

I Am the Bread of Life – Part 2
John 6:35-40
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February 26, 2012

We began to look at this passage last Sunday, focusing in on Verse 35, and the riches of that verse. This morning, what we want to do is look at the response to that. In fact, Jesus' response a little bit later in the verse is kind of interesting. When we follow a passage we ought to, as we prayerfully come before the Word, think through, "Why is the Lord saying what He's saying now?" In reality, what He does here is He answers some unspoken questions. It's interesting as you read through the sixth chapter of John, after the two miracles, the two signs that we've seen, the feeding of the 5,000, which we've said was really more like 20,000, counting not just men. There were 5,000 men, 20,000 people. Then Jesus walked on water. After those miracles, He encounters a subset of the crowd, still a multitude. A smaller multitude, but a multitude who've searched Him out, and they ask a series of questions to Him. That's really what controls the dialogue up to Verse 34, with them now turning that into a request. "***Lord always give us this bread***". And Jesus is responding to their questions. Here, they don't really ask the question but He answers a question that they might have asked, they should have asked, or that certainly other people were going to ask. The question really relates to the larger purpose of the Gospel of John, which is the problem that it poses for us when the masses reject our Savior.

One of the realities that undergirds the whole book and purpose of this Gospel is that John is writing late in the 1st Century, 8590 A.D. The last living apostle, serving Christ since the resurrection for upwards of 50 years, having taken the gospel out through the Mediterranean world himself, having preached, and having shared in countless synagogues, to numerous crowds. He's become aware experientially, personally, how many people have rejected the Messiah. It echoed his experience when he was walking with Jesus himself. Because here in this chapter, you have really kind of a climax point for Jesus' popularity. In Jesus' early ministry, He was drawing large crowds, and certainly, up to this point in John's gospel, He's still drawing large crowds. People are following Him in mass. We said 20,000 people show up to hear Him teach and He feeds them. But here, we mark a turning point where the crowds begin to dwindle. The multitude who had been interested, had been intrigued, was not willing to believe. In fact, Jesus' words kind of sift the crowd so that the true believers at the very end of John 6 are a small number. This multitude had dwindled down to a small number of true, faithful disciples.

So John had seen that as an apostle, as a disciple, he had seen this happen in Jesus' ministry. The second half of His ministry, especially as He gets closer to Calvary, the crowds are departing, they're leaving Him. People want less and less to do with Jesus. How do you deal with that? Well then when the gospel goes out, after the resurrection, the ascension of Christ, and the Pentecost, where the initial explosion of conversions that happened there in Jerusalem. Thousands saved. Thousands more added in subsequent weeks. Then as the gospel goes out into the Mediterranean world, more and more of the Jewish people reject Christ, so that it mirrors what happened in the Gospels. That the multitudes don't believe. The problem is not a lack of knowledge. We're going to see this clearly in the text. The reason the multitudes don't believe is not because they had not seen. There is something else going on, that keeps them from believing and receiving the free offer of salvation. This then is what the 1st Century church dealt with. People who came to Christ, who were born again experienced the transforming power of the gospel. They experienced the satisfaction of the soul that comes from embracing Jesus. Taking this most attractive of all messages out, and being stunned by rejection. Not of themselves, but of Christ. How can you reject so wonderful a Savior?

From time to time, and the rejection doesn't just happen out in the world. It certainly does, the Gentiles by and large rejected Christ too in mass. The Lord has always had a remnant. How do you deal with the fact that the religious people, the people who should know better, the Jewish people who've been prepped through 1,500 years of written history. They were preparing them for the Messiah and when He come's they reject Him. This helps us because history has a way of repeating itself. It's still that way today. In fact, Paul warns us that in the end times, in the last days, there will be difficult times and men will apostatize. That's what he's talking about in 2 Timothy particularly. They'll be lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure, but not lovers of God. And he's talking about religious people. Always learning but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. He's talking about an apostasy within the church. So that there are many people who profess to love God who really don't. There is a minority and so apparently this reality has gone on throughout history, and the Lord has given this passage in His providence to us. One of the purposes of it is to answer the question, "How can I remain faithful in difficult and dark days? How can I continue believing when those around me are not? When those even in the church around me are not? When the current is strong against believing and following Christ in truth? When there is widespread rejection of Christ, how can I be faithful?" That's what this passage is addressing and Jesus, in His marvelous grace, is helping undergird even John himself and the other

apostles. “You’re going to need this message.” Through them, us today, how can we remain faithful in difficult days? Let’s begin reading at Verse 35.

John 6:35 ~ Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will 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 the one who comes to Me I will certainly not 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 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

Let’s pray together.

Our Father, we thank You for Your Word. As we come to it, we always ought come on our knees, aware of our great need of grace and the power of Your Spirit to open our minds and hearts to understand and to believe. When we come, Lord, casting ourselves upon You, for You are kind, and merciful, and gracious, and You’ve beckoned us to come. So help us, Lord, to see Jesus. We pray in His name, Amen.

You know, when I’m asked by other pastors, younger pastors usually, they’ll say, “In this situation I’m in, what should I do?” Or, “I’m in a new church, what would you recommend?” “How would you recommend I begin?” “What are the priorities in my ministry?” “What should I do?” My first answer is always, “I think the most important thing you can do as a minister of the Gospel, is preach the Word expositionally.” There are a lot of other things that I say. There are a lot of other things that are important for the building of the church, but the very most important thing is personally loving Christ, walking with Christ, of course is the first thing. But the next ministry thing is to preach the Word of God and to preach the whole counsel of God. When I say preaching expositionally, what I mean is where you take a passage and you let the passage dictate the message. You don’t come with an idea you want to preach and you find a passage that helps it. No, you look at a passage and you dig in the passage until you understand the mind of God in that passage and the claim it’s trying to make, and you articulate that. You can do that, not necessarily going sequentially, but just when you take a passage, whatever passage you take, you try to exposit it. Now there is a second aspect. That’s the basic thing, the text dictates the message. The text is the ruler of the sermon. The

points flow from the passage, the purpose of the passage. The second thing is when I say to preach expositively, I usually explain this part too. Take a book and work sequentially through the book. When you get through with that book, go to another book. The reason being is that when you do that, expository preaching that way, sequentially through a book, it forces you to come to passages and issues you would never otherwise address. Things that you don't really want to hear about yourself, and things that you don't think are the pressing need of the congregation at first. There have been periods in my own ministry where I didn't do that. Early on, I knew that this was important, and I did preach through books, but then I'd take long periods and just do sort of topical, ad hoc, whatever. It was like every message was a sort of potpourri. That was always really hard because I'd work on a passage half of the week, and I'd say, "I don't really want to preach that." So I'd go to a different book. Well it's not a utilitarian argument. It's certainly a benefit, but it's not the main point. The main point is when you go through a book it does press upon the minister. It presses upon the pastor and his heart and his mind, things he would not otherwise deal with. So the Lord is able to do work in his heart that he didn't think he needed. He didn't know he needed. And then the congregation has the same experience. The Lord presses on us things that we might not really want to hear about today. We come to church thinking, "I need to be encouraged, or I don't want to have this happen." But the Lord's text directs the message. I like what Mark Dever says about this. When a church is preached to this way, what happens over time is the congregation, the mind of the congregation, is conformed to the mind of God, rather than to the mind of the pastor.

Well I've come to a passage today which deals with what I was telling you about earlier. It's about how to remain faithful in difficult days. So it means that there are going to be difficult days. Good news, difficult days are coming. But the answer that it gives to that is even more stunning. The answer of how you remain faithful in difficult days, we're going to see, it's going to basically come down to one of the pillars that God puts under us to buttress us in difficult times, and that is the mystery of divine election that this passage presents. That one of the things that's going to help a true believer stay faithful to God is knowing that he's chosen. We see the sovereignty of God in salvation laid out in this passage in a way that if you're truly looking at the passage, you cannot escape. So, I want us to break down our thoughts under four points this morning. What we're going to look at first, we want to kind of hit quickly again, Verse 35 which is the foundation of the whole passage. The first point is the invitation. The second point is the response. I'm going to have two points named the response, number two and four. The first is after the invitation, the response to Jesus. The third point this morning is going to be the implications. And the fourth point is the response of Jesus to those

implications. That's where we're going to see the mystery of divine election and God's sovereignty.

1) The Invitation:

The first thing is to see the invitation. What you see in this passage is the freeness of salvation offered. "Whoever will, may come." The question is: Why don't they come? But you see in this, first of all, a glorious invitation. That's the first point. The invitation, Verse 35. What an amazing invitation this was of Jesus. ...***"I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger,...*** A double negative there. ...***...and he who believes in Me will never thirst.*** A triple negative on the second part. He's saying, "I am the Bread of Life." It's echoing Isaiah 55:1 which we read earlier, where we heard three times in one verse, "Come. Come if you're thirsty. Come and drink. If you're hungry, come buy food without money, without cost. Come." That is the universal message of God throughout all recorded history. From the very beginning of time, His message to Adam and Eve in their falling was, "Come." His message when He went to Cain, when Cain had wrongly interpreted how to approach God. Remember he brought an offering of the produce of the land, rather than an offering of blood. The Lord didn't just disdain his offering and turn away from it, He went to Cain and He said, "If you do well would you not be accepted?" He's still saying, "Come." The whole message of the Bible is "Come." Revelation 22:17, the last few verses of the Bible, listen to this:

Revelation 22:17 ~ The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost.

"Come." One thing that you cannot escape in this scripture, and if you understand it correctly, the right of you of the sovereignty of God in salvation, you still understand this, if you look at the Bible carefully, and sometimes folks miss this. But the reality is that God is not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance. That's 2 Peter 3:9. In fact, 1 Timothy 2:3-4, the Lord says much the same thing. He says:

1 Timothy 2:3 ~ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

God desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. This was also told us in the Old Testament over and over again. One notable place is Ezekiel 33:11. Where we read this:

Ezekiel 33:11 ~ Say to them, ‘As I live!’ declares the Lord ^[a]GOD, ‘I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?’

That same, almost word for word, beckoning of God to the wicked is also in Ezekiel 18:23, where He says:

Ezekiel 18:34 ~ Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,” declares the Lord GOD, “rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?

What we see in this scripture, and what we see in Jesus’ invitation here is the way is open. I would like to call your attention to two things about the invitation. First of all, it’s absolutely genuine. Which is really why I’ve been giving you all of those other verses that say that God really invites all people to be saved. When He calls them to be saved, He is genuine in inviting them to be saved, and the mystery of divine election does not change that. In fact, the only reason people won’t be in heaven, they’ll be in hell, the only reason is their own free will. God is sovereign, yes. He’s sovereign in salvation. His glory, we’re going to glory in the mystery of election, but it doesn’t change this. The Lord doesn’t push people into hell, He invites people to be saved. I like what C.S. Lewis said:

Hell is God’s great monument to the free will of man.

“If you want to live apart from me?” Hell is Him saying, “Your will be done forever.” When you read the scripture carefully, this is the heart of God. Look at Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, and what does He put before them as their reason for being excluded from the blessings, their reason for missing out on Him? He said, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how I’ve longed...” Listen to His heart! “I’ve longed to take you under my wings as a hen would her chicks, but you were not willing.” God’s invitation is absolutely genuine.

The second thing about the invitation is that it is exceedingly attractive. He is the Bread of Life. We talked about this at length last week, but essentially, bread is the perfect food, when it’s done right. Not like our white bread today, but in the old

days when you milled the grain and you ground it into flour, and you ate right away, it was perfect food. I still love bread anyway, even the white bread. It makes every meal better, doesn't it? It was nutritious back when you ate the whole grain, and it's perfect. He says, "Come, have the bread." It's emphatic, the blessing that comes with it. "If you come to Me, you will by no means hunger. If you believe in Me, you will by no means thirst. Never. I will meet all of your needs." All of our deepest needs, Jesus will fully satisfy. In fact, this is an example of a literary device called litotes, which is a figure of speech in which you emphatically state something by negating the opposite. He does that three times in the passage. We're going to see this. It starts in Verse 35. He's saying, "I'm the bread of life." And what He wants to say is: "I satisfy your deepest needs." That's what it would be positively. "I will fully satisfy you forever." But what does He say? *...he who comes to Me will not hunger,...* He negates the opposite. *...he who believes in Me will never thirst.* Never. It's an emphatic way of making a point. It's kind of like somebody asking you, and this would be a relevant question now, we've been long enough away from this that many of you probably know the name but didn't really see him play. "Was Michael Jordan a good basketball player?" He was not a bad player. It's a way of highlighting and underscoring. Jesus is saying, "I satisfy completely." Everything that you have, and we talked about last week, that the main need that we have is to deal with our sin. Yes, we need love. Yes, we need significance and all that, but that's all secondary. The main issue is that what you need is to be reconnected to God. You're separated. Your sins have separated you from the Lord, as Isaiah 59 says. That's why you don't have any joy, you don't have any life. Your sins, your iniquity have separated you from God. You need a Savior who can deal with that problem, and Jesus deals with that problem wondrously, amazingly, and infinitely well. Perfectly. He paid for our sins fully, giving us a perfect righteousness through His death at Calvary. Being punished in the place of every one who would ever believe, paying the full sin debt, and giving us a perfect righteousness in exchange. So you stand before him, and the Gospels, and particularly Paul's, the epistles celebrate the wonder that comes when He says things like in Romans 5:1. We now have peace with God through faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ. And we have entered by faith into this grace in which we stand. I love that picture. We now are no longer under the law, we stand in grace and favor. God cannot look at us with anything but the favor that He has for His own dear Son. That is marvelous. That's the Gospel. That is what Jesus is offering here freely.

This is really what has gone out throughout the whole universe, and God has offered His salvation to everyone. People who have never heard the name of Jesus have heard the testimony of creation beckoning them, "Believe in the Most High God." If there is someone out there whose heart responds to Him, I believe the

Lord sends a missionary so they can hear about Jesus because there is only one way to be saved, and that's by believing in Jesus Christ. There's no other name given under Heaven by which we must be saved, than the name of Jesus. God is not scrambling, trying to find how to get someone there. He Who knew us before the foundation of the world has it all worked out. But the point here is that the invitation is absolutely genuine, and it's exceedingly attractive. Now, that's the invitation.

2) The Response to Jesus:

There is a two-fold response. The main response is given to us immediately in Verse 37. This is what prompts this discussion, this revelation of Jesus. The reason He goes in the direction He goes is He knows the response of the people. He's just given this amazingly wonderful invitation that the Father sent Him to give. He sees in the hearts of the people unbelief. The first response, there are two parts of the response. The response of the majority, Verse 36.

John 6:36 ~ But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

'Have seen' and 'do not believe'. The tense of the verb 'have seen' is the Greek perfect tense which implies completed action and it gives the idea of having seen with clarity, and the ongoing effects. Perfect means a completed action in past time that has ongoing impact to the present. "You have seen and you're aware of Me." Then, "At the same time that you have seen and are aware of Me, you are (present tense) not believing." The Greek present means a continuous ongoing action. You have seen and you are not believing. How the heart of Christ must be breaking. The heart of God, but also the heart of the man Jesus, as He looks at this. "How can this be?" Encountering the wickedness of sin, face to face. How can people who are starving to death reject bread? "No, I don't want to eat because I don't want to receive it from You." "No, thank You. I will gladly die and perish in my sins because I don't want to accept it from You." Astonishing!

You know normally we say, "Seeing is believing," don't we? But this passage seems to say, "Seeing is not believing." In fact, the word 'see' and 'saw' is very important in the passage. Verse 36, ***But I said to you that you have seen Me,...*** recalls how He uses this word another six times previous to this in the chapter. Verse 30, ***So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe..."*** They see a connection. "Seeing is believing. So show us a sign." He's basically saying, in Verse 36, "You have seen, but you don't believe."

Well what have they seen? Look at Verses 22 and 24. Remember after Jesus walks on the water from one side of the Sea of Galilee to the other. The people were looking for Him where they knew He was.

John 6:22 ~ The next day the crowd that stood on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other small boat there, except one, and that Jesus had not entered with His disciples into the boat, but that His disciples had gone away alone.

They saw, “Hey, there is no other boat here, so Jesus has got to be here.”

John 6:24 ~ So when the crowd saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they themselves got into the small boats, and came to Capernaum seeking Jesus.

Through those two things, He’s indicating that they’re putting together in their minds, “How did Jesus get from point A to point B without a boat? He would have had to walk right by us, as we’re on the side of the sea.” So it’s almost as if they saw this miracle, though they didn’t personally see it like the disciples, yet in a way, they did see it. Look at Verse 14:

John 6:14 ~ Therefore when the people saw the sign which He had performed, they said, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.”

That’s when He fed the 5000 or the 20,000 people with five loaves and two fish. They saw it. It recalls even Verse 2. Look at Verse 2:

John 6:2 ~ A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

It could be better translated as, ...*they were seeing*... That’s the imperfect tense, which means past time, ongoing action. They were seeing the signs which He was performing. They were seeing continually the signs which He was continually performing on those who were sick. I want to get a picture of that. Look at Matthew 4:23-25, and look at what the people in Galilee and Judea saw.

Matthew 4:23-25 ~ Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. 24 The

news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. 25 Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

I heard a preacher say one time, “It’s as if Jesus banished illness from Galilee and Judea for several years.” They were seeing people being healed. They were hearing: “What happened to you?” “I went to see Jesus. He healed me.” All of these signs they’re seeing, but they are not believing. How do you explain that? For the majority, seeing is not believing. Now, there is also a response of the minority. So the response to Jesus is 2-fold: The response of the majority and the response of the minority.

John 6:40 ~ For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

A lot of the translations actually say, ***...everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him...*** What Jesus has done is made this parallel. He said in Verse 36:

John 6:36 ~ But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.

In Verse 40, He said, ***...everyone who beholds*** (who sees) ***and believes...*** He uses word play to show these two different groups. How can it be? They’ve seen the same things but some believe. There’s something in the word that I think He uses in Verse 40, which the NASB translates ‘behold’, which I think is a good translation of that word. It’s not the same word as ‘see’ and ‘saw’ throughout the rest of the chapter. It’s another word for ‘seeing’, but it’s the word θεωπέω (theōreō), which means to behold, or to look at and contemplate, to look at with wonder. So people who look at it and keep looking, and look at it until it changes them, that’s something that God does in the heart. And when you see like that, you believe. Now we’re coming onto the implications. You have the majority response: rejecting Him, and the minority response: beholding and believing.

3) The Implications:

I think there are 4 questions we can ask from this:

a) How do you account for this radical difference in responses? How is it that seeing was *not* believing, and seeing *was* believing? How do you account for that?

b) Because the masses are in the category of those who see but don't believe, because the overwhelming majority rejects Christ, how do you account for the masses rejecting Christ?

And then there are a couple corollaries that flow from that. Those are the inferences that just naturally flow:

c) If you see that the masses are rejecting Christ, does it not imply that Jesus' mission has been a failure? Doesn't the fact that most people have rejected Him mean He failed? This was a very relevant question in the first Century. This was one that Jewish people were dealing with. Jews and Jewish proselytes who were still hearing the message of the Gospel were trying to reconcile the fact of how it could be that the masses of religious Jewish people had rejected Christ. "If that's the case, how can it be true? He cannot be the Messiah. He failed."

d) If His mission is a failure, does not failure imply that Jesus is not the Messiah? This is something where it's hard to put ourselves in that position, because we think, "Well, if I was there, I'd believe." We tend to overestimate our own abilities, don't we? We need to be careful of that.

John the Baptist had this same problem. It's astounding when you think about it. John the Baptist recognized Jesus when he was in the womb. Jesus was in the womb. John the Baptist was in the womb. John the Baptist, in the womb, somehow hears the voice of Mary. I guess the baby can hear inside the womb. John hears the voice of Mary, leaps in the womb, the Spirit of God ministering in him, and then begins to minister in his mother Elizabeth, and she says, "How can it be that the mother of my Lord has come to visit me?" She didn't know that. The Spirit of God told her that. But John the Baptist, the one sent to say, "That's the One. He's the One," even though they're second cousins, he doesn't see, and they didn't have any family reunions for over 30 years apparently. John never saw him again until he was baptizing at the Jordan, and Jesus comes walking down toward the Jordan, and John the Baptist says, "***Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!***" (*John 1:29*) He tells us early in the Gospel, that the way he knew was because the Father had told him. God had told him. "The one who called me said,

“When you see the Spirit of God descending and remaining on one, that’s the man.” So John sees that and says, “That is the man we’ve been waiting for!”

Later in his life when things are going bad and the crowds are beginning to leave Jesus, before they leave Jesus, they leave John. He gets arrested, and he’s in prison, and awaiting execution by Herod, and he’s hearing things about what Jesus is saying and doing that just don’t add up to what he was expecting. He doesn’t just think about it, but he goes to the trouble of sending a disciple to say to Jesus, “Are You the One or are we to await another?” Why did he do that? Because he looked at the circumstances and he sees not what he expected. He doesn’t see the Kingdom happening with masses coming in and accepting the Messiah. And in his tribulation, in his trial, he wonders.

I love how Jesus responds when He gets that question. He basically says to the disciple, “You go back and tell John that the blind see, the lame walk, the dead live.” Basically, He’s saying, “I’m the One. Don’t be looking for anybody else.” And then rather than slam John, which is what we probably would have done, Jesus said, ***“I tell you that there has not been a greater man among those born of woman than John the Baptist.”*** But the greatest struggled in that circumstance and we are no better. Yes, we have the Spirit of God this side of Calvary, this side of Pentecost. Yes, praise the Lord we do, but we still are weak and feeble. Our nature is the same as his. Just like it’s the same as Elijah’s and it’s the same as John the Baptist. So when the crowds begin to depart, when times get tough and the religious people begin to leave, how do you hold on? The force of widespread rejection can be so powerful, especially when you see it among the religious, those who claim to be followers of God. The current can be like a riptide that pulls you away from Christ. It feels like that. Jesus testified that days would come like this. He said in that Matthew 24:24 and it’s also echoed in Mark 13:22:

Matthew 24:24 ~ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

What does this mean? Has Jesus’ mission failed? Then that’s what Jesus is responding to is those implications. How do you account for the radical difference in responses? How do you account for the masses rejecting Jesus? Does this imply that Jesus’ mission is a failure? Does apparent failure mean that He’s not the Messiah? That’s what He’s dealing with in Verses 37-40.

John 6:37-39 ~ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not 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 This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.

It wasn't easy for His humanity to overcome sin. He did it perfectly, but it was no light thing. Just look at Gethsemane if you think it was a light thing for Jesus to overcome sin. But He did it perfectly. Always. Every time. He was tempted in every way, yet without sin. When He faces this kind of rejection, in His humanity, it must be overwhelming to Him. In fact, I think we'll see it as we go through the passage, that when the crowds and even the disciples start leaving Him, what does He do? Later in the chapter, He looks at the twelve and says, "Will you also leave Me?" You see His heart straining under the weight of this rejection, but He stays faithful, because He cannot do anything that is unfaithful. He cannot deny Himself. But He says, *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me...* "The reason that so many of you, the masses, have seen Me and yet do not believe, is that the only way you can come to Me is if the Father gives you to Me." He repeated that twice in the passage. Verse 39: *...of all that He has given Me I lose nothing...*

The picture is this, and this is the picture of the Bible when you read it carefully. Romans 9 is addressing exactly the same problem. Paul is dealing in Romans 9 with this issue. Why have so many Jews rejected Christ? And what he says is, "Don't you understand that God is always operated in salvation through the principle of election?" Abraham had two sons, but God chose one. Isaac had two sons, but God chose one. If you read Romans 9, and read it carefully, you'll see that it's the same point. And the reason he brought it up was because of the danger that it is to our faith when we see all of that unbelief, because he starts the whole discussion with, *It's not as though the Word of God has failed.* He's been talking in Romans 8 about how wonderful our salvation is and how secure it is because God is faithful to His promises. God cannot speak and it not happen, basically is what he's saying. And if that is true, he's thinking about all of those people who he's encountered who are wondering, "Why have so many Jews then failed, because didn't God promise to save all the Jews?" And the answer is: No, God never promised to save all the Jews. He promised to save the true Israel of God.

Now, let me remind you, though, that the only reason people aren't saved is because they don't want to be, and the mystery of election doesn't change responsibility. You can't sit there and wonder, "Am I the elect or am I not?" No, the way you're supposed to deal with that is to believe and repent, and that is our message. We don't sit there and try to figure out if somebody might be showing signs of being elect before we preach the Gospel to them or call them to repent and

believe. We call them to repent and believe because Jesus did, Peter did, Paul did, and John did. Repent and believe. There's no other way to be saved. It's kind of like this, putting all the scripture together, once you see Romans 3:10-18.

Romans 3:10-18 ~ as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become corrupt; no one does good, not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." 14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

So the Gospel comes and God's truth comes, and what do people do? They close their eyes. They close their ears, and then they will not believe. What has to happen is God has to change the heart, and that's what John was saying earlier in John 3 when he talked to Nicodemus, a religious man who had been beholding the signs of Jesus but was not saved. What was the problem? Jesus said, "You must be born again from above." The Spirit of God has to change you. We have to see how lost we are so that we cry out to God to do what only He can do. His arm is not too short that He cannot save. He will change the heart. He will take out the heart of stone and put in a heart of flesh. Jesus says ***...all that the Father has give to Me... all that the Father gives Me... ...everyone that He gives Me...*** What's happened is the Lord has invited all people to be saved, but nobody comes.

In fact, there's a beautiful picture of this in one of Jesus' parables where He talks about the parable of the rich man's banquet. The rich man prepares a feast and he tells his servants to make it ready. Then he tells his servants to send out invitations to invite everyone around to come to this banquet. The time draws near for the feast and he comes in and he says, "Where are the people?" and the servants begin saying, "Well, this guy said he had this commitment. This other one said he had some problem and he couldn't come," and no one's there. And what does Jesus say? That the rich man tells his servants, "Go out in the hedges and highways and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled." That's how sovereignty and responsibility work together. God invites all and none come. But by His Spirit, He changes the heart. That's the irresistible call of God that comes. And according to this passage, when the Father sent Jesus into the world, He sent Him to go get the group that He would give Jesus. It's as if the Father was preparing a bride for Christ. He sent Jesus into the world, and Jesus' mission isn't a failure because He didn't get the whole universe, because the Father sent Him for a select group. The

reality we have to face is that every single person that's ever been born is a sinner and chooses to walk away from God. And when God let's them get what they want, when God says, "Repent and believe. I Am the Bread of Life. Come to Me," and they don't come, whose fault is it? 100% theirs. God is not in any way to blame. That's the clear teaching of the Bible. But when He then changes hearts in people, He opens eyes. John doesn't give us any of these sayings, but Matthew, Mark and Luke do. Jesus is teaching. He's preaching. The word of God doesn't return void. It accomplishes the purpose for which He sent it. It cannot return to Him empty.

The power of Jesus preaching the word, what does He say in the Gospels over and over? *He who has ears to hear, let him hear.* He's acknowledging there that there are some people who can't hear though they hear. They don't have ears to hear. *But he who has ears to hear, let him hear and come.* God is not responsible, in a sense of condemning people, as in pushing them into hell. Though He was not obligated, He's offered salvation to all people freely. Nobody came, and so He sent His Spirit, He sent His Son to change the hearts of people and to bring them in and to compel them to come in. That's the mystery of divine election.

In the passage, besides saying *...all that He has given me...* four different times you have the noun for 'will'. *"I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."* *"This is the will of Him who sent Me."* *"For this is the will of My Father."* The ultimate determining factor is the will of God, for the glory of God.

But back to the purpose of the passage, what this is saying is that when so many are rejecting, how can we bear up in that time? It's just saying don't be discouraged. You can be brokenhearted for their unbelief. That's right. Jesus was brokenhearted for their unbelief. We ought to be like Jesus. We ought to not be able to implore somebody to come to faith and see them walk away, without tears. Our hearts are too cold. But the more we become like God, we'll be brokenhearted as He is, because the invitation is genuine. It's exceedingly attractive, but don't be discouraged when the masses don't come, because the sovereignty of God is our comfort.

The two implications of the mystery of divine election are: Don't be discouraged and don't be proud. To me, it should be an oxymoron. Proud and Reformed. Or Proud Calvinist. How can you be? If you believe in the sovereignty of God and election, how can you possibly be proud? The only way you can believe is because God has granted you eyes to see and ears to hear. It's all of grace. *To God alone be the glory* was the over arching theme that came out of the Reformation. When you

understand that salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, then that is to the glory of God alone.

4) Response of Jesus:

The response of Jesus is 2-fold:

- a) Take comfort in the mystery of divine election.
- b) Take comfort in the majesty of divine preservation.

You worry that you're going to fall away when the current gets great against you. Jesus is buttressing your faith mightily in Verses 39 and 40, by telling you that He will preserve those who belong to Him. We call this doctrine 'The Perseverance of the Saints'. That is the doctrine that if you truly are saved, if you have truly repented and believed, not just that you've had an experience, but that you've truly repented and believed, then you cannot be lost. This teaches it clearly. "All who come to Me, I will certainly not cast out one. I won't lose any"

John 6:37 ~ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.

What He's saying is, "I'm going to keep them. My Father gave them to Me. My food and My drink is to do the will of Him who sent me, and since He says, 'Take these. Hold onto them,' then is there any way I'm going to fail to do it?" No, it's unthinkable that Jesus would fail to carry out the Father's will. The Father's will is that any that come to Him, the way is open. When you come, Christ will take hold of you and will never let go of you. There are other passages where this is a mystery. In fact, the doctrine of 'The Perseverance of the Saints' is sometimes called 'The Preservation of the Saints' because different passages emphasize different parts of it. There are passages that say basically, "Keep on believing." Look at the author of Hebrews. He says that a lot. Basically, his message is, "Keep on believing. If you profess to believe in God, keep on believing." And it's not just Hebrews. If you hold firm your faith to the end, then you're truly saved. So you've got to keep on holding on, but this passage isn't dealing with the responsibility to keep on holding on. This passage is giving the balancing truth and it's giving it with great emphasis. "Of all that He has given Me, I will lose nothing." Again, He's using the emphatic phrase He used earlier. *They will by no means be hungry. They will by no means thirst. I will by no means lose anything.* That's what it's really saying. "There's no way I'm going to lose anything He gives Me, but raise it up on the last day." Do you see that? From the time that you come to Christ, He

says, “I’m going to hold you all the way until the day of the resurrection, to the last day.” We die, and our spirit goes to heaven to be with the Lord, but our body is buried until the last day when Jesus calls the dead to life. He calls the wicked to judgment, and those who have been made righteous through faith in Christ, He calls to everlasting life. He says, “I’m going to hold onto you from the day you believe until that day.” And look how He emphasizes it in Verse 39 and 40:

John 6:39 ~ This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”

He wants to make it clear you have nothing to worry about. If you are in Christ and you feel your faith faltering, realize at the most difficult times in your life, tribulation comes, and the trails of life weaken your faith, weaken you down, but keep trusting in Jesus. He will not let go of you. If we see great apostasy in our day, if many leave the church, if hundreds and thousands leave the church, and you feel the pressure of that riptide pulling against you, keep your eyes on Jesus and don’t trust in your faith. Trust in Him and His faithfulness, because He will be faithful to the Father. His bread and His drink is to do the will of the Father, and the Father said, “Son, go down there, and the ones that I give to You, keep til the end,” and He will do it. That’s our confidence.

When I think about the things that can happen in our lifetime – tribulation and persecution and all of that – I don’t take pain well. I’m one of those guys that takes an Advil if I think I might get a headache. “How can I possibly hold on, Lord? I’m weak.” Look away from yourself. Saving faith and faith that continues to overcome, is looking out of yourself to Christ. It’s about Him. Holding onto Him is really keeping looking at Him. “Lord, I’m weak. I don’t know if I can hold on.” Keep looking at Jesus. He can hold on. He held on perfectly. ***He who began a good work in you, will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.*** Nothing can stop it. No matter what happens, no matter how difficult and dark your days become, no matter what happens around you, Jesus will never fail you. That’s the glory of the Savior that we have, the Bread of Life. ***He who comes to Me will never hunger. He who believes in Me will never thirst.*** Let us keep our hearts anchored in that reality. Let’s pray together...

Our Father,

we give You praise. We adore You. We stand in awe of You because You have made salvation available. You have not just made it available, but You've accomplished it from first to last. We praise You that Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith. We praise You that He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. Lord, may we learn to not let the storms of life, the difficulties that we encounter, take our eyes off Jesus, but let us learn to discipline ourselves to set our gaze intently, firmly and continually upon the glory of Your Son, the sufficiency of His grace, the power of His blood, and the majesty of His resurrection and exaltation.

Father, help those that are here that have not yet partaken of Christ to see the reality of death that is coming, an eternal death that can come at any moment, and help them flee and run to Jesus. We're thankful that He is One who will not only not cast out, He will welcome any who come to Him, for He always says, "Come." We praise You, Lord. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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