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Series: The Gospel of John
Message: Drawn by the Father

Transcribed Message
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John 6:41-47

There is a kind of humorous sermon rating system that coincides with movie ratings. It goes like this. A G-rated sermon is generally acceptable to everyone. It's full of inoffensive platitudes. It's usually described as wholesome or wonderful. It is go into all the world and smile. A PG is for somewhat more mature congregations. At times, this sermon is even relevant to today's issues and may contain mild suggestions for change. It is often described as challenging, even though no one intends to take any action or change any attitudes as a result. An R-rated is restricted to those not easily upset. This sermon is threatening to the comfortable and is most often described as disturbing. X-rated sermons are positively limited to those who can handle explosive ideas. They are almost always described as shocking or in poor taste. In fact, the minister who preaches this sermon had better have an outside source of income or an established rapport with a pulpit committee looking for a new minister. Well, I think you could agree with me and say that Jesus preached more than a few sermons that were probably described as shocking and unsettling.

I think maybe we have some here in John 6, don't we? So, let's go back to the Gospel of John where we have been working our way through this wonderful gospel. We'll spend a few more weeks, no doubt, in this sixth chapter. We didn't finish our lesson last week, so we're going to pick up there. And remember, we noted that Jesus is the giver and the keeper of eternal life. So that's the lesson we'll finish this morning. And then we'll carry on with the verses before us and we'll see that the Father is the one who draws us into life. We don't just come on our own.

Let's do a very quick review, kind of remind ourselves where we've been. What John does in this sixth chapter, he introduces us to the first of the I Am's. And remember these seven wonderful I Am statements, every one of them linking us to some very specific real need that

we can relate to very clearly in our own lives. That's the immediate connection when Jesus says, I'm the bread of life. So, the first of those seven I Am's is I am the bread of life.

Everybody in that culture, we said, would immediately relate in a very practical way to what Jesus was communicating. If they moved it all beyond the physical, they certainly would have appreciated the spiritual aspect, but they all got the physical aspect of it because they relied on bread every day. The other part of that is it simply communicates to us that Jesus is all that we need and Jesus is all we need. He is everything that we need. And I think, again, that's part of the message that Jesus was communicating when he said, I'm the bread of life. He's saying every need that you have in your life, I am able and capable to meet that need for you.

Then remember as we worked our way through the beginning of that list, this is what Jesus taught in those four things that we pointed out last Sunday. The first of which was in verse 36, all will not come. Jesus himself makes that clear, doesn't he? But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. And so, clearly, Jesus and the Bible do not teach the idea of universalism. The Bible doesn't tell us that all roads ultimately lead to heaven. And just as James and Laurie function and deal and minister in a community as they do in Thailand, so we here as well have many people who think that all roads just lead to the same place. Jesus says that's not true. It's not true. He says, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me. And so, you really have this put forward for us.

Then the second thing we learned in that 37th verse is all who come are a gift. And we just enjoyed, I hope, that truth last week of saying that's, if you have put your faith in Christ, you're the Father's gift to the Son. It's hard to think of too many things more edifying, more encouraging than to realize that you and I as believers are, in fact, a gift to the Father. The Father knows who we are, and He tells us that we will, in fact, come.

The third thing, all who come will, in fact, be received. That last part of verse 37, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. So, if you come, you're welcomed. There are three whoever statements in these three verses that we're looking at here. So clearly the message, the invitation goes to all who will listen, and all who will come will be received. So, we can rightly say that as we think in terms of the gospel and the Christian message, it is in many respects an inclusive message in that Jesus says, I'm the way, the truth, and the life. Nobody

comes to the Father but by me. You can't get any more inclusive than that. And the inclusivity of that is offensive, of course, to people, because they do want to believe that there are a lot of different ways. Jesus says, no, there's not really a lot of different ways. There's only one, and it's me.

But then we turn around, and the message of the gospel is also in the broadest sense that what I just said was exclusive, not inclusive. But the other side of that is the inclusivity of the gospel, right? We can say, whoever will may come, and that's exactly what Jesus is saying here. Inclusivity in that Jesus is the only way in reminding us that he is the way, the truth, and the life.

Then the fourth one, all of God's will and plan will be accomplished. This is what Jesus took such encouragement in. This is why we said in the face of opposition, in the face of resistance, the ministry and heart of our Lord looked at what the Father was going to accomplish, and that is exactly what he put his confidence in.

Now, as we dove into some of those truths and what those truths meant, I want to come back again, and I want to just speak for a few minutes more about this matter of divine election, because when Jesus says, everybody's not going to come, there are going to be those that do not believe, those who do come and believe. He will tell us again this morning how it is that that comes about.

I'll just start by saying this, again, you don't have to agree with my understanding of the doctrinal election to be welcomed at Covenant. You may have a different understanding of this. I want you to grapple with what the Bible teaches. I want you to open your Bible, and I want you to look at these verses and these passages, and I want you to discern as the Holy Spirit teaches you, and as the Word teaches you, this is what I believe the Bible is saying.

My point is simply this. The doctrine of election is not the gospel. There are going to be people in heaven who don't know anything about the doctrine of election. There are going to be people in heaven who don't agree with anything I'm going to say, perhaps, this morning about the doctrine of election. But there won't be anybody in heaven who doesn't understand and believe the gospel. I think that is something that we need to say on the front end of this so

that we understand what it is that we're speaking about here in terms of what the Word teaches.

So just six observations, and then we'll look at these lessons that we didn't finish in our passage this morning. The doctrine of election, I would say it this way, the doctrine of election is not a controversial truth. You might say, okay, well, we're off to a bad start already. No, the doctrine of election is not a controversial truth. What is controversial? What is controversial is how and the way people understand this truth to be applied, and so I'll just say what I did last week. If you believe your Bible, you believe in the doctrine of election because the doctrine of election and the word election appears from Genesis to Revelation. There's something that you have to grapple with as to what that word means, and what we have to grapple with then is if God does elect certain people, then how does that happen? That's where we have some divisions down through the centuries and disagreements.

We really have, in my way of looking at this, we have two basic choices. We can take the position that says God looks down through the ages of time because Paul says in Ephesians 1 that God has chosen from before the foundations of the world. Whatever happens, it happens in the mind of God before the world was even created. One view of this says God looked down through the corridor of time. He saw Carlon was going to believe, and he chose him for salvation. And that view is one way that people explain what is the mystery and difficulty at times of the doctrine of election.

The other view, of course, the one that I would think is more close to what the Scripture teaches, says no, God in eternity past before the worlds were created (as Paul says again in Ephesians 1) before the foundation of the world elected and chose certain ones to salvation. Now, at the end of the day, what you really have is whose will prevails. And in my mind as I'm reading my Bible, I'm seeing that there is a sovereign God who is ruling and reigning over all. For me to put my will either above his or even equal to his just seems like a challenge that the Scriptures don't uphold.

Secondly, election is necessary because of the condition that we are in apart from Christ. We've rehearsed this. We've sung about it. We're lost. We're blind. We are without hope. We're dead in our sins. We're enemies of God as we again heard this morning. The Bible

simply says we're as bad off as we can be. We're not as bad as we can be because we can always be worse. But we're as bad off as we can be. You can't get much worse than dead.

Thirdly, if God did not graciously choose some to be saved, no one would experience salvation. If God did not graciously choose some to be saved, no one would experience salvation. Spurgeon again had a great quote. He was asked about this doctrine and this truth, and he said, "I'm so glad that God chose me before the foundations of the world. I'm so glad that he chose me before I was born because he would have never chosen me after I was born." And I think that's the right perspective.

Here's the question. If God looked down through the corridor of time and saw who was going to believe, who would he see? Who would he see? Who would he see that was going to believe? If we are in the condition that we are spiritually dead before God, he wouldn't see anybody who of their own initiative was going to believe apart from his work as we're going to see this morning.

Number four, all are lost, including the elect, before they are saved. All must be at a point where they put their faith in Christ alone to be saved. Again, just what we said earlier, it's the gospel that saves. The doctrine of election does not save you. The gospel saves you. Coming to Jesus and believing in what he has said about himself and about us is what brings salvation.

Number five, the reason people are lost is not because they are non-elect but because they reject Jesus as their savior. Now, you say that doesn't even make sense. Well, there is within our limited capacity and limited understanding a point at which I think we simply bow before the mystery that is what the word teaches. And besides, if you turn back just a page, isn't this exactly what Jesus said in a previous lesson? In John chapter 5 and verse 40 when he said, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. You do not come to me.

That's not the only time that he said that. Remember back in the first chapter in the 11th verse, right out of the gate in the first chapter, he came to his own and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but of God. And then, of course, you'll see the same thing over in Matthew 23 when Jesus cries out as he looks over the city of Jerusalem, oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem. It's this

heartbreaking cry of our Lord, right? The sympathy of his heart for the lost. How I would have drawn you to myself, but you would not come. You would not believe.

And then number six, we must be careful not to reverse the roles, right? The roles with God. He judges us, we don't judge him. And I understand there is an element of mystery and there's an element of difficulty with this doctrine and with this truth. And I think it's good when we grapple with it. But at the end of the day, we're ultimately asking ourselves the question, who is responsible for our salvation? How does it come about?

Let's look and I think we'll see even more in our teaching this morning. Finishing where we left off, the truth that Jesus taught in verses 39 and 40. These three points that we didn't get to last Sunday are all very closely related. I think we can move through them rather quickly. But the first one in verse 39, all who come are kept.

Look at verse 39, 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. Takes us right back to what we saw in verse 37, right? All that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. So, you could say verse 37, the security of the believer. The security of the child of God is kept and maintained by the Lord Jesus.

And now here in verse 39, it's this matter of our security and the will of the Father. What is more reassuring than for us to hear that it is the will of the Father to keep us? A.W. Pink said this, the realization of the invincibility of the eternal counsels of God gives a calmness, a poise, a courage, a perseverance which nothing else can. Jesus did not promise to keep us for a day or two, or a week or two, or a month or two, or a year or two, or 20 years, or 30 years, or 40 years, right? He promised to keep us till the last day. He promised to keep us for all of eternity.

Number two, all who come have eternal life. Look at verse 40, the very first part of that verse, for this is the will of my Father. Again, referencing the will of the Father, right? For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life. So, to believe is to come. Remember, we've talked about this matter of coming is to be welcomed. To believe is to receive eternal life, isn't it? It's right here again before us, the language of looking and believing and coming.

It takes us to John 3. In John 3, remember, in Jesus' teaching, He was talking about the fact of the Old Testament story when the children of Israel grumbled and complained. Now, that's going to be relevant to our lesson this morning. When they grumbled and complained, remember, God sent the plague. And the answer to the plague, remember, was the serpent on the pole. And Jesus draws back to that in John 3, and He says, if you will look, you will live, right? Well, here's the same thing. The language of coming and believing and looking, these are all used somewhat interchangeably. Look and live, Jesus says.

And then the third thing that's tied in with that, all who have eternal life have a complete salvation. Look at the end of verse 40. Well, let me just read the whole verse. 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 eternal life that He speaks of is a present possession. We don't die to get eternal life. We come to Christ by faith. We believe the gospel. We enter eternal life. We're experiencing eternal life right now as a child of God. But it's not just limited to our soul and spirit. He also says that it will be that He will raise us up on the last day. Well, that's an encouragement to say to us, it's a whole salvation. It's a complete salvation. There's our justification. There's our sanctification. There's glorification of our body. We're going to receive a new glorified body. First Corinthians 15, the great resurrection chapter, speaks to that same thing, and that's what Jesus is saying to us here.

When I see all of this, this is what comes to my mind. I go over to Romans chapter 8. We're all going to be kept. We all have eternal life. We're going to have this complete salvation. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good. For those who are called according to His purpose, for those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son in order that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those whom He predestined, He called. And those whom He called, He justified. And those whom He justified, He glorified. So that is what awaits us. That's the promise that God, through Christ His Son, has given to us.

Now, let's look at how this truth is then going to be received. Let's look at verses 41 through 47. And the answer to how this truth is going to be received, this idea that not everybody is going to believe, that not everybody is going to come. Those that come, they will

not be cast out. Those that come are going to be kept. Those that come, my Father has given them to me. How is that truth being received? Now remember, this is the interesting thing. Who is Jesus teaching this to? We said a couple weeks ago, as we worked through this sixth chapter, He's teaching this to unbelievers largely. There are disciples, His disciples are there. There are others who no doubt have believed. But for the most part, the people who are hearing this teaching of Jesus, that we put into the disturbing category, the hard sometimes to understand category, He's teaching this to the masses of people. And so, how do they receive it? Well, they don't receive it very well, do they?

Let's look at verses 41 and 42. There's an immediate objection, and I want to just start with verse 41 and just looking at who they are. Verse 41, so the Jews grumbled about Him because He said, I am the bread that came down from heaven. Now, remember at the very beginning of our study in the Gospel of John, I told you that as we go through the Gospel, we're going to see this language called the Jews. And honestly, critics of the Gospel of John and critics of the New Testament have pointed to this and said, John is speaking pejoratively of the Jewish people. John has been accused of being anti-Semitic. He's talking about the Jews in a way that is not reflective of a very gracious spirit, but that misses the point completely. John's not using this phrase in an ethnic way or a racial way. He's using this almost as a technical term in the Gospel of John to speak to those who were within the religious community, those who were involved in the pharisaical system. Now, these aren't the leaders that have come up from Jerusalem, but there are leaders in Capernaum, and these are the ones who are opposed to the teaching of Christ.

And so, what do we see? So, the Jews grumbled about him. The word grumbled here is the Greek word *gangouzo*. Turn to your neighbor and say *gangouzo*. If you did, there would be this grumbling, this murmuring, that's what the word literally brings to mind, doesn't it? *Gangouzo*. There's this low rumbling, this murmuring that's going on. It takes us back to the Old Testament, again, Exodus 16 to Numbers 11, where the children of Israel were often caught up in grumbling and complaining against God. And so, that's what Jesus says here, and what pushed them over the edge at this point. when you look back at verse 33, for the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. Now, that statement there is

kind of abstract, right? For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven. Nothing very specific there, but then what pushed him over the edge was when he went from the abstract and he went right into the very concrete and he said in verse 35, I am the bread of life. I am the bread of life. I'm in fact the one who has come down from heaven. Well, they couldn't bear that. They couldn't tolerate that. Jesus speaks to them about who his father is, and he often says to them, you don't know my father. You don't know my father. I know your father, but you don't know my father.

Isn't it interesting, as you look back on your life, there are conversations, seemingly insignificant conversations that you can still remember. And I remember some 40 years ago in Kansas sitting in a barber shop, sitting in the chair getting a haircut. I'm in this conversation with the barber and he's in a community that's religious with a lot of lost people, and so he was in that company, and I'm sure he viewed himself as being a Christian. And as we talked about spiritual things, he made some comment about, we're all children of God. And I said, well, and I don't know, hopefully I said something else too, but I said something at some point about, well, what about the phrase that Jesus makes when he says to the religious leaders, you're of your father the devil? And we had a kind of a silent haircut for the rest of the time. He didn't really know exactly what to say, because the idea that we're all children of God, and yet Jesus himself would say to the religious leaders, you're of your father the devil.

Well, that in effect is what's happening here, because in verse 42, the focus is really who he is, right? They said, is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and brother we know? How does he now say I have come down from heaven? I mean, you've got to feel for them on some level, don't you? Because they do know his father and his mother. They know he was raised in Bethlehem, or born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and now here he is in Capernaum. They know his family. They can't get past what they know about his family. How can he possibly be from heaven when we know he's from the earth? We know his family, we know his father, his mother. We know his brothers and sisters.

Here's the interesting thing, John in his gospel doesn't explicitly teach about the virgin birth or the virgin conception. Matthew does, and Luke does, because they teach the narratives of the nativity, right? Mark doesn't, because he begins his gospel with Jesus' adult ministry, and

John doesn't. Not directly, but he is in effect here, isn't he? Because Jesus' claims, every time Jesus claims that he is not from this earth, that his father is in heaven, he has been sent down from, every time he makes a claim like that, he's literally laying claim to his unusual beginning. But here it is.

The correction that comes in verses 43 to 47, and in fact Jesus says, let me say this to you again. 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. Jesus' response is not to jump into a defense of himself personally, to give them the family history all over again. Rather it's an invitation to them and a rebuke. It's a rebuke and an admonition and just saying simply, stop it. Stop the grumbling. Stop the murmuring. And then he goes back to the two issues at hand.

And what are the two issues at hand? The two issues at hand are human inability. It's our fallen condition and divine intervention. He's grappling again with how is it that we come to faith in Christ. What is it that we point to when we think of our own spiritual journey? What is it that we see and who do we give credit to for how it is that we have responded to the gospel? Jesus says again, no one can come to me. No one can come to me. It's a universal negative proposition. There are no exceptions, Jesus says to this. Now it doesn't mean that nobody's ever going to come, right? That's the good news.

But what's the key word in that sentence? The key word in that sentence is unless. There's the necessary condition. The Father has sent me and he is going to draw you. The word draw here is the word *elkuo*. It means to pull. It means to drag. Almost every time this word is used in the New Testament, it signifies that there is a resistance. Now, don't miss what Jesus is teaching us here about answering the question, how is it that we come to Christ? And how is it that we come to the gospel? And how is it that we believe? Because I think he's making it abundantly clear how this comes about. He says to us, nobody comes to me of their own accord. Nobody comes to me of their own initiative, of simply their own will. They come to me because the Father draws them.

Now, I'm not going to go and read the verses, but there are verses, for instance, in the book of Acts, when Paul is being arrested and he's being drug out of wherever he was. That's

the word that is used. When it says draw, it's not just a mild suggestion. There's always a resistance. One of the great examples is at the end of the gospel of John in the 21st chapter. Remember, they were out fishing, and they couldn't catch anything, and Jesus said, let's do it again. And they throw the nets in, and what happens? They fill up with fish, and it says that they're drawing the fish back in. Same word, *elkuo*. The fish are resisting. They're not just jumping into the boat. They're resisting, but they're pulling them in now.

Sometimes this is referred to as irresistible grace, but do not hear in the words irresistible grace divine coercion, because it's not divine coercion. This is where the balance between what immediately may come to mind, and the teaching of Scripture has to always come into play. Irresistible grace is not divine coercion. Nobody is going to be in heaven who says, I wanted to come, and I came on my own. I don't know what your testimony is, but I wanted to come, and I just came on my own. No drawing from the Father, no wooing by the Spirit. I just came because I wanted to come.

But on the other hand, nobody is going to be in heaven who says, man, I really did not want to be here. I didn't want to come, but I didn't have a choice. No, that is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible repeatedly, as we've seen in this language, is calling us to come. It's calling us to look. It's calling us to believe, right? There is always that part of human responsibility that the Scriptures underscore.

So, look at this further explanation, this last point. Maybe just one more time, Jesus has to clarify again, verse 45, 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. Not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God. He has seen the Father. That's almost like a parenthetical statement. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. Here's the process in a snapshot of how we come. He says we're taught by God. I almost see that as the external ministry of the Word of God. We're taught by the Word of God.

And then you notice that there is the Holy Spirit's convicting work of opening our eyes. We're taught by the Word. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father except he was from God. He has seen the Father. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. We know the Holy Spirit engages with our

mind and our heart, and He opens our eyes, and He gives us understanding. He brings about the conviction of that which is needed in our lives so that we understand our condition before God. So here, verse 46 says again, only through Jesus. Verse 47 says this is an invitation to all, to an affirmation to whoever believes.

I say to you this morning, if you've never put your faith and trust in Christ as your personal Savior, come. Come and look and live. Come and believe. Put your trust in Christ alone. He will welcome you with open arms if you come and believe.

What do we take away? It looks to me when we put all this together last Sunday and this Sunday, the more we understand God's work in salvation, the more we trust Him. And you know what? The more we trust Him, the less we trust ourselves, the less we have to trust in any form of human manipulation. We can present the gospel. Now, I want to know the gospel well. It's your responsibility as a Christ follower to know the gospel well. That's incumbent upon all of us. It's incumbent that we live a winsome, attractive life before the world. Those are givens. We need to know the gospel.

We need to live this gospel in a way that's attractive and winsome. And then we need to persuade to the best of our ability in bringing people to understand what it is that we have learned and what it is that we've received. But I'm so glad that Jesus didn't say anywhere in the context of this teaching, if you'll just get down these techniques, man, you're going to see people come to Christ all over the place. I'm so glad He didn't say, if you'll just use some emotional manipulation, you would be surprised how many people will believe. I'm so glad He didn't put any of that on us. Sadly, I believe in the church we've taken some of that on ourselves, and we think we've got to manipulate people. We think we've got to tug on their emotion, and we think we've got to sing a song 20 times before somebody might respond. I don't see that in the text.

I see in the text that here is the gospel. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2, for I did not come to you in flowery speech. I didn't come to you with words of men's wisdom. I came to you knowing one thing and only one thing. I came to you knowing the gospel of Christ crucified. Now obviously Paul knew a lot of stuff, but what he said was this was the crucial issue. This was

the point that he focused on. That's why he would say, for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it's the power of God into salvation to everyone who believes.

I say to you again this morning, if you've never put your faith and trust in Christ, I've got great news for you. I've got good news for you. The good news is that it says to us, if we'll recognize that we are lost in our sin, separated from God, nothing that we can do to earn his favor, but that what Jesus did on the cross was all that needed to be done. When we believe that, God forgives our sin, and he gives us eternal life. Believe that this morning.

Let's pray. Father God, thank you for the life of our Lord. Thank you for his great love for us. Father, thank you for the willingness of our Savior to come to this earth, to live this perfect holy life, to teach so powerfully, so clearly what it is that we need so desperately to know – that we can be in a personal relationship with you through his death, through his resurrection by simply believing in what he has done. Father, would you fill us with this delightful message? Give to us a great desire to share it with all that we can. We love you. We thank you in Jesus's name, amen.