

The Gospel of John: *Know Jesus and Live*

Part 19
John 6:40-47

Introduction

- Two weeks ago in our study of John 6:30-40 we saw Jesus teaching that he was the bread of life. In the Old Testament, the Father provided physical food to sustain his people as they wandered in the wilderness. In the New Testament, the Father provides spiritual food which endures to eternal life. He then went on to teach that God is absolutely sovereign over the distribution of the bread of life. In other words, he is utterly sovereign over salvation. Verses 37-40 revealed that God the Father has chosen certain people to give to Jesus. These chosen people WILL hear the gospel, WILL respond to the gospel in faith and repentance, WILL be eternally secure in their salvation, and WILL be glorified when Jesus comes again!
- So now the question is, will the Jews now believe!? Jesus has fully revealed how amazing this deal is! Come to Jesus! You will be preserved! You will be resurrected and glorified at the end of all things to dwell with the Lord forever! Will they now come?

Jewish Response

- ❖ John 6:41-42-- *So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 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'?*
 - three things to see here...
- 🕒 **The Jews.** This is the first time in this passage that John references "the Jews." "Up to this point they have been described as 'the crowd' (verses 2, 22, 24) or 'the people' (verses 10, 14).¹" When John uses the term 'the Jews' he is usually referring to the Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus. He usually isn't referring to the Jewish people in general. Thus, this tells us something important about the setting. The crowd that was enthusiastically following him is still present. However, also present is a group of Jewish leaders who seek to discredit and destroy Jesus. This is why the Jewish leaders refer to Jesus as...
- 🕒 **The Son of Joseph.** This statement is a challenge to what Jesus had just said about himself. Jesus had said...I came from heaven (38), God is my father (verse 40). The Jews are arguing against him by saying...He came from Galilee, Joseph is his father. In the end...
- 🕒 **They still won't come!** Who in their right mind passes up such a deal? Believe in Jesus, Live forever...DONE! Yet that is exactly what we see here. They will not come. The question is...why?

Jesus's Response

- ❖ John 6:43-44--*Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.*
 - Thus, the answer to the question of why won't they come is because they can't. When Jesus says "no man **can** come to me" he means it. The theological term for what Jesus is teaching is total depravity/moral inability...


¹ Colin Kruse, *John: Tyndale New Testament Commentary Series*, p. 172.



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 **Total depravity/Moral inability** means that man's total being (mind, will, emotions) is affected by sin rendering him totally unable to come to God on his own. If man is to come to God, God must intervene. This truth is not a new teaching that Jesus is introducing, it is taught throughout the whole of scripture in passages that we have looked at many times together. Passages like...

- ❖ Isaiah 1:5-6--*The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds;*
- ❖ Proverbs 20:9--*Who can say, "I have made my heart pure; I am clean from my sin"?*
- ❖ Romans 7:18--*For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.*
- ❖ Romans 8:7-8--*For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 2:14--*The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*
- This begs the question, if sin has left us in such a state that we cannot come to God, how do we get to God? How can we come to him? The answer is in the same verse...
 - ❖ John 6:44--*No one can come to me **unless the Father who sent me draws him***
- The question is, what does it mean that God draws us?

The meaning of draw

- The popular answer in American Christianity is that draw means to woo, entice, or gently persuade. As sweet as this sounds, there are two massive problems with this.
 1. The first problem is that the greek word, *helkyo*, actually means to compel² or drag off.³ It is a very strong and forceful word. It is saying that powerful, effective force is being applied in order to accomplish one's intended goal.
 2. The second problem is the Bible. When we look at the other uses of the word *helkyo* in the New Testament, we discover that there is absolutely no indication whatsoever that the word could possibly mean woo, entice, or gently persuade. For example...
 - ❖ John 18:10--*Then Simon Peter, having a sword, **drew** it*
 - ❖ John 21:11--*So Simon Peter went aboard and **hauled** the net ashore, full of large fish*
 - ❖ Acts 16:19--*But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and **dragged** them into the marketplace before the rulers*
 - ❖ Acts 21:30--*Then all the city was stirred up, and the people ran together. They seized Paul and **dragged** him out of the temple*
- So we can clearly see that when Jesus says...

² Gerhard Kittle, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Abridged)*

³ Strong's Concordance



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❖ John 6:44--*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him*

- He is saying that absolutely no one is in any way able to come to Jesus, believe in Jesus, and be saved by Jesus unless the Father uses powerful effective force to make it happen.

🌐 At this point we must address a real issue in pop American Christianity. Much of pop American Christianity seems to be on a crusade against the doctrines of grace (Calvinism). I have had discussions with individuals who boast “I don’t follow the teachings of Calvin, I follow the teachings of Jesus!” or “I don’t follow Calvin, I follow the Bible.” The real problem with such boastings is that Calvinism is just a systematic way of describing what Jesus and the Bible are teaching here in John 6:37-44.

1. **Total Depravity**--no one can come to Jesus. Sin has left them too ruined to be able to do so on their own (John 6:44, Romans 8:7-8)
2. **Unconditional Election**--God has in eternity passed decided to give people to Jesus. This choice is not based on any merit or future faith of the individual, but is based on God’s grace alone and is to the praise of his glorious grace. (John 6:37, Ephesians 1:4-6, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Titus 3:5, Romans 9:11-18)
3. **Limited Atonement**--God, for whatever reason, hasn’t chosen to give everyone to Jesus. Thus, even though the sacrifice of Jesus is powerful enough to save every single person and is to be proclaimed to every single person, it will not save every person. It will only save those who come to believe. It will only save those whom God has given to Jesus. (John 6:37, 44, John 10:14-15, John 17:9, Romans 9:20-23, Ephesians 5:25)
4. **Irresistible Grace**--If you have been given to Jesus, you are coming to Jesus...period! (John 6:37, 44, Isaiah 55:11)
5. **Perseverance of the Saints**--You haven’t just been chosen by God, you will be kept eternally secure in your salvation by God. (John 6:37-40, John 10:27-29, Philippians 1:6, Romans 8:29)

- Thus, you never have to be intimidated by such statements. You can know with confidence that saying you’re a “Calvinist” is just another way of saying that you agree with Jesus and the rest of the Bible that salvation belongs to our God (Revelation 7:10)! Now back to this weeks text...
- Our study of John 6 has thus far shown us that the Father has given people to Jesus and he is exerting his almighty power to ensure that every single person that he has given to Jesus, comes to Jesus. This leaves us with the question, how exactly does he do this? Is God forcing us to do something we don’t want to do? Is the kingdom of God going to be filled with people who don’t want to be there? No. How then do we go from not wanting to believe in Jesus and not being able to believe in Jesus to believing in Jesus? The answer is in the next couple of verses.

❖ John 6:45-46--*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 — 46 not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father.*

- two things to see here



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- Being drawn by the Father to Jesus means being taught by God. But what does this really mean?
 - The Old Testament describes it like this...
 - ❖ Jeremiah 31:33-34--*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*
 - ❖ Ezekiel 36:26-27--*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*
 - The New Testament describes it like this...
 - ❖ John 3:3--*"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."*
 - ❖ John 3:5-6--*"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."*
 - ❖ Ephesians 2:4-5--*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ —*
 - ❖ Titus 3:5--*he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*
 - In modern American christianity we often hear it described this way...
 - "The Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin and drew me to Jesus"
 - "It was like a light came on in my head!"
 - "I saw the light!"
 - The theological and Biblical term that we use that describe this is regeneration. Yet, regardless of how we describe this difficult to describe occasion. Being taught of God means that God sovereignly made you alive. God draws us by changing us. God brings us to Jesus by changing us into people who couldn't bear to live without Jesus. Before, you would not submit to God and you could not believe in Jesus. Now, you want to submit to God and you cannot help but believe in Jesus.
- Being taught by God doesn't mean seeing the Father
 - "Verse 45 must not be interpreted to mean that a person may enjoy a direct, personal, mystical knowledge of God apart from the revelation that has been given in Jesus"⁴
- ❖ John 6:47--*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.*
 - At this point, Jesus returns to his main point. The thing that he has been saying all along. The main point of John's gospel.
 - **Believe in Jesus and live forever!**

⁴ D.A. Carson, *John: Pillar New Testament Commentary Series*



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- A question that ought to be pondered is why does Jesus persevere the way he does. He can hardly get a few words out before someone starts questioning or challenging him. Why doesn't he just pack up and move on? Why does he bother with these stiff necked people? The answer is absolutely necessary for us to hear.
- He perseveres because he has sheep in that crowd. Sheep that belong to him. Sheep that will hear his voice and respond to him. This is important for us to hear because as we say to people in the world, "Believe in Jesus and live forever!" We will hardly be able to get a few words out before someone starts questioning or challenging us. Many will hear our words and turn away. Yet we must persevere! Because in our neighborhoods, in our places of employment, in our families, in our community activities, Jesus has sheep. Sheep that belong to him. Sheep that WILL hear his voice and WILL respond to him.
- For this reason, we too must persevere. We MUST continue to proclaim in every sphere of our lives, Believe in Jesus and live forever!