

John 6-36-46
Safe and secure in the father's arms.

Sermon introduction-

Jake (not his real name) refused to believe. Jake was an atheist, so I wondered why he kept coming to the college ministry. Eventually, I found out that he came to our college ministry to do research for the book he wanted to write that promoted atheism.

Finally, we met for coffee. Our conversation lasted a few hours. I laid out all the evidence for Christianity. I started with the cosmological argument. Then we discussed the teleological argument, followed by the moral argument, followed by evidence for the resurrection, followed by the evidence of fulfilled prophecy. Then we talked about evidence for miracles. Then we dove into the problem of evil.

No matter how much evidence I presented, Jake refused to believe. I was discouraged! Can you relate? Maybe you have a friend who refuses to believe, no matter how much you pray, love, and present evidence for Christianity's truth claims.

We must not get discouraged. Why? The same thing happened to Jesus. This brings us to John 6:36-46. Jesus just performed an incredible miracle. He supernaturally fed 5,000 family units with five loaves and two fishes. Yet, the huge crowds refuse to take him seriously. They refused to believe that he was the son of God, the bread of life, and the Messiah.

You would think that this would discourage Jesus. He could have said, "what in the world is wrong with you people, why don't you believe, I just performed a miracle."

But Jesus is not discouraged—at all. Why? This brings us to the main point of our passage.

Jesus is not discouraged because he knows that no matter what happens ***God will save and preserve his chosen people!!!***

This is meant to encourage us! ***We too must not be discouraged because we know that no matter what happens God will save and preserve his chosen people.*** To help us understand these verses, we are going to look at four aspects of God's saving work.

God elects
God draws
God welcomes
God preserves

First, God elects

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.

All of what? All of the people chosen by God. We know Jesus is referring to people because the word "all" is in the neuter singular form. In other words, it is referring to a collective body of people, chosen by God before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

The same group of people is described in John 17:6.

John 17:6 (ESV) — 6 “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.”

Back to John 6:37.

Jesus says, “God the father will give to me all the people he chose before the foundation of the world. And I will not reject a single person he gives me. I will save every single one of them. Not one of them will be lost by me or rejected by me. Why? Because the father gave them to me.”

These people were not chosen because they were good or righteous or because God saw that they would choose him. God’s choice of them was not based on anything he saw in them. He chose them because he loved them.

This group of people is referred to as the elect 16 times in the NT alone.

For instance...

Matthew 24:31 (ESV) — 31 And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Mark 13:20 (ESV) — 20 And if the Lord had not cut short the days, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.

Romans 8:33 (ESV) — 33 Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies.

See also 2 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:1-2

People often say, “I don’t believe that election is in the Bible.” Then how do we make sense of these verses?

In addition, when you include the synonyms for election (chosen, appointed, predestined, elect) the word group is used 38 times in the NT. For instance...

Matthew 22:14 (ESV) — 14 For many are called, but few are chosen.”

Acts 13:48 (ESV) — 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed.

Romans 8:29–30 (ESV) — 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. **30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Ephesians 1:4–5 (ESV) — 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

See also Rom 11:7; Eph 1:12; 1 Thes. 1:4-5; 2 Thes. 2:13; 1 Pe 1:1; Rev 13:7-8; Joh 10:25-29; Col. 3:12; 1 Thes. 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rom. 9:11-12

Back to John 6:37.

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.

Application:

This means that...

Every single person chose by the father will be redeemed by the son! This will happen, nothing can stop it!

Not one person chosen by the father will be lost.

Everyone chosen by the father will be saved.

Furthermore, not one person chosen by the father in eternity past will be rejected by the son.

The salvation of the elect will happen—no matter what.

This can't be thwarted by Satan.

This can't be thwarted by WWII.

This can't be thwarted by premature death.

This can't be thwarted by a global pandemic, a massive recession, political corruption, violent persecution, or the rise of militant Islam.

Rather than this being a hindrance to evangelism, this is an encouragement to evangelism. No one can thwart our efforts to bring the gospel to the lost.

Before we move on...

Let's Revel in the love of God for a moment...

If you are a Christian...

God the father loved you (yes you) so much, that he chose you in eternity past to be his child. Then he gave you to his son as a precious gift. Then the son promised the father that he would gladly receive you (yes you). Then the son promised that he would die for you (yes you).

This means that the father has extravagant love for you.

This means that the son has extravagant love for you.

When will you doubt God's love this week?

When you do, remember that God the father chose you and the God the son promised to receive you.

Once God chooses the elect, how do they become Christians? This brings us to the next point...

First, God elects...

Second, God draws.

John 6:41–44 (ESV) — 41 So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." **42** They said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

The Jewish crowds refuse to believe. Why? Jesus tells us in verses 43-44. Let's keep reading...

43 Jesus answered them, “Do not grumble among yourselves. **44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

The crowds refuse to believe the claims of Jesus because God the father had not drawn them. Just to be clear, Jesus says to the crowds, “You don’t believe in me because the father is not drawing you.”

Let’s look carefully at the words of verse 44.

Jesus says, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

“No one” means no person without exception...

“can come to me” has to do with ability, not will or desire. In other words, it is impossible for them to come.

Why can’t they come to Jesus???

Because they are unredeemed. Listen to what the Bible says about unredeemed humanity.

Ephesians 2:1 (ESV) — **1** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins

Romans 3:10–12 (ESV) — **10** 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 worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

John 3:3, 5 “unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God”

Rom 8:7-8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

1Co 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

2Co 4:3-4 (3) And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. (4) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

John 6:65 (ESV) — **65** And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

Before conversion we can’t come to God because we don’t want to come to God. Therefore, God must draw us to himself.

Back to John 6:44

John 6:44 (ESV) — **44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

What does the word draw mean???

When we think about drawing people, we tend to think of kids being drawn to candy, or bees being drawn to honey, or flies being drawn to sugar. In other words, we think of wooing, enticing, or persuading. But the Greek word translated as draw means “to compel.” (Sproul)

Jesus was not saying, “No one can come to me unless the Father woos him or persuades him.” Christ’s meaning was much stronger.

The same Greek word that Jesus used in John 6:44 is used in Acts 21:30, where Paul is seized and dragged out of the temple at Jerusalem. We can be sure the angry Jewish guards did not try to woo Paul into coming with them.

The same Greek word is also used to describe the action of the disciples pulling their nets, filled with fish, onto the deck of the boat (John 21:11). This is much more than persuading or wooing, it is compelling.

Theologian R. C. Sproul tells this story...

Illustration:

“I once took part in a public debate with the head of the New Testament department at a Midwestern seminary. We were debating the doctrine of election, and we eventually came to this text (John 6:44). I pointed out to him that the Greek word translated as “draws” actually means “compel,” not “entice” or “woo.” In response, he quoted an obscure text from the secular literature of ancient Greece wherein the same Greek word was used to speak of drawing water out of a well. He said, “Now, Dr. Sproul, when you get water out of a well, do you compel it or drag it out of the well?” Everyone in the audience roared, so I said: “Well, you’ve got me there. I didn’t even know that text existed in classical Greek. But let me ask you, how do you get water out of a well? Do you stand up there and look down and say, ‘Here, water, water, water’? Do you woo it up? Of course not. The water is inert. You have to go get it.” (Sproul)

In a similar sense, when God calls us, we can’t resist. Oh, we can resist for a season, but we will eventually decide to follow him.

Objections...

So, are we robots?

No, explain effectual calling and the Holy Spirit’s work...

What about free will?

That depends on how you define free will. We are free in the sense that we always act according to our strongest desires and our nature. Before conversion we are free, but we will not choose God because it goes against our nature to choose God.

Why does God draw some and not others?

Clearly, he was not drawing the Jewish crowds...

Behind this understandable question is the question of fairness.

Imagine a prison with 1,000 inmates. They are all violent criminals, which means that they are in prison for life. The president is feeling very magnanimous, so he decides to pardon seven of them. What would the others say??? They would have no right to say, that is not fair... would they?

Here is the application:

If you are a Christian, it is because God the Father lovingly drew you to himself.

It is not because you are smarter, more discerning, or more righteous than the person next to you.

But I decided to follow Jesus! Amen, but that decision was the result of God the Spirit drawing you to Jesus.

This means that we have nothing to boast in.

This means that there is absolutely no room for self-righteousness in the Christian life.

This also means that we should be incredibly grateful to God—all the time!

Have you thanked him recently?

At this point, some of you may be wondering, what if I'm not elect? This brings us to the third point...

First, God elects

Second, God draws

Third, God welcomes

Who does he welcome? Everyone who looks to the son!

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.”

Jesus says that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life. What does the word “everyone” mean? It means everyone.

We see similar language elsewhere.

Romans 10:13 (ESV) — 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Matthew 11:28–30 (ESV) — 28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

John 3:16 (ESV) — 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The Bible is very clear. Anyone, anyone, anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. What a promise!!!

If you are worried about whether you are elect or not, stop worrying and cling to the truths of John 6:40 “everyone who looks to the son and believes in him should have eternal life.”

If you are tempted to be self-righteous and proud because you are a Christian, you must cling to the truths of John 6:44 “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

They are both true!!!

How can you say that God offers the gospel freely to everyone when only the elect will be saved??? Because the Bible teaches both...

Over and over again the Bible teaches that God is sovereign over all things, yet we make real choices that have real consequences.

This is a profound mystery, but shouldn't we expect mystery?

Illustration:

According to many, the hardest undergraduate Math class in the world is Math 55 offered at Harvard University.

Here are a few facts about Math 55

Math 55 requires 30-60 hours of homework per week.

Which means that even though Math 55 is one class, it is essentially a full-time job.

Math 55 covers four years of insanely difficult coursework into two semesters.

One problem often takes 15-20 pages of calculations to solve.

Over half of the students fail (most of them are Harvard Math majors).

Now, with that in mind, would you expect a squirrel, a dog, or a cat to understand the material in Math 55? Of course not!!! Their brains are too small.

In a similar sense, our brains are way too small to comprehend the ways of God. He is able to establish a universe where he controls all things, yet we make real choices.

D.L. Moody used to describe the mystery of election this way...

When you are saved it is like walking through a door.

When you approach the door, it says, "Everyone is welcome."

When you walk through the door and look back on the other side of the door, it says, "you were chosen before the foundation of the world."

Application:

If you are not a Christian, you must decide to follow Jesus. But what if I'm not elect? That is never ever an excuse in the Bible for not repenting and believing. You must repent and believe.

Maybe you are thinking...

But I have done some really bad things

Jesus says, "everyone who looks to the son . . . should have eternal life."

Since everyone is invited to follow Jesus, we must try to persuade everyone to follow Jesus. The sovereignty of God never negates our responsibility to pray for and evangelize the lost.

Some of the greatest evangelists and missionaries the world has ever known held on to the sovereignty of God with tenacity.

Once God welcomes us, will he preserve us until the end? This brings us to the fourth and final point...

First, God elects

Second, God draws

Third, God welcomes

Fourth, God preserves

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.

John 6:39–40 (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. **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.”

What a promise.

Jesus promises that he will lose none of the elect that God the father gave him. And on the last day he will raise up every single person given to him by the father.

This means that genuine Christians will not lost their salvation since God the son will hold on to us until the last day.

Jesus says the same thing later in John’s gospel.

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.”

See also Rom. 8:28-30; Phil. 1:6; Jude 1, Jude 24-25.

Hopefully you see God’s love for you stretching all the way across eternity.

God the father chose you in eternity past.

God the father gave you to God the son.

God the son died for you.

God the son promises to raise you up on the last day.

Implying that you will dwell with God for the rest of eternity.

You are safe and secure in the ironclad arms of God—from eternity past through eternity future.

Salvation is all of grace...

Conclusion:

Back to where we started.

The next time you are tempted to be discouraged because your friends, neighbors, and relatives keep rejecting the gospel remember the truths of John 6:36-46.

Christ was not discouraged when people rejected him because he knew that God the father would save and preserve the elect until the end. And nothing will stop the father’s plan.

Let’s pray...

