

Sermon Series: *The Gospel of John*

Jesus Came To Do the Will of God the Father

John 6:35-40 (ESV)

35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. 36 But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. 37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. 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. 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."

Introduction

Do you believe Jesus is able to do God's will? Is He fully and completely able to all of the will of the Father? How you answer that question will either bring you unspeakable comfort and joy or cause you live in doubt? The goal of this sermon is give you unspeakable comfort and joy and remove all doubt by helping you rest in the supreme power of the sovereign will of God the Father which will be achieved through omnipotent ability of the God the Son.

Have you ever heard someone say, "If I could just see it, then I would believe it. If I could just see Jesus with my own eyes, then I would believe in Him. Show me and I'll believe you. Prove it to me and I'll be convinced." That's not necessarily true. The truthfulness of the evidence will not necessarily lead you to a true verdict. True evidence is often before us and yet somehow we still arrive at a false conclusion.

You will of course remember that Jesus was rejected and murdered by people who saw Him do miracles, and who walked with Him, and listened to Him preach and teach. He was even rejected by those who participated in His miracles. In spite of all that Jesus did, the majority of Jews, even up to His crucifixion, still demanded to see more signs. "If you are the Son of God, then come down from the cross."¹ Sometimes people refuse to believe the truth no matter what they see. Even though the Truth (Jesus) stood before their eyes, with all the supporting evidence, they still were not believing the truth, namely, that Jesus had been sent by God.

In order for truth to be embraced, something much deeper than mere sight must take place. The spiritual deadness of the human soul due to sin, cannot be overcome by the mere knowledge of certain true information. The human soul has not been merely crippled by sin. It has been killed by sin.²

¹ Mt 27:40.

² Eph 2:1; Col 2:13.

Why, when presented with the same information, do some people believe the gospel of Jesus and others do not? What or whom is the decisive worker in the salvation of man? Spiritual life is impossible without the work of the Holy Spirit. Physical bread only gives life to physical things. It takes a bread of different stripe to give life to a dead spirit.

Jesus claims to be the true bread, sent by the Father, who came down from heaven to give true life, but will anyone receive it?

John 6:35 (ESV)

35 Jesus said to them, *“I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”*

The First of Seven “I Am” Sayings

In verse 35 Jesus says, *“I am the bread of life.”* This is first of seven “I am” statements.

1. I am the bread of life (6:35, 48, 51), to men who are dead.
2. I am the light of the world (8:12; 9:5), to men in darkness.
3. I am the door of the sheep (10:7, 9), to enter into safety.
4. I am the good shepherd (10:11, 14), to men who need protection and leading.
5. I am the resurrection and the life (11:25), to men condemned to death.
6. I am the way, the truth, and the life (14:6), to men who are lost and lied to.
7. I am the true vine (15:1), to men who are fruitless.

That sounds like a wonderful offer. Will anyone take it? Will anyone come to him?

Seeing Is Not Believing

Jesus has been speaking to the crowds who had followed Him all the way around the Sea of Galilee (approx. 8 miles across) after participating in one of the most amazing, to use the apostle John’s favorite term, “signs” (i.e. miracles) that Jesus ever performed—the **feeding of the 5,000** men (which may have been as much as 10,000 including women and children, or maybe even more). They had eaten the bread that Jesus had provided. They had received the benefit and the blessing of Jesus’ grace and hospitality and yet **their hearts have remained in unbelief**.

And Jesus was trying to get them to think beyond mere physical bread, but it was not working.

John 6:36 (ESV)

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

Seeing is not believing. These people had witnessed the miracle of Jesus feeding the massive crowd and yet they still did not believe in Jesus. They had actually been the recipients of the miracle. They handled the bread, ate the miracle (i.e. wonder) bread, and then had been physically sustained by that same bread through the night and the next day. The miraculous work of Jesus had driven away their hunger pains and yet they still did not believe that Jesus was sent by God. **Obviously, seeing is not believing.** Neither is tasting and eating. **Experiencing** a miracle will not bring salvation to your soul. **Witnessing** a miracle will not save you. **Participating** in a miracle will not give you spiritual life. **Watching** Jesus create bread did not automatically deliver these people into the kingdom of God. Something more than mere seeing is required for believing.

Seeing signs will not automatically give birth to saving faith. Seeing signs only leads to the belief that there are signs, but it does nothing to give one spiritual life. Jesus said, “*For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world*” (Jn 6:33). Seeing Jesus make bread for supper only led these people to conclude that they should continue to hang around Him for maybe they would get breakfast too (Jn 6:26). “This crowd has witnessed the divine revealer at work, but only their curiosity, appetites, and political ambitions have been aroused, not their faith.”³

Jesus Came To Give Spiritual Life

The bread of God is **He**, a male person, named Jesus, who came down from heaven **to give life to the world**. Life is THE greatest need of the world. But what kind of life did Jesus come to give? Physical life? No, of course not. The world already has physical life. The kind of life that can be sustained by barley bread is already here aplenty. The kind of life this world needs is spiritual life. However, this crowd is an illustration of the truth that humanity is so preoccupied with sustaining physical life (with barley bread) that we are not even aware of our deep need for spiritual life...

Until Jesus shows up talking crazy non-sense like verse 35.

John 6:35 (ESV)

35 “*I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*”

And we stand staring at Him, mouth agape, thinking, “What on earth are you talking about?” The irony is that He is not talking about earthly things. He is talking about spiritual things. Given what they said in 6:33, “*Sir, give us this bread always,*” they clearly have in mind daily renewable supply of barely bread. Just like the woman at Jacob’s well in Samaria, they are thinking in a purely materialistic direction.

These confounding words of Jesus are like verbally induced spiritual labor pains, squeezing the deadness out of our souls and jarring us into spiritual breathing. Jesus is about to say some things that will cause many of His “disciples” (i.e. people who were following Him for various reasons) to stop following Him. He is inviting them to come to Him for the true bread of God, but, at the moment, it’s not working, no one is receiving His invitation. These people are not believing. They have seen Him, but they were not believing in Him. **Seeing is not believing**. And at this point, it appears that Jesus is not a very persuasive speaker.

Come To Me... Believe In Me...

Jesus is inviting people to “come” to Him for spiritual life, but no one is coming to Him. He is saying that whoever comes to him, will never hunger and whoever believes in Him will never thirst. These two phrases are parallel phrases that are both speaking about the same reality. They are simply two different ways of saying the same thing. ‘Coming to Him’ and ‘believing in Him’ both refer to Jesus as the object of saving faith just as ‘hunger’ and ‘thirst’ both refer to Jesus as the the satisfaction of the spiritual longings of the human soul. ‘Coming’ to Jesus is synonymous with ‘believing’ in Jesus. ‘Believing’ in Jesus is synonymous with ‘receiving’ (Jn 1:12) Him.

³ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 290.

“But to all who did receiving Him,
who believed in His name,
He gave the right to become the children of God,...”
John 1:12 (ESV)

‘Coming,’ ‘believing,’ and ‘receiving’ are different words used to describe the same saving reality of the soul looking away from itself and to Jesus; of not trusting in itself, but trusting in Jesus; of having no saving-confidence in itself but all saving-confidence in Jesus. I will use ‘coming,’ ‘believing,’ and ‘receiving’ interchangeably throughout the sermon. Jesus continually invites people, even these unbelieving people, to come to Him, but the majority will never come to Him.

So it might look like He is failing in His ministry because they were not believing in Him.

Do you ever feel like your ministry is failing? Do you ever feel like your best efforts are worthless? You try your hardest and do your best and yet you never see the result you’re hoping for? You share the truth in love and yet your every efforts somehow only yield the exact opposite of what you intend? Jesus can sympathize with those aching experiences. He was standing before these people telling them the truth and inviting them to come to Him and yet they kept asking for another sign and refusing to believe the truth about Him which was right before their eyes. What will keep you going when it looks like you are failing? ***Though the will of man may appear to fail, the sovereign will of God will ultimately succeed.***

So Jesus continues with these painful, verbally-induced, spiritual contractions by going on with a teaching that many people find controversial and others incredibly offensive, namely, that ultimately God is sovereign over the salvation⁴ of man (i.e. humanity - every man, woman, boy, and girl). It may appear that Jesus’ ministry is failing, but Jesus’ confidence is in the power of the unfailing will of His Father.

It looks like things are going badly, but it is as if Jesus stops and reminds Himself of the deep foundation upon which His ministry stands.

John 6:37 (ESV)

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

Jesus here pulls back the curtain on what happens when someone comes to Jesus in salvation. He goes behind the human decision to “come to Him,” and opens a window on the grounding and enabling of that decision. Notice there are two realms of activity, ***the heavenly realm***—that which transpires between Father and Son, and ***the earthly realm***—that which transpires between the Son and ‘whoever’ who comes to Him.

The Earthly Realm - The Human Side of Salvation: Come to Jesus

In the earthly realm, we see a person coming to Jesus for salvation. This is the human side of salvation. You must come to Jesus, you must believe in Jesus. There is a decision to be made. I made this decision when I eight years old.

⁴ “Salvation belongs to the Lord!” Jonah 2:11 (See also Ps 3:8; Rev 7:10; 19:1).

This is the “work” that Jesus spoke of in 6:29. The people has asked, “What must we do to be doing the works of God?” Jesus answered and said, “*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent.*” The “work” of man in salvation is really not a work at all, it is simply to believe in Jesus. This is the obligation of man, to come to Jesus in faith by trusting in Him as the all-satisfying Savior. In the earthly realm, Jesus is given by God as a gift to humanity. In order to be saved, you must exercise your will. You must come to Jesus. You must receive the gracious gift of God, which is Jesus.

The Heavenly Realm - The Divine Side of Salvation

However, behind that earthly realm is a heavenly realm. In the heavenly realm there is an event, a heavenly transaction which has already taken place between the Father and the Son—the giving of a chosen people to the Son by the Father. In the heavenly realm, a chosen people are given as a gift⁵ by God to Jesus.

That transaction which takes place in the heavenly realm is the foundation and enabling (i.e. efficient cause) of what takes place in the earthly realm. The heavenly transaction guarantees the earthly transaction. It does not say “all who come are given,” but those who are given, **will** come. “*All that the Father gives me **will** come to me...*”

All who are given to the Son by the Father **will** come to Jesus as their all-satisfying Savior. Though this crowd of people were seeing Jesus and listening to Jesus and yet still not believing in Him, Jesus knew everyone who had been given to Him by God that Father would eventually have their resistance to Him overcome by God and then they would come to Him and believe in Him. They will come. They will come to Him, that much is certain.

Rock For the Feet of Our Souls

It seem as though Jesus is encouraging Himself by reminding Himself of the certainty of God’s sovereignty. This passage should similarly encourage us to trust in mighty sovereign power of God Almighty.

Job 42:2 *"I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted."*

The sovereignty of God is rock under the feet of our souls. It gives us confidence to go on when it looks like all is lost. Do not give up. Be faithful and continue to do what the Lord has called you to do and He will cause the fruit to grow in it’s appointed season.

What will be Jesus’ response to those who do come to Him?

Whoever Comes, Will Never Be Cast Out (v.37)

He says, **whoever comes to me I will never cast out.** What sweet and wonderful words! Whoever comes to me I will never cast out. NEVER. If you come to Jesus, He will **never** cast you out. Those who have been given to Jesus by the Father, will never be cast out by Jesus. Those whom come to Jesus (as the true bread of God who gives eternal life), will always be welcomed by Jesus. If you come to Him, He will eternally welcome you and never cast you out—**never!**

⁵ Jesus especially notes this in His high priestly prayer (John 17:2, 6-7, 9, 11, 24).

Those who come to Jesus are eternally secure in Him. If you are looking to Jesus as your all-satisfying treasure for eternal life, then you need not ever worry about the care of your soul. Both the Father and the Son are at work to protect your soul.

John 10:27-30 (ESV)

27 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.”

Jesus' sheep will **never** perish. He gives them eternal life and no one in all of heaven or earth has the power to take that away. No one can snatch you out of Jesus' hand. His sheep are safe in His hand and God the Father has His hand wrapped around Jesus' hand. The sheep who have been **given to Jesus by the Father** are doubly secure. Paul praises this truth in Romans 8.

Romans 8:35 (ESV)

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

Romans 8:38-39 (ESV)

38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The chosen sheep who have been given to Jesus are always welcomed by Him and He will never cast them out. Nothing or no one will ever separate them from their Savior.

Why will Jesus never cast out those who come to Him? Because that is the will of the Father.

Jesus Came To Do The Will of the Father

John 6:38 (ESV)

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

Jesus here says He has **come down from heaven**. This is will be a problem which we will come to later, but the legalistic fault-finders in the crowd take note of this and will throw this back in His face claiming that He is a liar because they know He raised in Nazareth.

The deepest purpose of Jesus' life is to **do the will of Him who sent Him**, that is, of course, God the Father. The purpose of Jesus' life was to do the will of His Father. That is why He came. So the deepest reason Jesus will never cast out those who come to Him is because it is the will of the Father that He never cast them out. It is God's will that everyone whom God gives to Jesus should never be cast out by Jesus. It is God's will that Jesus keep safe everyone whom God gave Him. Jesus states this even more clearly in verse 39.

His Will Is That Jesus Lose No One

John 6:39 (ESV)

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.*

The will of God the Father is that every single person whom He chose to give to Jesus should never be lost. It is God's will that all of His chosen people arrive safely into His kingdom. God does not want Jesus to lose anyone! The question is, "***Is Jesus able to do God's will?***" If He is, then the salvation of God's chosen people is eternally secure, not because of what we do, but because of what He does. That does not mean that we are to do nothing. We are to believe in Him whom God sent and we are to continue believing in Him and obeying Him, but the deepest reason not one of God's children chosen sheep will be lost is because Jesus is able to do God's will.

It is God's will that every single person whom He gave to Jesus ***be raised up on the last day***. This is important because Jesus repeats it twice. He says here in verse 39 and He will say it again in verse 40. God wants His chosen people to be raised up on the last day. He wants His children to experience the resurrection that will usher them into the fullest experience of His joyful kingdom for eternity. So, it is God's will that, of all the people whom God has given to His Son, no one be lost, but that they each experience the resurrection to eternal life. And what exactly is the way to experience this resurrection to eternal life? How can you know that you will experience that eternal life?

Look On the Son & Believe

John 6:40 (ESV)

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."*

It is God's will that the gift of eternal life be given only to those who ***look on the Son and believe in Him***. Those who will experience the resurrection to eternal life, will be those who look on the Son and believe in Him. It is not God's will that you merely see the Son, but see and ***believe*** in Him.

The people in this crowd were seeing but not believing. It is God's will that you both see ***and*** believe. Anselm of Canterbury (born c.1033) wrote, "I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe, that unless I believe, I should not understand."⁶

The verses we read this morning tell us how to be saved (by coming to Jesus as the all-satisfying Savior), the deepest reason you were saved (you were given by the Father to the Son), and why you will stay saved (because it is will of God the Father).

I pray these truth will make you humbly courageous for the sake of the gospel. I pray that they will give you deep-rooted unshakable confidence in inviting people to come to Jesus to receive the bread of the all-satisfying Savior, even people who look you in face and say, "What on earth are you talking about?" Keep speaking the gospel to them because "all people who have been given to Jesus will come to Him" and God has ordained that they come to Him by hearing the good news of who Jesus is and believing in Him. So this week show people Jesus and invite them to come to Him.

I invite you to come to Him now.

⁶ Anselm *Proslogium* chapter 1.