

the gospel of

JOHN

he is the one

JOHN: THE ONE WHO SAVES TIL THE END

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John 6:35-40

C.S. Lewis was once interviewed by an American Christian journalist who was writing about well-known characters who had converted to Christianity during their adult life. And the theme of his article was decision. He wanted to get Lewis to say how he had made his decision. Unfortunately for his project, Lewis refused to put it in those terms. He said that he hadn't made a decision. In fact, he said God closed in on him. God came to him in such a way that he couldn't escape, even though admittedly C.S. Lewis said he wanted to. In fact, the closest he could get to using the language that the interviewer wanted was this-he said this-I was decided upon. You know, I found that that was the case in my story as well. I didn't choose God, God revealed himself to me and then I chose to follow Jesus. He actually was the initiator. He was the pursuer. He was the one who came after me. When it comes to our salvation there really are two camps within Christianity. Both of them agree that God chooses and we make a decision. They have that in common. The difference is one camp believes that God first chooses and then we decide to follow Jesus and put our faith in him. The other camp believes that we first decide to believe in Jesus and follow him and then God chooses us. Now I happen to be in the first camp and in part because of what we're going to see in this message today, in this particular text where Jesus describes how salvation comes about. Now, if you were listening to Donald's message last week, you heard that Jesus' teaching is getting more direct and more difficult to accept. And in fact, by the end of this chapter, almost everyone is going to leave Jesus because they just can't accept his teaching, and all that really remain are the 12. And as people are rejecting Jesus, Jesus wants it to be clear-he hasn't failed. It's not like he failed the mission or somehow he's starting to lose everybody. No, he wants them to know that the Father has given to him whoever he wants and whoever the Father has given to Jesus will come

to Jesus. And Jesus will never cast them away. And Jesus will never lose them. He will keep them till the end. And so in these verses, we're going to hear about the source of our salvation, the certainty of our salvation, and then the security of our salvation. Let's pray before we look at this text.

Father, we come to you as the author and perfecter of our faith, the one who has chosen and pursued us, loves us deeply. And Jesus, we know you are the one who brings it all about, who accomplishes our salvation through your life, death and resurrection. So we ask that by your spirit, you would reveal to our hearts the things you want us to know, convict us of any sin in regards to our unbelief in you and lead us in the way you'd want us to go, in Jesus' name, Amen. First of all, the source of salvation. If you have your Bibles, we're in John chapter six. We're going to look at verses 37 and on so if you want to please open your Bibles, look at these verses with me. Verse 37 says this, all that the Father gives me, Jesus says, will come to me. In verse 44 he says, no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And in verse 65, he says to those who wouldn't receive, who couldn't receive his teaching, he says this, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father. God, the Father gives us to the Son. God, the Father draws us to the Son. God, the Father grants us to come

to the Son. So then like Paul says in Romans 9:16, it depends not on human effort or exertion, but on God who has mercy. So we'll start with this. As we think about God as the source of our salvation, how do we know if the Father has given us to the Son? Verse 37 says this, Jesus says, all that the Father gives me will come to me. So you know that the Father has given you to the Son if you come to Jesus, you follow Jesus. And then Jesus continues in verse 40, 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. So if the Father gives you to the Son, you will come to the Son, you will look to the Son, you'll hear the Son Jesus's words. You will believe in Jesus. And then you'll begin to experience eternal life. And that's not just life that lasts forever, though it does, but it's life of another kind altogether. It's not just about duration of life. It's about transformation. It's about a kind of life God begins to bring into your heart and life right now. So how do we know if the Father is drawing us to the Son? Verse 41, the Jews grumbled about him because he said, I'm the bread that came down from heaven. And they said, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother, we know. How does he now say that I've come down from heaven? See, they're still looking at Jesus just like any other human. So it's impossible for them to understand this concept that he's come down from heaven because they know his parents. Jesus answered them, do not grumble among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him and I will raise him up on the last day. It's written in the prophets, they will all be taught by God. So now we have all the masses hearing Jesus. And he's saying basically that prophecy is being fulfilled. You're all being taught by God right now through me. And he goes on, he says, everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except he (pointing to himself I'm sure) who is from God. He has seen the Father.

So here's the deal. Those who are drawn by the Father to the Son, believe that the Father really sent the Son, that he's not just the son of Joseph. He's not just an ordinary man. And they don't just listen to Jesus' teaching. They receive Jesus' teaching as coming from God, the Father himself, since Jesus has been with the Father and seen the Father and now is speaking on

behalf of the Father. So because of this, all those who are drawn to Jesus know they've been drawn to Jesus because they're not grumbling about Jesus' teaching. They're not pushing back on it. They're eagerly accepting it. And they're not just saying, well, you know what? It doesn't fit my cultural situation. I don't know if this fits the place we live in right now. I don't know if people will agree with that. It's like, no, no, Jesus said it. He is the authoritative voice from God, the Father. And what he says is true and therefore I will receive it, not push back on it, not reject it. It doesn't mean we won't struggle with it. It won't be hard to believe at times, but we eagerly accept the words of Jesus as the authoritative word from God, the Father. That's how we know. And then finally, how do we know those whom the Father has granted to come to the Son? Jesus says this... after many of his disciples hear it they say, this is a hard saying who can listen to it. But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples are grumbling about this says to them, do you take offense at this? So here's a key. Those who are being granted to come to Jesus by the Father are not offended by Jesus' teaching, though they might struggle with it, but they will receive it. Then Jesus says this. What if you see the son of man ascending to where he's gone before. It's like Jesus is saying, if you're having a hard time believing that I came from the Father from heaven, wait until you see me ascend back up to heaven. And he continues...it's the spirit who gives life. The flesh, which is another way of saying human effort, human works is no help at all. The words I've spoken to you are spirit and life. There are some of you who do not believe for Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who would not believe and who it was who would betray him for him, referring to Judas. And he said, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it's granted to him by the Father. So how do we know who has been granted by the Father to come to Jesus? They've received the spirit who not only gives new spiritual life, like Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3, but also makes it possible to actually hear Jesus' words, understand Jesus' words, and accept them as the very words of God. See, they know by the spirit that their human effort does not save them. They know that their intellect is not what ultimately led them to Jesus. They know that their religious behavior is not what makes them acceptable to God.

Many of you know that I grew up in a Christian home was in the church all my life. And even in high school I did a two-year Bible instruction class where it really was the equivalent of getting a two-year Bible degree at a college. I did it my 10th and 11th grade years in high school. I also was vice-president our youth group. We'd go around with adults knocking on doors, sharing the gospel. I mean, I did all of the religious behaviors. I knew all of the Bible I could know at that point in my life to the best degree as I could. And yet, I didn't know God. And many of you know, it wasn't till I was 21, until God pursued me, revealed Jesus to me, led me to lay down my life in exchange for a new life in Christ. I say that because I needed God to pursue me. I needed God to give me to Jesus, to draw me to Jesus, to grant that I would come to faith in Jesus. All my religious behavior, all of my Bible knowledge, all of my church activity would never do that for me. God had to reach me and save me. And you know what? Even when I came to faith, I still had a long way to go. I mean, it's not like I went from sinner to saint. I did in God's eyes, but not in my practice. I still had so much brokenness and so much sin that I was dealing with my life. I had a long way to go and I still do to be clear. And there are some of you I know who have come to me at times and said, you know, Jeff, I'm just not sure I'm saved. I mean, I still struggle with sin and I feel like I shouldn't struggle anymore. And I should be over this and what's wrong with me. And as I listen, I hear them give me these kinds of words, like, I love Jesus. I follow

Jesus. I want to obey Jesus. But I struggle and I feel like I can't get over this struggle. And as I'm listening, I'm going, like, that sounds like a Christian. And usually what I tell them is, you know, if you didn't have the spirit of God in you, you wouldn't care. You wouldn't want to stop sinning. You wouldn't want to follow Jesus. I mean, those desires are the kinds of desires that the spirit of God gives to God's children, where we are convicted of our sin, where we are sorry for it, where we want to change. So if this is you listening, I just want to encourage you. Maybe you actually aren't someone who is lost, but you've been found, that you aren't far from God. You're a son or a daughter of God. And you're just doing what all of us do, which is struggling to learn how to walk in the power of the spirit to overcome sin in your life. Because I want to say it again, you don't save yourself. The Father is the source of your salvation. And that includes your daily salvation, not just your one-time salvation. Now there may be some of you who are bothered by this teaching. You're like, okay, this doesn't sound fair. You're saying the only people are going to come to Jesus are the ones the Father gives, grants and draws. Shouldn't everybody get the same treatment. Why is the Father only drawing some to Jesus? And I don't know the answer to that. I mean, God is God. God will do what God will do. However, I want to be clear about this. I don't believe Jesus is saying these things in this context to primarily address the "who" I think he's trying to address the "how". He's trying to address the efficacy, the power, the effectiveness of salvation. And we can get stuck and go like, yeah, but what about these other people that aren't drawn? And I just want to just put it back in the context. This is what's going on here in the text. These men are saying to Jesus, Jesus, who do you think you are? What do you claim to be able to do? Seriously? You think you can do that. You expect us to believe you? And Jesus knows that they're going to leave him. And then many are going to say, see, his claims are all false. If he were truly the Son of God and the savior of the world, nobody would leave him. Everybody would follow him. And I think what Jesus is saying in that context is hey, here's the deal. God's going to give me those whom he will. And those whom he will, they will follow me. They'll come to me. If God draws them, I will receive them. If God grants them to come to me, they just will come to me. That's how it works. I think Jesus is saying, I'm fully dependent on the Father to do the work of the Father. And then I'll do the work that I'm called to do. And so I want to say, if you struggle with this teaching that yes, God the Father gives, God the Father draws, God the Father grants that people come to Jesus. If you struggle with that, then don't forget, if you have come to Jesus, you are now participant in the very relationship of God the Father, God the son, God the spirit as they work to draw people to Jesus. I mean, Jesus in his high priestly prayer, prays this for you and I who will believe. Father, as I am in you and you are in me, may they be in us? Now don't miss that. Jesus is saying, I'm praying that you will be participants in the Godhead with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as he is at work in this world, bringing people to himself. So does it bother you that some might not be saved, then cry out in prayer to God the Father and say, Father, will you give them to Jesus? Will you grant that they'll come to Jesus? Would you draw them to faith in Jesus Christ? You and I get to have access through Jesus in prayer to the Father's heart. And if you have a heart that wants to see people come to faith, that's likely God the Father putting it in you that you would want others to know him so that you will join in, in prayer and participation with how God's going to save them. Are you bothered that your friends might not be saved, cry out. Father, give them to Jesus. Father, grant that they would come to Jesus. God, would you draw them to Jesus Christ. Parents, are you worried about your kids? Pray Father, give our kids

to Jesus. Draw our kids to Jesus. Grant that they would come and believe in Jesus. Do it with your neighbors, your coworkers. If it bothers you, that's God's heart for the lost and join in with his work through prayer, but then also be willing to share the good news of Jesus that God loves them, that God's pursuing them through Jesus Christ and through you in their life. Just recently I shared with our elders my own struggle in preaching. I just feel like 13 years of preaching, I wonder did it accomplish anything? Sometimes I just feel like did it work? And this last week as I was preparing for this message the spirit just began to speak to me around this text and said, Jeff, it's God the Father who draws, and gives, and grants that people come to Jesus, not your preaching. You do what you can do and I'll do what I do. And it was just a big relief for me to realize it's not on my shoulders. It's on God's. Now, not only do we know the source of our salvation but we also want to consider the certainty of our salvation. Jesus says all that the Father gives me will come to me. And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out for I've come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me. Not only is our coming to Jesus guaranteed if the Father gives us to Jesus, but our reception by Jesus is completely welcomed. Jesus will never cast us out. He will never reject those whom the Father gives to him. Now throughout Israel's rebellion, God continued to tell them over and over again, I didn't choose you because of anything you did. I didn't choose you because of the kind of people you were. I didn't choose you because there was anything special about you. I chose you because I wanted you. I chose you because of my divine sovereign gracious, loving decision to make you my people. And he told them this over and over again, so that in their rebellion they would realize that there was nothing they did to make them God's people and therefore there's nothing they could do to lose what they had become. That in their rebellion, because God chose them apart from their works, that even their evil and their rebellion and their sin would not lead God to regret his choice and reject them altogether. And the reason why that's so important is because now Jesus is saying the very same thing. He's saying I came down from the Father to do my Father's will, which is to receive everyone whom the Father gives to me. And everyone that the Father gives to me they will come to me and when they come to me, I will never reject them. I will never cast them out. In other words, there's nothing you or I have ever done to make God want us. And therefore, there's nothing we could ever do to make God reject us.

See far too many of us think God's like a wine snob, you know, where they bring the wine to the table and I'm kind of one of these. And they get a little taste of the wine and they're like, yeah, it's a little off. I want another one. And we think that's what God's going to do with us. That he's going to go like, yeah, I don't know, you're just a little off. I'm going to push you away. Or maybe we think God didn't have a very well-developed palette when he first brought us in, but his palette is developed and you know, now he used to put up with two-buck Chuck, but now there's nothing like, you know, a really fine bottle of wine. And so he looks at us like that and he's going like, you know what, at first I accepted you, but my standard has changed. I want more from you. I want more performance. I want better behavior. I don't know if I'll accept you anymore. So what do we do if we believe God's like that, that he's constantly examining us to see if we are acceptable to him and at any moment he might just reject us. Then what we do is we live in hiding where we're just so afraid of being known. Or we live with this unbelievable weight of performance that we've always got to strive and become better so God will finally be pleased

with us. And the problem is because we're so afraid that if he really knew what we were like, he'd cast us out. We always keep him at arms distance. We never really get close. And there are some of you who are listening right now, who you've never come to Jesus because you're afraid that if you came to him and he saw what was really true of you, that he would reject you. But Jesus is saying, no. Anyone who comes to me, I will receive. I'll never cast out.

Ken did a great job a few weeks ago teaching on the spiritual practice of reflection. He was really clear that God sees you completely and that there's nowhere you can run ever to get away from his presence. And yet though he sees you and knows you and sees all of your sin and all of your flaws and all of your brokenness, he loves you. He receives you, accepts you in Jesus. It's been a big part of my own story, as many of you know, with my struggle this last year facing my shame and more recently realizing a lot of it was also fear. In my head I believe the things I'm teaching but in my life I was often led by this unbelievable shame and sense of fear that God would find me out or that I would not measure up. And I had a real big breakthrough several months ago with a guy that I meet with once a week, my counselor from Tin Man Ministries. And I was just so overwhelmed with shame and fear that, I mean, I was just riddled with anxiety coming into this meeting with him and he could see it. And he just stopped and said, Jeff, let's do something. Let's try something together. And if you want to do this you can do this as well. He said, I want you to breathe in with your nose, breathe out through your mouth, breathe in through your nose, breathe out through your mouth. And then he kept having me do that. And he said this. So if you want to do this, just keep breathing in with your nose, breathe out with your mouth. And he said this, be still and know that I am God. Breathe in. Be still and know that I am. Breathe out. Breathe in. Be still and know. Breathe out. Breathe in. Be still. Breathe out. Breathe in. Be. Breathe out. We did that three times. And it was like the weight of my shame, my fear and the knowledge of my sin just lifted. It's like I was just breathing in the words of God that reminded me that I don't have to be God, that I can live with limitations, that I can be, that I don't have to be about doing. I can just be. And when I fail in my doing, I can go back to being still and knowing he's God, not me. Paul says it this way in Romans 8, what then, shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? For, I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, including your sin, will be able to separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. If the Father has given you to the Son, God the Son will never reject you . Never. And let's consider the last part-the security of our salvation. Jesus says, this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he's 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 Father gives us to the Son, the Son receives us and will never reject us. And the Son will keep us till the end and raise us up on the last day, giving us new resurrection bodies to enjoy a new heaven and a new earth forever. It's the Father who's the source of our salvation. It's the Son who is the one who grants us eternal life and will never reject us and never lose us. So here's how it works. If the Father's given you to the Son, then you can have absolute confidence that the Son will keep you secure until the end.

You don't save yourself. You don't make yourself acceptable to God and it's not up to you to keep yourself saved until the end. Jesus saves. Jesus secures. And Jesus will keep you forever. Some of you know people who've walked away from the faith-friends, family members, sons, daughters, people that you love dearly and you wonder, did they lose their salvation? Maybe you're even wondering about yourself. And the answer is no, they either were not yet drawn to the Son so that the Son could receive them and never reject them and never lose them. Or they were drawn to the Son and they belong to the Son and they will return to the Son because Jesus will win in the end. Years ago Janie and I, right when we got engaged, had my friend call me from Grand Rapids, Michigan and he said, I have a dog due. He had a new puppy that he wanted to see if we wanted. It was an Australian Sheep dog, which we found out are really rambunctious and liked to run a lot. And we went to Michigan to have my family first meet Janie. We were engaged, but they had not yet met her. So we spent a couple of weeks at my house. And my friend gave me this dog. We called him Spencer. And one morning we woke up and Spencer's gone and we're looking all over the house. We can't find them. We're looking outside. We're yelling, Spencer, Spencer. And we'd picked him up from my friend's house which was about 40 miles away. And so our fear was he just took off running to go back to his house. So we got in our cars, we're driving everywhere. We can't find them. We come back home. We're just so discouraged. And I look out the back window and in our backyard there's a pool. And next to the pool is a pool house. And I look over to the pool house and I just discern this movement in the window of the door. And I look and I realized it was a little nose jumping up and down. And it's Spencer. He's in the pool house. Somehow he got in and the door closed behind him and he was locked in. Well, we didn't end up keeping him cause we realized we probably don't have the energy or the space in our small home in Seattle at the time to take on that kind of a dog. But here's the deal. God is a far better Father than I was a dog owner. He never loses us and he never rejects us and he will keep us till the end. You and I may get lost, but he never loses you. You and I may feel rejected, but he will never reject you. You and I may lose our grip on God, but God will never lose his grip on you. Just think about his own commitment to his son. Look at the cross. At the cross when Jesus was in our place dying for our sins, it looks to everyone like he's not only lost, but he has now been separated from his Father. He cries out my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? That's what it felt like to Jesus, to be suffering for our sin in our place. It felt like he was abandoned by the Father, but the Father never really abandoned the Son. Look at what Psalm 16:10 prophetically states about this moment on the cross. He says, you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, which is the place of the dead or let your Holy one see corruption. Instead, the Father raised Jesus up victoriously securing Jesus' life forever, but in Jesus also securing our lives forever as well. If your faith is in Jesus, your life is secure in Jesus because he has power over sin, Satan, and death. The greatest of the enemies we will ever face. And we can know in Christ that none of them will ever have victory over us. If Jesus has received you, Jesus will never reject you. And Jesus will never ever lose you. He is the one who saves until the end. Let's pray. Father, thank you for the sufficiency of your salvation. Thank you for the security we have in Christ. Thank you for the certainty that we will never be rejected. And thank you that you will keep us till the end and then raise us up on that last day. Jesus, would you help us to believe this? Would you help us to share this? Would you help us to lead others into a place where they

can receive this as well? We desperately need that certainty and assurance that we are saved for forever. Amen