

The Jesus Series: Sovereignty and Responsibility

Sunday, August 19, 2018

John 6:35-48

The Sword

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

- Introduce the sword, **where** it came from, and what it is **symbolic** of.
 - **Our purposes at Agape:** *Love the Lord, Love our Neighbor as Christ has loved us, and make Disciples.*
- One of our **distinctives** as a church is that *we believe and trust in the power that God has given His word to bring about spiritual change; so we believe in clear, unapologetic teaching and application of biblical truth.*
 - We affirm the work of the Holy Spirit, who **Christ said would come** upon His ascension into Heaven, and **lead the church into all truth.**
 - But we believe all of the works of God **are built on the foundation** of this word, and **are in agreement** with it today.
 - We believe that **this word became flesh and dwelt among us** in the person of Jesus Christ (**John 1:14**). Therefore to **learn** this word, to **adhere** to it, and to **proclaim** it - is all ways in which we **lift high the name of Jesus.**
 - We believe in the power of Christ, therefore we believe in the power of this word that is collectively ALL about Him: **Hebrews 4:12**
- Because of this, we aim to make Christ and His word the center of our gatherings as a church: On **Wednesday night** we bring the word to bear against a variety of life topics; in **Gospel Community groups** people from this church gather in homes to fellowship and spend time reading, discussing, and ministering this word with one another. And on **Sunday mornings**, we go through books of the Bible passage by passage.
 - My goal is for us to mine as much truth as we can, knowing we will never find it all and knowing it will be slow a times. This is week#5 in **John 6**, with 1 or 2 to go.
 - And one of the great benefits of this approach, is that it brings us to passages that otherwise we would simply skip over.
 - Today, is certainly one of those days: Jesus is bringing us - as I said last week - **into the weeds**. But we are not afraid to go there. It is actually really good for us.

The Controversy

The nature of our salvation

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. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. John 6:35-36

- Jesus has taught this crowd that He is the all satisfying Bread of Life
 - As we are physical beings, and need physical food to feast on; We are also spiritual beings who need spiritual food to feast on.
 - **Spiritual cravings:** *What we desire when we are restless inside, that we might feel whole. What do we feast on, indulge in, a little more each time?*
 - But there was a bit of a cliff hanger - this crowd has seen Jesus and his signs; they have heard his teaching and personal interactions; **yet not believed.**
 - So is this mission of Jesus a failure?
 - This is a lead in for Jesus: **12 verses** about the nature of **His saving work.**
- Most of us have at least heard of some of the surrounding controversies:
 - **Example 1:** What is the **determining factor** in our salvation?
 - Is it the choice of man? Or Is it the choice of God?
 - **Example 2:** What is the **security** of our salvation?
 - Can salvation be lost? Or Can salvation be rejected?
- Both of these questions are addressed in this text and we will look there because Jesus takes us there. But first I want to make **3 observations for our community of Christ:**
 - **1st** - Christian **unity** is possible without Theological **uniformity.**
 - There are certain non-negotiables to believe for us to be in the Faith.
 - Inside of the church, The key to unity is first to Love as Christ loved us.
 - I am not calling us to theological flippancy as you will see. But there is room for us to have differing views on big theological questions; and love each other well as we all **grow together.**
 - **2nd** - Understanding exactly **HOW** God saves **IS NOT** required to **be** saved.
 - Your salvation is dependent on your faith in the goodness of God and the willingness of Christ to save you from your **sin**. Not on your complete understanding of how it came about.
 - **3rd** - The Gospel **is the power of God for salvation (Rom 1:16)** and it is incumbent upon us to learn **its true nature.**
 - Uniformity is not required, but we should all be **GROWING together** to strive for more of it.
 - Learning the nature of the Gospel **is more important** than our tradition, denominational understanding, or even our sensibilities.
 - Allow Christ to stretch you

Observations on Salvation in John

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.”

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?’” **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. **45** It is written in the Prophets, ‘And they will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me— **46** not that anyone has seen the Father except he who is from God; he has seen the Father. **47** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life. **48** I am the bread of life.

- The goal this morning: to focus on what John records Jesus teaching about salvation.
 - I am purposely not bringing in other truths today. Just Jesus in John.
- **Observation #1 - The invitation to salvation is global.**
 - John 1:29, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!
 - John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only son...
 - John 4:42, (The Samaritans) We know this is indeed the Savior of the World
 - **Jesus is the Bread of Life who came down from Heaven to offer life to the world.** Which is the teaching of John 6:33
 - John makes clear abundantly in His Gospel that the offer to receive forgiveness of sins, and eternal life in Jesus **is universal** to all.
 - Every tribe, nation, language; man, woman, child, from every time period - EVERYONE is offered salvation.
 - There is NO teaching of scripture that calls a Christian to **hide** this offer; There is ample teaching that we must **SHARE** this message.
- **The Christian message is Whoever!** This was John’s message:
 - **Whoever believes in Jesus has eternal life (John 3:15)**
 - **Whoever believes in Jesus is not condemned (John 3:18)**
 - **Whoever believes in Jesus will never thirst (John 6:35)**
 - **Whoever believes in Jesus will not remain in darkness (John 12:46)**

- **Observation #2 - The call to salvation is personal.**
 - The invitation is global. But John also describes something much more intimate than a global invite. He indicates a personal calling, purposed by the Father.
 - **Mail that says Occupant vs Mail that has your name handwritten**
 - **Global** Invite vs **Personal** call.
 - The invitation is Global but there is a calling that is personal.
 - Jesus says, **6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me**
 - Jesus says, **6:39 All that he has given me**
 - Jesus prays, **17:24 Father I desire that they whom you have given me may be with me where I am...**
 - This is personal language that echoes teaching in other places of the NT.
 - The Father giving individuals to Jesus, is what led them to come to Christ.
 - **The Saints (those saved) are given (gifts) From the Father to the Son.**
 - And their salvation is the Father's will and the Son's purpose.
 - Jesus says his purpose in, **6:38 To come down to do the Father's will**
 - Jesus says the Father's will in, **6:40 is that Jesus will save all who look to Him and believe**
 - They look to Him and believe, by virtue of the Father giving them to the son.
- All of this is very **personal** language.
 - IF you have come to Christ; IF today you hear His voice; IF right now your heart is stirred to believe - It is not by chance; it is not random; it is not because God is crying out to the crowd and you are one in the crowd.
 - No - the invitation is Global; but your call is personal.
 - This call doesn't say occupant - HE is calling YOUR name.
- And **ALL** of the Saints, given by the Father to the Son - **will never be rejected or lost.**
 - Jesus says, **6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will never cast out.**
 - Jesus says, **6:39 The will of the him who sent me, is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.**
 - 'Cast out' carries the idea of 'Something that is IN being driven OUT. So Christ is saying those who the Father gives to me, I will NEVER drive away; I will KEEP THEM IN.
 - Can that person leave Christ? Jesus is clear, I will not lose those the Father gives me. I will keep them until the end. You may wander from Christ - like a child - but you will not wander with finality.
 - Jesus will KEEP you from both; and He stakes his obedience to the Father on it. If he was to fail to keep you, it would be because He was incapable of keeping you or he didn't want to obey His Father. Neither is possible.
- **Observation #3 - Mankind is responsible to come to Christ.**

- Mankind receives this global call to salvation - and we are absolutely responsible for how we respond to that call.
- John emphasizes that **only those with personal faith have eternal life**.
- Jesus says, **6:40 everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life**.
- Jesus says, **6:47 Whoever believes has eternal life**.
 - John is clear - the necessity of faith; we are responsible for who we look to in order to satisfy our cravings.
 - Notice: **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'?" 43 Jesus answered them, "Do not grumble among yourselves.**
 - (v43) This word may be used very purposeful. Grumbling against God (is complaining, not trusting, disbelief) and it is what got their fathers exiled to the wilderness for 40 years (and shut out of the promise land).
 - Now their grumbling endangers them just as well. Because they are not looking to God for help! They assume that they know all they need to know about Christ. They know his parents, they know where he lived, where he grew up. So they grumbled.
 - And Jesus warns them against this. And in the very next verse (44) **points them to their need for God - if they want to come to Him**.
- Joseph Lightfoot (Theologian 1800's) said **'So long as a man remains, and is content to remain, confident in his own ability, without divine help, to assess experience and the meaning of experience, he cannot 'come to' the Lord, he cannot 'believe'. Only the Father can move him to this step, with its incalculable and final results'** (Lightfoot)
 - Which brings us to the last observation
- **God is sovereign over all who come to Christ**.
 - John makes this point clear, in both positive and negative statements: **Whoever believes personally was drawn by the Father**.
 - Jesus says, **6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me**
 - Jesus says, **44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him**
 - And this is not the only place John emphasizes this truth:
 - **John 6:65** (Referring to disciples who left Jesus because they did not believe, and Judas who would later betray Him) **This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.**
 - **John 10:29 My Father, who has given them (my sheep) to me**
 - **John 17:9 I am praying for those whom you have given me because they are yours.**

- And this I believe is clear in the text, considering all of these, that this drawing is not just a general wooing or invitation that God does. It is a personal drawing as we have already seen. Which is only emphasized further by his teaching in v 44 and v 65.
 - It was this divine drawing that Jesus placed His confidence in. I said at the beginning that v36 is a bit of a cliff hanger: Jesus is the bread of life that has come down, but those who saw him did not believe. Would His mission fail?
 - No. Because the very next verse (37) says **37 All that the Father gives me will come to me**
 - The confidence of Christ was not in the people, but in the Father.
- God sovereignly draws us to salvation - How? **He makes the truth about Christ real to their hearts.**
 - **V45**, John paraphrases **Isaiah 54:13, They will be taught by God.** and then **everyone who has learned from the Father comes to Christ.**
 - This is right in line with other OT passages on future salvation - that stresses God internal work on the hearts of those who believe.
- Mankind is responsible to come to Christ. You must believe and be warned if you do not. God is sovereign over all who do come to Christ. As Lightfoot said, do not put confidence in your own ability to find God. No one can come, unless the Father moves them. So Cry out to the Father. Do not rely on your own strength or reasoning!
 - And you may say - well, these are incompatible! It cannot be both! Man cannot be responsible and God cannot be sovereign.
 - And my first response, is **that is not what John believed.** John speaks with ease and with confidence about both!
 - All who come are drawn by God and given to Christ.
 - Anyone who receives eternal life must personally believe.
 - I believe it is to our folly, that we assume because we do not know how these truths work together, that someone one must be rejected.

That God predestines, and that man is responsible, are two things that few can see. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory; but they are not. It is just the fault of our weak judgment. Two truths cannot be contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one place that everything is fore-ordained, that is true; and if I find in another place that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is my folly that leads me to imagine that two truths can ever contradict each other. These two truths, I do not believe, can ever be welded into one upon any human anvil, but one they shall be in eternity: they are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the mind that shall pursue them farthest, will never discover that they converge; but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring. - Charles Haddon Spurgeon

Will you believe? You are responsible to answer God's call to the world.

Moreso: Will you cry out to God for His help? Only He can reveal truth to you and draw you in.
Do not rely on your own strength.