
      - No doubt this aged women had looked after Jacob when he was a child.
      - She is very dear to him because she is buried with great lamentations and with a memorial.
    - We are not given many details—we don't know when she came to be with Jacob or how she died...
      - All it says is: Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called Allon Bachuth.
  - 2. No doubt this detail is included to guard against assuming that if we are serving the Lord there will be no trials.

- Jesus tells us plainly that we enter His kingdom through much tribulation...that if we follow Him, we will be treated as He was treated.
  - There will be crosses and trials and griefs of every sort.
  - But still, you have come to God's house and are a soul set free.

# III. And when you get to God's house—Oh what a warm welcome you receive from your heavenly Father!

- A. God comes to personally welcome you to His house...
  - 1. We see this with Jacob in verse 9 where it says: Then God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram and blessed him.
    - Jacob saw a personal representation of the LORD, perhaps a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ, as Abraham and Isaac also saw.
      - That was God's way of appearing to the Patriarchs, it seems.
      - What an encouragement this was to Jacob who had seen God at Bethel thirty years before!
        - Now he is warmly welcomed by the Lord.
  - 2. This is such a delightful thing that God always does when His servants come back to His house.
    - There is the beautiful picture of it in the parable of the prodigal son—with the father running and weeping upon his son before he even gets to the door.
    - There is the beauty of the welcome that Christ speaks of when He tells us that all of heaven rejoices when one sinner repents.
  - 3. But we do not have Christ come to us as the Patriarchs did—no indeed—we have something even better than that.
    - a. We have the Spirit of God's Son, the Holy Spirit, who comes to our very hearts and assures us that we are God's sons, fully accepted as members of God's household!
      - Jacob did not have this as we do.
      - He was told that his name was changed to *Israel*,
        - That name meant, as we were told before, that he had prevailed with God to gain the blessing from God that he sought.
        - This was a great encouragement, but our encouragement is greater because we are assured by God's Spirit that we are adopted...
          - His Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the sons of God.
    - b. We also have the blood of Jesus that speaks of better things than the blood of Abel or the blood of bulls and goats on Jacob's altar...
      - Abel and Jacob had pictures of atonement, but we have the blood of Christ that actually atones for our sin.
        - We see what has been done for us and there can be no doubt of God's love or of the sufficiency of this provision...we surely have the complete forgiveness of sin!

- c. We have so much revealed to us that Jesus says that the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist,
  - and that John was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets—he had more revelation than any of them—
    - And the least of us in God's house in the New Testament has more.
    - That is what you get when you truly come to God's house today!
- B. And we see with Jacob how our heavenly Father also assures us of our inheritance in His house!
  - In verse 11 He promises Jacob a seed and in verse 12 He promises him a place for his seed...
  - 1. Verse 11 says: Also God said to him: "I am God Almighty. [El Shaddai, reminding Jacob that He had the power to do all things...and then He says] Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body."
    - a. These words, "Be fruitful and multiply" are not just a command, they are also a blessing—that Jacob will be fruitful and multiply...
      - not just that he will have lots of children and grandchildren, but that he will have lots of **godly** children and grandchildren.
      - You are not fruitful if you bring forth lots of weeds, but if you bring forth sons and daughters for God.
        - This is the promise that Jacob will forth a kingdom of righteousness in this sinful world—people who are restored to God!
        - And saying that they will be kings means that they will have dominion at last in the world!
    - b. And of course, spiritually, the seed is Christ and all His seed.
      - He is the one that Jacob brought forth, and through Him, the fruit of the nations—people saved from all nations has come...
        - And indeed, He reigns forever and of the increase of His government there will be no end!
        - It is a beautiful kingdom!
    - c. And when you come to God's house, you are given a place in this kingdom that is growing daily in Jesus Christ as the gospel goes out to the nations.
      - Jacob was promised that the seed would come, but you see Him seated at God's right hand until all His enemies are made His footstool!
        - This is the house you enter when you are received in the church.
  - 2. And in verse 12, the seed is promised a place—God says to Jacob: The land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land.
    - a. This was the land of Canaan which was the place where God would establish His righteous kingdom at the first...
      - It was to this land that Christ would later be born.
      - It is the firstfruits of the everlasting inheritance...

- Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were promised it not just for future generations, but for themselves...
  - and now we know that they will be raised up at the last day and Jesus and His saints will inherit the whole earth!
  - Yes, this land was an everlasting inheritance for them—a possession yet to be obtained.
- b. When we come to God's house, we now have the full revelation that we will be raised with glorious bodies as Jesus was...
  - And that He will return to drive out all His enemies and to renew the whole earth for His people so that there will be no more curse in it.
    - The glorious city of God will come down from heaven, and the meek shall inherit the earth forever as God has promised.
    - We will dwell in glory with Jesus our Master and we will see the love that He has had with the Father from before the world began!
    - And we will live in that love, loving and being loved...being blessed and being a blessing!
      - This is your inheritance in the house of God!
- C. How full of thanksgiving God's sons are when they are welcomed in!
  - 1. Jacob again sets up a monument at Bethel and pours out the oil of gladness!
    - Verse 14 says: So Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone [just as he had done before]; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it.
    - This pouring out of oil and wine represents the pouring out of the soul in thanksgiving—
      - You are so full of thanks that you must pour yourself out to the Lord!
        - Paul speaks of himself as a drink offering, poured out in gratitude in the house of God.
  - 2. What else can you do when a helpless, hopeless sinner like you has been so warmly welcomed into the house of God!
    - Jacob knows that that is what it is—once again he names it the house of God because that is what it is—the place where God dwells.
      - It is still the house of God!
    - Behold what manner of love has been bestowed on us that we should be called the sons of God!

### **Conclusion:**

Dear people of this congregation,

- Have you truly come to the house of God?
  - Have you come both outwardly by baptism and by entering the church and have you come sincerely in faith?
  - Do you know what it is to be called of God and so that you put off all your filth and come to His altar—to Jesus Christ crucified for the remission of sins?

- Do you know what it is to be welcomed into this house by your gracious heavenly Father and given an everlasting inheritance in with Jesus Christ?
- And if you have come, have you by any chance drifted away?
  - Do you feel that there is no hope for you—that you have been cut off?
    - Have your sins and your fears and your failure eaten up your hope?
  - Know that your Father continues to call His children...
    - He calls you, as He called Jacob, to return to Bethel—His house!
    - Put away your idols, wash away your defilement, change your garments and come to Jesus Christ, the altar God has prepared for you in His house.
    - Come and receive His welcome...
      - No more empty prayers, no more half-hearted service, no more lack of assurance.
      - Come home, dear child of God, can't you hear your Father's call?
        - Come home!