

Seeing How Jesus Responds to Rejection

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John 6:36-40

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So back when I was looking for a school to train me to be a pastor, I visited one in Washington state where one of the profs there talked about a game that he called pastoral poker. He said, "Every good sermon, every handshake, every phone call, every hospital visit, every kindness, the people in the church give the pastor a chip, a token of their trust in him. And the same way with every bad sermon, every perceived unkindness, every bad decision, they take one of those tokens away." So, if a pastor is holding most of the chips, the people love and trust him. If the church is holding most of the chips, there's skepticism and a lack of trust. Well, I may be cashing in many of my chips with some of you today. Now why is that you ask? Because our text is about something many Christians do not like talking about at all.

My hope is that even though it may cost me some of your chips, that it won't cost me all of your chips because I've built up enough trust with you. The subject of our text is rejection, the rejection of Christ, and specifically we're going to see how Jesus responds to rejection. How does he respond when people reject him? People who want to use him for his blessings rather than want him? How does he respond to people who are attracted to his miracles, to his power, all the excitement, but really aren't attracted to him? How does Jesus respond to people who outwardly seek him but inwardly reject him is interesting because in our text he responds to that by getting theological, and when he gets theological, he brings up a subject many Christians think we should never talk about. What is that subject you ask? It is the subject of election or God selecting people for salvation. I just heard a groan.

Now I know that means some of you just cashed in all your chips, but before you leave, look at what Jesus says in verse 37 after rebuking people in verse 36 for not believing in him. Verse 37, "All that the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out." Now being a Christian for almost 28 years now, I've seen what pastors like me who preach through books of the Bible verse by verse, I've seen what they do with texts like this one where the Bible talks about election. Many will just skip it. I saw a famous preacher do that this week. I was interested, what is he going to say about this text? I turn him on You Tube and I start watching, and he got to verse 37. He read verse 37, but only talked about the last half of the verse like the first half didn't even exist, like wait a minute, what about the first part? Never touched it.

Now listen, why do guys do that? They do that because they are afraid of how people are going to respond to it. But listen, you just need to know, I am more afraid of how God will respond to me for not teaching it. Like I have the authority to edit the Bible. I don't want to talk about that. People might get mad at me, or God might get mad at me for not teaching about it because this is

his word, and my job is simply to proclaim it. Others will come to a text like this and overemphasize the first part that God's election of those who will be saved but skip the second half about coming to Jesus because anything that smacks of human choice, they are just uncomfortable with. Others will explain the text that suggests election isn't true.

That's how they're going to do it. And the way they typically do that is something like this. Well, yes, it says that, but we have free will. So just be calm. We're okay. Like the concept of free will kind of trumps and edits what the text actually says. Others still will demonize either side of the argument using ad hominem attacks like this view is just humanism or that view is just Gnosticism without actually explaining actual text and dealing with actual arguments. Well, or there's a fifth option, which is what I'm going to try to do today, which is holding both God's election and human responsibility intention. I'm not going to use one to explain away the other. I'm not going to try to pit one against the other. I'm going to say both are true and show you from the text that that's what Jesus taught from this text, that both are true because in the mind and ways of God election and human choice are compatible.

I can't understand how that's possible. I have no idea, but I believe both because they're both in the Bible and I never hope to fully understand either of them, but that's okay because I worship a God I'm never going to fully understand. Right? This is what smart guys call an antimony where two statements that are both true resist being harmonized. It's kind of like the Bible's teaching on the Trinity that God is one and God is three. It's not a contradiction, it's an antimony. So in the words of one pastor, "I'm not going to separate the friends that are called election and human choice. I'm going to proclaim them both because both are biblical." Let's see that starting in verse 36 it says, "But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe." Now, when did Jesus say that to them? Probably verse 26. He says to them, "I said to you, you've seen me, yet you do not believe."

Now Jesus is doing evangelism with people who want his stuff. They want stuff from him, but they don't want him. Many will say, "Hey, don't talk about election when non-Christians are in the room," but Jesus does it right here. Maybe Jesus knows something that we don't. Maybe he knows that talking about this could spark in them a desire to be saved. See, even though they saw him turn five loaves and two little fish into a satisfying meal for 10 to 20,000 people, verse 36, "they do not believe." Their rejection is not a mistake. They saw the miracle, but they didn't see what the miracle pointed to, that he is the Messiah. He's the son of God. The miracle wasn't a ticket for more stuff. That's what they thought it was. It was a revelation of who he is, but their desire for food and verse 15, their desire for political power blinded them from seeing who he really is. So, he is rebuking them for their unbelief. They're responsible for rejecting him. But verse 37, he answers the question, why do they reject when others don't?

Verse 37, "All that the father gives me will come to me." Now I've got eight quick points on the first half of verse 37. So this is a nerd moment warning time, okay? But point 1 is going to be longer than the other points, but that's because this is the most controversial of all of the points. Point number one, think about the context. Right after a statement emphasizing their

responsibility for rejecting Christ. We're given a statement on divine election in verse 37. So one right after the other. 36 does follow 37 still, right? And the statements are said by the same person, Jesus, who always only ever speaks the truth. So, what are we seeing here? We are seeing that Jesus and John do not have a problem with election and choice being side by side, which means what? You and I shouldn't have a problem with it either.

Second, the word all here are people. They're people because Jesus wants them to come to him. Verse 37, whoever is used in verse 37, these are people who will be raised up on the last day, so these are people. And third, notice the Father gives these people to Jesus. Verse 37, "all the people the Father gives me will come to me. Now, fourth, for the Father to give these people to Jesus, they must belong to the Father. Now, the text doesn't say how they belong to him, only that they do belong to him because he gives them to Jesus. And you really can't give somebody something that you don't already have. If I give somebody else's stuff to you, that person's going to go, wait a minute, that's mine. You can't do that. No, so God is giving people he already has to Jesus. Fifth, the all here refers to a collective group of people, all kinds of people in the category of being given to Jesus by the Father.

So it's all of those people, all kinds of people in the category of being given to Jesus by the Father. And notice six, they will come to him at some point in the future. This is a universal rule. So, whether the people there that day believe in Jesus or not, is irrelevant because he's saying to them, if you don't believe in me, listen, others will come to me. It's not a wish. It's a definite outcome. It's a sheer future. No problem, no power, no scheme is going to keep them from Jesus. Notice they will "come to him," which means if it's future, he cannot be talking about who in this text? He cannot be talking about the 12 minus Judas, right? Why? Because will come his future. But the 12 minus Judas already came to Jesus when? In the past, John 1. Seventh, notice what comes first.

People coming to Jesus or the Father giving people to Jesus, which comes first. Well give is in the present tense, will come, is in the future tense, which means that before coming to Jesus, a person is given to Jesus by the Father first. Eighth and finally, this text does not say that God elects all people, but only some people come to him. It actually says the opposite of that verse 37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me." There is a confidence in Jesus here that even if these people don't believe in him, his mission will not fail. God's people will come to Jesus. It is sure. So if these people aren't coming to him, if these people don't believe in him, it's because the Father didn't give them to him. That's Jesus' point. Nerd moment over. Did you survive? You still with me?

Yep. Now, asserting the idea of election was how Jesus responded to these people's rejection. So in light of that, we must point #1) ***Admit the Father has People He Gives to Jesus. Admit the Father has people he gives to Jesus.*** Verse 37, the Father has a group of people, and he gives all in that group of people to Jesus. Jesus explains the unbelief of the people here before him that day with verse 37, "The Father didn't give you to me. That's why you don't believe." Now, before giving these people to Jesus, the father must have them. They must be his already, which is

where election comes into play. What is election that God out of his love for sinners who have no hope of saving themselves, choose some before time to save, to be saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone, not because of anything he saw in them or saw them do, but based solely on his love while leaving the rest to get justice for their sins.

Some get mercy and grace, others get justice. Nobody gets sinned against, nobody gets injustice or unfairness. Why? Because nobody deserves to be adopted into the family of God. What we deserve is what? What we deserve is punishment for all of our crimes against him. Some get the hell that they deserve for their crimes. Sadly, tragically. Others get to heaven, they don't deserve. Not because they chose Jesus while others didn't, but because they chose Jesus, they came to him because verse 37, "God gave them to Jesus first." Now, I know this may be hard for many of you to accept, but this is what the Bible teaches, and I don't think there's anywhere that's clearer on this than Ephesians 1. So, I don't normally have you do this because we don't normally have time, but hey, it's 11:55. We have all the time in the world.

This is actually the extended version of this sermon. This is the director's cut. I want you to turn to Ephesians 1. I would tell you the page number, but we got two different Bibles floating around up there and I have no idea what page it's on, but Ephesians 1 is about six books to the right in your Bible. If you get to a book of the Bible that starts with a T, you've gone too far. All right? Ephesians 1, drop down to verse 4. Ephesians 1:4 says this, "God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace." There is so much here I could do like five sermons on this text.

I'm going to give you seven very quick observations about election in this text. The first one is this, the fact of election. The fact of election is seen in the words chose us and predestined us, both of which are something that God does for sinners. Notice God is the subject of the sentence. God chose us, God predestined us. Predestination by the way, means there is a predetermined destination that you are going to go to. That's the idea. That's why point number two, the source of salvation is God the Father. That's the point in verses three, four and five. It's God the Father who does all of this. Three, the time of election. Verse four, did you see it? What's the time of election? Before the creation of the world. Who are the objects of election? Number four, notice verses four and five. It's not Jesus who is the object of election.

It's not Jesus who is chosen, but who are the subjects? Who are the objects of the verb? What does it say? He chose what? Us, us individual people. What is the motive of election? Meaning why did God do this? Look at the last two words at the end of verse four, which really should be the first two words of verse five, but verse markings aren't inspired. What is it that motivated God to do this? In love he predestined us to adoption. Interesting adoption. His predetermined plan was to adopt rebels. So out of the massive people, he chooses some to be in his family, just like adoption. Question, did the kids who get adopted deserve to be adopted more than the others who aren't adopted? Whose choice determines adoption?

Six, the basis of election. In other words, whose will is primary in election? Does God choose me based on what he knows I'm going to do, or do I choose based on something God already did? Let's look at the text. Verse six, he chose us, quote, "according to the purpose of our will." Right, our will. That's what the text says, right? No, it doesn't say that. So whose will is primary in this? His will. He chose not because of what I wanted, but because of what he wanted. This is reset in John chapter 1:12, that "all who did receive him who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." So there are children of God, but listen, who were born into the family of God, not of blood, which is ancestry. You're not a child of God because your mom or dad is nor born of the will of the flesh, meaning what you want or what you can do, nor of the will of man, which is what others want for you.

None of that is why you were born into the family of God, but you were born "of God." So God's will is the basis for election again, just like adoption. And then seven, the goal of election verse six is that we would praise God for his, what? What does it say in verse six? For his grace, his kindness, his mercy, his compassion for sinners. See, if what ultimately determines the reason, I'm saved is God's grace in election, then I will endlessly praise him, endlessly praise him for his grace to me. There's no room for pride here. There's no room for "I'm one of the chosen." No, there's only room for deep humility and gratitude that the child is adopted, just like the child is adopted out of pain and into a great family. There's no room for anything but just sheer gratitude. But if the deciding factor in my salvation is me, if my choice is the ultimate difference between why I'm saved and others are not, if I make the difference, then whether I want to admit it or not, I should get some of the glory.

Because I made the difference, the ultimate difference. But notice God doesn't get glory for making salvation possible. He gets glory for his grace because he actually chooses predestines and adopts actual people. Now back to John 6, that some people come to the son, that they believe in him as proof that they were previously given to Jesus by the Father. So look one more time at verse 37, let's read it one more time. "All that the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me, I will never cast out." Again, there is a confidence in Jesus' words that I don't think he would have if there wasn't a guarantee that people would come to him. This is the confidence that he's saying to people who are rejecting him. "You are rejecting me, but others will not." Now is he just like, is that just wishful thinking or does he know something that we don't know?

Because if salvation wasn't up to God but up to us, it is possible that no one would've believed in him. It is possible that his death could have been for nothing, which means the certainty of verse 37 is false, that the will come there in verse 37 is really just wishful thinking. Jesus crossing his fingers that he's going to do enough to convince enough people to come to him. That's not what's going on here. Also, whether we believe in election or not, whether we say we believe it or not, we all kind of believe it, don't we? At least partially. Why? Because we all pray for lost loved ones, don't we? But if salvation is purely a decision of a person's free will, then that prayer does

nothing. Or if God answers your prayer, he would be violating their free will, which is exactly what some would say God would never do. Oh, which one is it?

Well, I'm sure some of you might be thinking, "Well, if this is true, why tell people about Jesus at all? If election is true, why evangelize the lost." Question. What was Jesus doing here in John 6? Oh, he was evangelizing, lost people. That's what he was doing. Talking to people. He brings up election to people who are rejecting Him. He was doing evangelism. It seems he didn't see a contradiction between election and evangelism. Why? Because evangelism is how God saves people. He saves people through you and me telling people about Jesus. And in that moment, invisibly the Father gives the person to Christ and when they do, they believe and receive eternal life. So the elect, who they elect are, we don't know. It'd be nice if there was a little tattoo behind one of their ears and we just preach the gospel.

Only them. Let me see your ear first. Oh, there's more. Okay, now let me tell you about Jesus. The rest of you forget it. That's not how God set this whole thing up. He set the whole thing up with what? Whoever will come to Christ, repent of your sins, give your life to him, knowing deep down, knowing from a text like this one, that's only the elect that are going to do it. So, evangelism and prayer and election is again, not an either or thing. It is a both and thing. And all of this is seen in the illustrations that New Testament authors use for salvation like the one we've been looking at in Ephesians 1, adoption where the Father chooses who he will bring into his family, not the child choosing the family that he's going to be a part of. I'd break the illustration. It's Luke 15.

Jesus calls it being lost and God what? Finding you, not God being lost and you finding him. Jesus calls it being born again, John 3 because babies are completely passive at birth. They contribute nothing to the whole process of being born. They're just along for the ride. Just like the elect sinner in salvation. Paul calls evangelism a seed that is planted and then grows. 1 Corinthians 3. But farmers don't plant the seed and say, come on buddy, grow, you can do it. Come on, you're so good. Come on. No, he just plants the seed and leaves the results with God because it is God who makes the seed grow.

And they call salvation being made alive from the dead. Ephesians 2. Dead people can't do anything. They can't choose anything. For them to come to life they must be acted on by something outside of them and that something is a someone, namely God who raises the dead spiritually when people are saved. So can you admit this, that God the Father has people that he gives to Jesus and then every one of those people given to Jesus will believe in him. Can you admit that? I've only scratched the surface, but my point is that election is in the Bible by looking at the text itself, by looking at cross-references and looking at the illustrations and trying to answer objections, all of that to say this is a biblical doctrine actually taught by Jesus in our text. So after all of that, can you admit it or will you keep kicking against the idea we've got philosophy or I don't like the way this makes me feel, or some notion that election makes God a devil or because of free will or something else.

Election doesn't make God a devil any more than parents choosing a specific child makes them a devil for not choosing others. Can you admit that the God side of salvation, the salvation equation is election. That even if he chooses the possible world that you were going to believe in, that he chose that world, his choice determined the outcome that you would be saved, and he didn't choose a world where people who won't believe in this world would be saved if it was another world. So Christian, according to verse 37, look at it one more time. The fact that you are now trusting in Jesus means the Father gave you to Jesus first, and the only way he could give you to Jesus first is if he chose you for himself before that. Does that realization not humble you? Does it not cause you to stand in awe of the riches of God's glorious grace? Do you see why God's grace is glorious? Do you see why you will spend endless ages worshipping him for his grace to you?

Aren't you glad I didn't skip this because of the gratitude and worship that this truth causes? Now listen, if you're like, listen preacher, nice try, but I still disagree. That's fine. I hope this point hasn't taken back all the chips I've built up with you and just know you don't have to agree with me to attend church here, be a member, even serve in many of the ministries we have here. Just know that. Now verse 37, those who come to Jesus are the father's gift to the son. And notice the son will absolutely never refuse to receive this gift. Verse 37, again, "All that the father gives me will come to me. That's election. "And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out."

Jesus welcomes all who come to him, every single one. He rejects no one. There is not a mass of people who want to come to Jesus, but he will reject them if they try because they aren't the elect. No, this text is emphatic, meaning Jesus will certainly absolutely receive all who come to him. He will always accept any who believe in him and will keep them all safe. Interestingly, that word at the end of verse 37, those two words "cast out" and most of the parallel passages that use those two words, it's assumed that what is cast out is already in. So what Jesus is saying here that he'll certainly keep them in salvation. He will save and protect all who believe in him. But for how long? Verse 39, for how long? "This is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me..." There's election again, "but raise it up on the last day." He will keep all the people that God gives him who then come to him for eternal life. He will keep them safe all the way to their resurrection, to eternal life. And now why does Jesus do that? Look at verse 38. Look at verse 37, the last phrase again, "Whoever comes to me I will never cast out for, because, I have come down from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me." So what's he saying there? He's saying the entire reason that he came from heaven took on flesh while always remaining truly God. The reason he did that is to always and only do what the Father wants him to do. Well, in our context, the context of rejecting Jesus, what is the father's will for him to accomplish?

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." No one chosen in eternity pass given by the Father to the Son can ever or will ever be lost. He will not lose even one because it will never be God's will for him to lose even one. In fact, what else does the text say is the father's will that Jesus

came here to do? Verse 40, "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks to the son and believes in him should have eternal life." Not a life that goes for a while and then ends, but a life that goes on forever all the way. "I will raise him up on the last day." So putting it all together, the spiritual protection, the preservation, the perseverance of each person in the group of people the Father gives to Jesus, who then believe in him, their eternal security is the whole reason why Jesus came here and why he lived his life the way he did.

Well listen, if you believe in Jesus, then no matter what is going on point #2) ***Rest in Jesus Protecting His People. Rest in Jesus protecting His people.*** Jesus is currently protecting all the people that have ever believed in Him. We just read it. It's why he did what he did in his life. It's why he's praying for Christians right now so as not to lose a single one of them, verse 39. But seeing that all are resurrected unto eternal life. Here are just a couple more passages to kind of support this idea, Paul, in Romans 8:38 says this, "I am sure, confident, convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present right now or things to come in the future, nor powers nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us, has the ability to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord."

Except for me, I'm able to do it. Really the most powerful beings in the universe cannot separate you from the love of God. Nothing. What does he say? He says, "Anything else in all creation," except you. I don't think so Chief. Peter 1:4 speaks of an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

God's power is guarding believers for salvation, God's power. But I can overcome that power. I can beat his guarding me. I can pull myself from that. No, you can't. No, you can't. Whether it's Jesus, John, Paul, or Peter, all teach the same thing. Truly save people cannot lose their salvation. Why? Because our text says Jesus keeps them safe, which means only people who stay committed to Jesus all the way to the end of their lives are saved because that's what Jesus promises to do in our text. Well, you might be thinking about what about these people who believed once but don't anymore. Listen to the words of 1 John chapter 2:19. This text answers that question. It says this "They went out from us," talking about people who have left the truth. They were once committed to the truth, but now they have left. "They went out from us, but they were not of us." They weren't really a part of us. And then he goes on, "Because for if they had been one of us, they would have continued with us."

And by the way, if you think about it, if those people who once believe it now, if they lost the salvation they once had, that makes Jesus a liar in verses 37 to 39, or he is just really overconfident. What does he say? Verse 39? "That I should lose nothing of all that he's given me". Except your uncle bumper. Well, I will lose nobody. Well, except your sister. Yeah, yeah, there's that one." Or he's just being really overconfident here. I'm going to do a great job. No, the eternal security of the elect, the point of Jesus words here is that their security is based on his faithfulness.

For even one person given to Jesus by the Father to be lost would prove that he is unfaithful and either he cannot do the father's will, which was to lose nobody, not even one. Or he's just lying here or overconfident or he's just wishing that this is going to be true either way. Guess what? That would make him not God. Well, you might be thinking you theological superstars. Didn't he lose Judas? Doesn't He say "I've kept them all? Except for that one, Judas." No, Judas was never given to Jesus by the Father, and we know that because Judas never believed. How do I know that? Look at verse 64. The people are hearing all of this, and they are offended. He says that. Look at that in verse 61.

"Do you take offense at this?" People in here probably are like, yeah, well I am too. "Do you take offense at this?" Verse 64 "but there are some of you who do not believe." And then notice John explains what he's saying. "For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were, who did not believe, and then within that category and who it was, who would betray him. Now, Judas never believed, and if he never believed, he was never given by the Father to Jesus, which means Jesus didn't lose Judas. Well, I've heard this. If this is all true, that Jesus eternally protects those who come to Him, that means you can live however you want, and you're still saved. No, no. When you are saved, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you. And with the Holy Spirit living inside of you, he holifies you. He changes your life. That is the book of one John, that regardless of what people say about believing in Jesus, the truth about that is seen in their life. So no holy life, no obedience, living like the devil proves you are still of the devil.

Now, again, to qualify, that's not the perfection of your life because no Christian is ever going to be perfect, but it is the direction of your life to follow Christ, live for Him. Obey him. Please him, love him. If that's not there, it doesn't matter what you say, the truth is in how you live. And I love how Jesus pictures this idea in John 10. You can turn there if you want. I mean, this is the last service. So we got all the time in the world. Turn to John 10. John 10, he's going to illustrate this idea for all of us to help this truce sink down. John 10, go to verse 26. He's speaking to the religious leaders who do not believe in him, who are attacking him.

Verse 26 says, "You do not believe because you are not my sheep." See it? I read that really fast. Did you catch what he just said? "You do not believe because you are not..." Jesus that's not right. That's not right because when I believe I become a sheep, I become one of your people when I believe. Jesus goes, "You read that again. You do not believe why? Because you are not my sheep." There's election again. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life. So they are sheep before they have eternal life. Election again, "and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand." There's the picture, but he continues. My Father who has given them to me. Do you see that? Given them to me? There's that idea again. God having a people that he gives to Jesus, "My father who's given them to me, is greater than all. And no one is able. No one has the ability, the power to snatch them out of the Father's hand."

Well, no one except for me. Really? No. You are protected in Jesus' hands. And Jesus' hand is surrounded by the father's hand. Can anything be more secure, more kept safe than that? Is there

a safer, more protected place in all of the universe? No. And Christian, that's where you are forever. So if that's true, can you rest in the protection of your salvation? Can you rest that you are saved instead of wondering if you've done enough or believed enough or repented enough or you're committed enough?

Listen, your salvation does not depend on the strength of your faith. Your salvation depends on the object of your faith, what it is you are trusting in, and whether you have great faith to move a mountain or a little bit of faith like a mustard seed. If your faith is in Christ, then you are saved. Your salvation does not ultimately depend on your weak and feeble hold of Christ, but his strong and certain grip on you, he guards your salvation. He's standing guard over it. Nothing, not even you can take you out of his hand and the father's hand, he promised never to cast you out of salvation. He promised to lose no one, not even you.

In John 6:37 to 39, he states the truth of his entire life, death and resurrection on making sure you persevere to the end. So Christian, can you rest in that? Can you rest in that? Can you revel in that? Can you rejoice in these truths? You and I, we will fail and sin in many ways, but true believers in Jesus can never be thrown out of salvation, verse 37. The father's will and the son's powerful determination are both committed to seeing you through to the very end. I've often heard it said, "If I could lose my salvation, I would," because sin can be so powerful. But Christ is powerful still. So we've seen God's perspective we're given by him to the son. The son protects us eternally. But from our perspective, we believe in Jesus. Look at verse 40 "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on this son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

So verse 37, we've already seen people must come to Jesus, which we saw when we looked at verse 35 isn't a physical thing. To come to Christ is a synonym for believing in him. It's coming to him because you trust him to save you. And people verse 40 must look to Jesus, which again isn't a physical thing like, "Oh, good, I saw Him." No. It is also a synonym for believe. So to look to the Son is to recognize Jesus as the Messiah, the Savior of the world, the Son of God, the source of salvation for all who would believe in him. So people must believe in Jesus. What does it mean to believe in Jesus? Well, to believe in Jesus begins with knowledge in a person's head that he believes is true. So faith is not blind speculation or wishful thinking, but it's also not a purely intellectual thing either that has no impact on a person's life.

So faith ultimately is an act of trust, of conviction, a commitment of one's life to Jesus. That's what it means to believe in Jesus, and to believe in Jesus involves a choice. Now, I know some don't like that word choice, so that's why we must point **#3) Confess People Must Choose to Believe in Jesus. People must choose to believe in Jesus.** Believing in Jesus, in other words, is an act of the will. It is a choice. Here on the human side of salvation, a person must come to Christ, look to Christ, believe in Christ. We all have the ability to make choices. Choices that are real choices. So real in fact that we will be held accountable for those choices, especially the choice to receive or reject Christ. And yet at the same time, God is sovereign over all of those choices, including that one.

God doesn't put people on like a jacket and make them believe and believe for them, they believe. So all the choose language in the Bible comes into play here. Deuteronomy 30:19, "choose life." Joshua 24:15. "Choose this day whom you will serve." Why? Because to repent is a choice. The choice to turn from self, from rebellion, from being opposed to God. To believe is a choice, a choice to turn to Christ, to trust in him, to commit your life to him. That's why you see New Testament authors using words like urge and plead and appeal and even beg people to receive the grace of God and to come to Christ. That's why Jesus even invites people, Matthew 11:28, to come to him. He looks to "Come to me, all who are burdened and weary, and I will give you rest for your soul." That's why you will hear me call on people to believe in Jesus, to come to him, to repent, to turn from your sins and give your life to him.

That's not me being inconsistent with points one and two. That's me holding them both intention and saying, "God is absolutely sovereign. I know that and I still plead with you. "Come to Christ, give your life to him. Do not reject him any longer. Today is the day of salvation. You will hear me say that. Why? Because that's what biblical authors do. They plead with people to come to Christ, even though they know God is sovereign over all of it. They must choose to believe, or they cannot and will not be saved because the Bible says nothing about being saved because of election. Election is the first step in a person's salvation. Yes, but the elect are not saved until what? Until they believe. So for those of you who believe really strongly in points one and two, do not ever justify a lack of prayer and a lack of passion for the loss with "Well, God will just save them if he wants to."

That is using a biblical truth in an unbiblical way. Well, God will just save who he saves." And I don't need to tell people about Jesus." Baloney. No. We are told to take Christ to people. And again, Romans 10, God saves people through you. It's how he does it. You don't justify a lack of evangelism. You don't justify. Well, they're not saved. Whatever. That's just God is sovereign. No, you pray, you beg. You give them the gospel, you minister to them. You do good to them. You bless lost people. You don't grow weary in doing that.

Why? Because God will use people to save lost people, use Christians to save lost people. So to put it all together, the best way for me to kind of help us all understand what I think the text is saying here comes from an old illustration that maybe many of you have heard, a simple one, but I think one that accurately illustrates what we see in the Bible, and it's this. Imagine you arrive at the door of heaven and above the door it says, whoever wants to may come in. You look at what's going on inside, and I want to go in there. And so you go in, you enter only to find that when you look back at the door above the inside of the door are the words chosen before the foundation of the world.

Why? Because it's not either election or human choice. It's both and. So choose this day to trust in Christ, tomorrow's promised to no one. Do not harden your heart, which is another choice. Instead, come to him today. Look to him, believe in him today. And what does the text say? Verse 40, you will have eternal life, a life fit for an existence that never ends. And Jesus

promises to raise you, resurrect you on the last day. So question, do I have any more chips with you?

Well, I had something in this message to make everyone uncomfortable, but I only tried to make you uncomfortable with the text. So is God's sovereign over all who will be saved? Yes, he is. John 6:37, John 6:39. Are people responsible to believe in Jesus? Does God hold people accountable for not believing in Jesus? Yes, John 6:36, 37 and 6:40. Can we reconcile these things? No. At least not in this life, but one day we will. One day we will. But in the meantime, as all of us are growing in our understanding of God's word, regardless of where we are at in this whole subject, let's not be troublemakers. Let's prioritize love and unity with other people who follow Jesus over being right and making a point. Can we do that?

Theological controversies are great and it's fun and it's exhilarating and all of that, but it is not the reason to sin against brothers and sisters who don't agree with us. So let's guard our hearts as we seek to understand these incredibly amazing biblical truths. Let's pray.

Father, I said earlier that people who were listening to Jesus that day, He identifies in verse 61. He asks them, "Do you take offense at this?" And there may be some within the sound of my voice who also take offense at some of these things. So much so that the people in this text left Christ and no longer walked with him because of the things that he said here. I pray that that would not be true for any of us, but that no matter where we are, as we think through these things, that you will use your truth in this text to draw each of us closer to your mind on these things and draw each of our lives closer to your desires for, in light of these things. May you work in our hearts to live in this tension, to stand in awe of your grace, and yet at the same time, I understand that people must believe. Help us to figure all these things out because we just want to be pleasing to you and what we think and how we live. In Jesus' name, Amen.