

## All the Father Gives, the Son Keeps

TEXT: John 6:36-47

PHBF 04.09.17

Scr. Reading: John 6:35-48

The Gospel of John

[Next Sunday: 8:30 breakfast, 9:00 baptism, 10:00 worship meeting]

Three years ago, while I was on a summer sabbatical, Aundrea and I traveled to Cape Town, SA, with our two oldest sons to visit Karl & Glynn Peterson. On our brief layover in London, we hit the town to see as much of that historic city as we possibly could. One of our stops was the British Library, particularly the “Treasures Room,” where you can find on display some of the world’s most important and interesting documents. One of the four remaining original copies of *Magna Carta* (1215) is there. They have a Gutenberg Bible (1455), with its colorful borders and ornate Latin text. We saw the original folio of Handel’s *Messiah* written in his own hand, handwritten sheet music by Bach and Beethoven, and original lyric sheets from the Beatles. They have pages from Leonardo da Vinci’s notebook—not copies, but original notes handwritten by the Renaissance man himself. Personal letters from Queens Elizabeth I and “Bloody” Mary. Original work from Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, and Jane Austen. One of the most important biblical manuscripts in the world is there—Codex Sinaiticus—which was handwritten in Greek in the mid-300s and includes the oldest complete copy of the NT. This is the item I had come to see, and it literally took my breath away standing there over it, trying to explain to my son the importance of this manuscript I had heard about since my theological education had begun 20 years earlier.

But just as I turned to go, a small book across the aisle caught my eye. It was another Bible, this one about ¼ the size of these other thickly bound and ornately decorated copies of the Scriptures. It was a Tyndale New Testament, 1 of only 3 known surviving copies from 1526. The word of God—not in Greek or Latin—but in modern English. This was the fruit of Tyndale’s whole life, his labor of love to the English-speaking world, and the book he literally lost his life to produce. I couldn’t believe my eyes, but there it was, lying right there, open to the Gospel of John chapter 1. And I read, not in Greek or in Latin, but in my own native tongue: “In the beginning was that word, and that word was with god; and god was that word.” Among all these other noteworthy artifacts and fascinating documents from Western culture, here in this tiny little

book in a display case off to one side was a priceless treasure indeed.

The Gospel of John reminds me of the Treasures Room in the British Library—everywhere you turn you find precious and breathtaking articles of our Christian faith: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” / “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son” / “You must be born again” / “I am the bread of life” / “I am the light of the world” / “I am the Good Shepherd” / “I am the True Vine.” You walk through this book and it’s like: “Look there: He’s turning the water into wine! Oh wow, it’s Nicodemus and the woman at the well. He’s raising Lazarus from the dead, washing the disciples’ feet, restoring Peter after the resurrection....” There’s treasure everywhere! But then, if you’re looking closely, you’ll see something else, not as central, certainly not as commanding of attention as these others, but a treasure absolutely priceless. It’s this description of the wooing and winning grace of God in John 6.

***What Jesus gives us in John 6 is a breathtaking description of God’s invincible grace in saving sinners.*** Specifically, the Father draws sinners to Himself who are incapable of coming on their own, He then gives them as a gift to His Son, and the Son keeps them for all eternity so that not one of them is lost. If you worry that God might lose patience with you or that your faith is not strong enough to endure, this text is for you. If you struggle to feel deeply and personally loved by God, listen up. There’s great news for you in this passage.

This teaching from Jesus arises for a very simple reason: He has just made an incredible offer and virtually no one responded. In fact, some people stopped following Him altogether (v66). This, in spite of the fact that He just said:

**v35** *I am the bread of life: whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*

What an offer! Bread that nourishes and strengthens and satisfies you forever. But what happens?

**v36** *But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.*

Why would people not believe Him and take Him up on His offer? Why are they walking away? That is the question Jesus answers in **our text for today, verses 36-47**. His answer falls into 3 categories: teaching about the Son, sinners, and about the Father.

## 1. The Son (vv37-40)

Specifically, the Son performs 4 activities: receives, keeps, obeys, and resurrects. All of these show this problem is not a failure on His part.

### The Son Receives

**v37** *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

The plain but profound point in this verse is that **the Father has a gift He is preparing to present to His Son**: “All that the Father gives.” The “all” here isn’t stuff; it’s people—you could substitute the word “everyone”: “Everyone the Father gives me will come to me” (cf. HCS).

What does it mean to “come” to Jesus? Verse 35 defines it by setting it parallel to something else:

**v35** *I am the bread of life: whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*

See it? “Whoever comes to me” is restated in the next clause as “whoever believes in me.” Coming to Jesus is believing in Jesus.

In other words, the Father intends to give His Son a gift, and that gift is composed of people who believe in Him. Jesus says something similar several other times:

**v39** *This is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me...*

**17:1-2** *Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, <sup>2</sup> since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.*

**17:6** *I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.*

**17:9-10** *I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.*

Do you see what is happening here? Jesus is describing a special gift the Father has put together for the Son, a gift the Son intends to keep so that it is never lost or destroyed, a gift of people who believe in Him and come to Him as their Bread of Life. In other words, if you are a Christian, you are part of an intra-Trinitarian gift from one member of the Godhead to another. The Father intends to give His Son a present, and

part of that present is you. The Father gives, and the Son receives.

### The Son Keeps

**v37** *All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*

The first part of the verse is collective and general, talking about the whole group: “All the Father gives will come.” The second clause gets specific and personal: “Each individual one who comes I will not refuse.” In other words, the Son isn’t going to reject a single part of the Father’s gift.

ILLUS: I received a woman’s coat for Christmas one year. To the great offense of the giver, I rejected it. Jesus will never do that!

In fact, He goes to great lengths to keep, to hold, to preserve forever everyone the Father gives Him:

**vv39-40** *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”*

The point is, Jesus will never let go of His gift from the Father. Every single person the Father gives, He will keep forever. If you have believed on Jesus, you are secure. Eternal life is yours right now (vv47, 54).

### The Son Obeys

Why is Jesus so careful to keep everyone the Father gives Him? Because Jesus always obeys His Father:

**v38** *For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.*

The whole purpose of Jesus incarnation, the whole reason He came from heaven to earth, was to do the will of His Father. What is that?

**v39** *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.*

Here is the Father’s will. This is what the Father sent Jesus to do: to lose none of the people the Father gave Him. The Father has charged the Son with this duty: “Hold on to those people I gave you. Don’t lose any of them.”

Do you understand what this means for you? **Your eternal life is a matter of the Son’s obedience to the Father.** If you trust Jesus at some point and are lost to hell forever at some other point, it means the Son

has failed to obey the Father. Either the Son was too weak to get it done, too forgetful of what His Father asked, or too rebellious to obey. **Your eternal security is not merely about Jesus' faithfulness to you; it's about His faithfulness to God.**

### The Son Resurrects

**vv39-40** *And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.*

Jesus isn't merely going to keep your eternal soul forever. He intends to keep every part of you, including your broken, failing, weary body. God won't lose any part of you. All of you—body, soul, and spirit—will be redeemed forever. Why? Because the Father wills it; and what the Father wills, the Son does.

So if the Son does all that for those who believe, where is the breakdown? Why aren't people responding to His offer? The problem isn't in the Son; it's in the sinner.

## **2. The Sinner**

The Jews don't like this at all! Who does this guy think He is, making these promises and claiming these responsibilities for Himself?

**vv41-42** *So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." <sup>42</sup> They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"*

Remember the last time God offered His people bread from heaven? What did they do? They grumbled: "We've lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (Num 11:4-6) These people haven't learned anything from their grandparents. Same attitude. They grumble to each other. Not only is it ungrateful, it's arrogant and dangerous. They are assuming they can figure out God's revelation by talking things over with each other instead of humbly responding with joy to the free grace of God. As long as people remain confident in their own ability to sort out the meaning of their experience, they can't come to God. They're still too independent. And THAT, Jesus says, is their real problem:

**vv43-44** *Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. <sup>44</sup> No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will*

*raise him up on the last day."*

I'll explain the Father's role here in a moment, but first, we need to understand why the Father's "drawing" is so essential. The Father must draw because...

**v44** *No one can come to me unless the Father [does it.]*

What does Jesus mean, "No one can come to me"? That sounds rather harsh, doesn't it? Doesn't feel too good to be told that by Jesus. Maybe it's a poor translation, and Greek will clear things up. Sure. Here are a few samples from other renderings...

NIV: *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him...*

NLT: *For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me...*

NAS:: *No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him...*

Exactly the same as the ESV ...which is exactly what the HCS, RSV, NKJ and a host of other English translations say. But in Greek, it actually says—and this is very literal: "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."

What Jesus is saying is very plain. The hard part isn't understanding it; the hard part is accepting it. "No one comes to Jesus unless the Father draws him." People get saved, not on their own initiative, but on God's initiative. The decisive will in conversion is not our own will; it is the will of the Father. If we did not have Scriptures like this one (and many others), if we were informed only by our own instincts and experience, we might believe:

- Jesus made salvation possible, and the Holy Spirit comes along and asks if we're interested, and we can choose whether or not we are.
- God's love is a passive openness, willing to receive anyone who comes.
- Predestination to salvation is based upon God's knowledge ahead of time of who will choose him, and then he chooses them.

***The problem with all of these notions is that they assume that human beings stand in a state of mental and moral neutrality. Jesus says we don't. Our instincts tell us we can trust our own judgment, we are an unbiased arbiter, weighing the evidence and making an impartial decision. Jesus says we can't trust ourselves because we aren't unbiased. **Without the drawing grace of God, we cannot even come.*****

Notice Jesus is speaking of ability, not permission: "No one CAN come to

me [i.e., is not able to] ....” What is this paralyzing inability in us? Jesus is clear that the problem is not in their will, in and of itself. He urges them to come and promises life to those who do:

**v35** ...whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

**v37** ...whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

**v47** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life...

### **The problem is not in our will, per se. The problem is in our nature.**

Jesus makes this very clear earlier:

**John 3:18-20** *Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. <sup>19</sup> And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. <sup>20</sup> For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.*

The problem is not in our will; it's in our heart. **We choose what we love!** We love darkness rather than light. It has nothing to do with our free will. Put meat and oatmeal in front of a lion, and he'll choose the meat every single time. Has nothing to do with his free will. It's his nature. He's a meat eater, and no matter how nutritious and delicious that oatmeal might be, he cannot eat it. This is why we cannot come unless the Father does something first...

### **3. The Father**

**v44** *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*

The Father must first draw, and then the sinners come. And as v37 says, all who come, Jesus will receive and keep forever. What is this drawing of the Father? It's teaching, teaching about Jesus:

**vv45-47** *It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me- <sup>46</sup> not that anyone has seen the Father except him who is from God; he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.*

Jesus isn't making this teaching up. It's what the Prophets taught about the New Covenant: God writes His law on people's hearts (Jer 31), gives His people a new heart of flesh (Ez 36). When does that happen? God doesn't drag people into His family kicking and screaming. He draws them like a suitor, woos them in love, tells them about His goodness

and kindness... where? when? how? Verse 46: not through some mystical voice or personal vision, but through the person and work of Jesus Christ, the only One who has ever seen the Father. When people believe that kind of teaching from the Father about Jesus, they have eternal life (v47).

Why do I teach so emphatically this utter and irresistible sovereignty of God over our salvation? Because its fruit is so sweet. Believing this truth *will produce* in us...

#### 1. Humility

**1 Corinthians 1:27-31** *God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption. <sup>31</sup> Therefore, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*

#### 2. Gratitude

**1 John 4:19** *We love Him because He first loved us.*

#### 3. Security

**Deuteronomy 7:7-8** *It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, <sup>8</sup> but it is because the LORD loves you*

This is Grace. This is the love we all want, not depending on anything in us. A newlywed couple, she asks: "Why do you love me?" He: "You are so beautiful. Irresistible." 15 years and 3 kids later: "I'm not as pretty. Why do you love me?" He: "You are such a fun mom. Captivating." 15 years later: "I'm not as energetic as I was. Why do you love me?" He: "Your mind, sense of humor, wit. Alluring." 20 years later, 70s: "My mind is slipping, doctor says it's not getting better. Why do you love me?" He: "It's not your beauty, your energy, your mind. It's never really been any of that. I love you just because I love you."

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