

Main Idea: In John 6:28-40 we see how Jesus helped people who said they were interested in Him. Basically, He put on the brakes and corrected three errors that plague the sinner.

- I. Jesus corrected the sinner's faulty view of his ability (28-29).
- II. Jesus corrected the sinner's faulty view of his need (30-33).
- III. Jesus corrected the sinner's faulty response (34-40).
  - A. He needs to grasp who Jesus is (34-35a).
    1. He is the source of life.
    2. He is the staple of life.
  - B. He needs to grasp what Jesus can do (35b).
    1. He can satisfy.
    2. He can satisfy permanently.
  - C. He needs to grasp what he has failed to do (36).
  - D. He needs to grasp what the Father is doing (37).
    1. He is seeking true worshippers (4:23).
    2. He gave His Son a gift of people (6:37, 39; 10:29; 17:2, 6, 8, 24; Phil. 1:29).
    3. He gave His Son a work to do (4:34; 5:36).
    4. He sent His Son into the world to do that work (5:23, 24, 30, 36; 6:29, 57).
    5. He placed His seal of approval on His Son (6:27).
    6. He is drawing people to His Son (6:44, 65).
    7. He is giving His people a guarantee (6:37).
  - E. He needs to grasp what Jesus came to do (38-39).
    1. He came to do the Father's will.
    2. He came to rescue the Father's gift.
  - F. He needs to grasp what the Father's will is (40).
    1. His will is to give sinners eternal life now.
    2. His will is to give sinners resurrection life at the last day.

Response: How should this affect us?

1. We should praise.
2. We should preach.
3. We should pray.
4. We should persevere.

"I want to get saved."

That's what the man told me as he spoke to me across my desk. It happened a few years ago when I met with this man at his request. He told me his marriage was in crisis and he'd come to see me for help.

He was very responsive to what I shared that day, in fact, *too responsive*, as it turned out. As I opened the Scriptures to explain what it meant to be saved, I could feel the man's impatience rising. He seemed distracted, not interested in listening, and preoccupied with getting to the "praying the sinner's prayer" part of the conversation.

"Do you want to receive Jesus Christ and your Lord and Savior?" I asked.

"Yes!" he insisted. And he began to pray.

Following the amen, I explained that once a person is born again he enters God's family as a baby, and as a baby he desperately needs help to grow. "Are you interested in looking into God's Word to find out where to go next in your walk with Christ?" I asked.

"Uh, no, not right now," he responded quickly. "I've gotta go," he insisted.

"But this is important," I explained. "You need some help if you're going to live for the Savior."

"Well, thanks, but I don't have time right now. I need to get to an appointment," he explained.

"What appointment?" I asked.

"I'm supposed to be at the court house right now for my divorce hearing."

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\*\*\* Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

And then I began to understand. The man wasn't really interested in what the Judge of heaven and earth had to say about his life. That's because he was more interested in pleasing an earthly judge, the one who was going to decide about his alimony payments and the custody of his kids. I began to see that's what this urgency of "getting saved" was all about, a way to show a judge in Portsmouth just how worthy he was, no matter what his soon-to-be-ex might be saying about him. Not surprisingly, he never did come back to see me for follow-up.

How do you help a person who says they're interested in Jesus, that says they really *want* Jesus in their lives? Some would say, "Well, you show them how to get saved, and then you urge them to get baptized and join the church. And you do it *now* because now's the time to bring in the harvest, when they're interested."

Unfortunately, that's the way I've handled the situation far too many times. I say *unfortunately* because that's not the way Jesus Himself handled it. Did you ever notice how many times Jesus sent seekers home? He didn't seem to be overly impressed with a raised hand.

Remember the rich young ruler? By the time Jesus finished with this enthusiastic seeker, the man walked away from Jesus still in his sins.

Then there's the crowd of five thousand plus that enjoyed the loaves and fish. They wanted to make Jesus their king, but He would have no part of their plan, and left them immediately.

Don't misunderstand. Jesus made it clear that He came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). And He gave a clear invitation, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28)." Jesus never turned away a sinner who came to Him seeking rest for their soul.

But what about sinners who came to Him, not for rest for their souls, but for something else? Now that's a different story. That's precisely what we find as we return this morning to John 6. Right after Jesus fed the five thousand and left the multitude, the crowd followed Him across the lake and tracked Him down in the synagogue in Capernaum. These folks were serious. They made it clear they wanted Jesus.

How did He handle their apparent interest? Basically, He put on the brakes and made them think about three deficiencies in their lives. By the time He's done with this sermon, they'll be grumbling at Him and most will leave Him, at least for now.

Compare that with what happens today in the typical church. When the hand goes up, the sinner is brought to Jesus. "Just pray this prayer," says the preacher, "and you're in the family and on your way to heaven." And everyone rejoices...for awhile. Until the new recruit stops coming to church. "Backslidden," says the preacher. "Boring," says the disinterested church member.

It's so commonplace that we don't even stop to think that our unbiblical methods are at the root of this problem. Until we take an honest look at the way the Master handled such people. When interested sinners came to Him, He loved them enough to help them face three errors that often plague the quick-responder. That's what He's doing in John 6:28-40. We looked at the first two errors last time and introduced the third. Let's do a quick review, then flesh out point three carefully.

#### I. Jesus corrected the sinner's faulty view of his ability (28-29).

Notice verse 28, "Then they [the crowd of seekers] asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?'" There's the sinner's perspective. He thinks he can work his way to God.

But Jesus made it clear he needs God to do a work for him. In verse 29 the Savior responded, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent." That's what the sinner must do, not work, but *believe*. And to do that he must admit that he lacks the ability to do anything to merit God's favor.

#### II. Jesus corrected the sinner's faulty view of his need (30-33).

Verse 30—“What miraculous sign will you give that we may see it and believe you?” So the sinner thinks he needs a sign. “Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,” says 1 Corinthians 1:22.

But Jesus didn’t give this audience a sign, not this time. He’d just given one less than twenty-four hours earlier when He turned a boy’s lunch into a miracle meal. No, if a sinner is going to become a believer, he doesn’t need a sign, like he thinks. He needs to come to grips with the truth. That’s Jesus’ point in verses 32-33.

“I tell you the truth,” says Jesus in verse 32. That’s what the sinner needs, *truth*. In this case, Jesus began presenting truth to these sinners about Moses, about the Father, and about bread. He told them in verses 32-33, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

That’s what the sinner needs, and it’s not what he thinks he needs. Bottom line, he needs *the bread of God*. What’s that? The bread of God is not a thing but a person. It’s not a *what*, but a *He*. Specifically, the bread of God is a person who came from heaven to give life to the world.

“Sir, from now on give us this bread,” said the crowd to Jesus in verse 34. They’re raising their hands, aren’t they? They say they want what Jesus offers. They’re ready to respond.

But hold on. They’re *not* ready, not even close. Their response is ill-informed and short-sighted. They may be raising their hands, but Jesus ignores their apparent interest and proceeds to give them another dose of truth.

### III. Jesus corrected the sinner’s faulty response (34-40).

Before a sinner can respond rightly to God’s offer, he needs to understand some things. Jesus took time to address six critical subjects that the apparent responder must grasp.

**A. He needs to grasp who Jesus is (34-35a).** You can’t believe in a person you don’t know. Who is this person who is offering eternal life to the crowd in Capernaum?

Notice verse 35, “Then Jesus declared, ‘I am the bread of life.’” This is the first of seven I AM statements made by Jesus in John’s Gospel. Later He will announce, I am the light of the world (8:12), the door of the sheep (10:7, 9), the good shepherd (10:11, 14), the resurrection and the life (11:25), the way, the truth, and the life (14:6), and the true vine (15:1, 5).

He begins, “*I am*.” That’s significant. The audience had just referred to Moses. They want Jesus to give them what Moses gave them, a lifetime supply of the physical stuff of life. But that’s not what you need most, says Jesus. And then He takes them back to something Moses had heard at the burning bush. “Tell them I AM has sent you.”

You say you want bread from heaven? That’s good. Let me tell you about that bread. It’s not a loaf, but a person. It’s the person who spoke to Moses from that burning bush. I am that person. *I am the bread of life*.

Jesus repeats this claim four times in this Bread of Life sermon. He’ll say it again in verse 41, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” And in verse 48, “I am the bread of life.” And then in verse 51, “I am the living bread that came down from heaven.”

What’s Jesus saying? We may miss the point since bread for us isn’t what it was for the first century Jew. For us bread is just one of several food groups on a pyramid. You need meat, dairy, fruit, vegetables, and then you need some bread. Bread is sort of the filler for us, and if you want to shed some pounds, it’s one of the first things to go. If you plug that way of thinking about bread into this sermon, you’ll miss the point for sure. Jesus isn’t some optional food group on the plate.

No, this is an astounding claim, and every Jew in the audience got it, as is evidenced by their response. Verse 41 says, “At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, ‘I am the bread that came down from heaven.’” Why did they grumble? Because they knew what Jesus was claiming, and they couldn’t believe it.

1. *He is the source of life.* “I am the bread of life.” If you want life, you must come to Me, says Jesus. That’s what “of life” indicates. He doesn’t just make life better. He is the Giver of life itself, and specifically of life that will never end. That’s what He just told them in verse 27, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.” If you want eternal life, you must come to Me and I will give it to you.

But there’s more. Not only is He the source of life. What’s more...

2. *He is the staple of life.* That’s what bread was for the first century Jew, the staple of life. If you didn’t have bread, you didn’t have a meal.

Friends, Jesus isn’t the cake at the end of the meal. That’s not His claim. He says He is the bread. That means He is what you need if you want to experience life itself, not just give you life some day, but to experience life to the full now and forever. He is the source and staple of life.

No wonder they grumbled. They said in verse 42, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’?”

This is critical, friends. When a person tells you they’re ready to receive Jesus, make sure the person knows who Jesus really is. It does no good (in fact, it does a ton of harm) when a person receives the Jesus they want if it’s not the Jesus who is.

There’s a second subject a responder needs to grasp. First, who Jesus is. Then...

**B. He needs to grasp what Jesus can do (35b).** Jesus made it perfectly clear what He can do at the end of verse 35, “He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” What can He do? Hear His claim...

1. *He can satisfy.* If you come to Me, I’ll take away your hunger. If you believe in Me, I’ll take away your thirst. Hunger. Thirst. He’s using two words that sum up human need and He’s saying, “I can meet those needs. I can *satisfy* you.” But not just satisfy...

2. *He can satisfy permanently.* “He who comes to me will *never* go hungry, and he who believes in me will *never* be thirsty.” What an offer! Jesus says He can give a person eternal satisfaction.

By the way, who benefits from His offer? Jesus says a person must *come* and *believe*. Westcott observes that the first word presents faith in deed as “active and outward,” while the second word presents faith in thought as “resting and inward.”<sup>1</sup> That’s what the sinner must do. He must *come to Jesus*, which necessitates that he leaves where he was—that’s repentance. And he must *believe in Jesus*. He believes that Jesus is who He claimed to be and accomplished what He said He accomplished, namely salvation for his soul through His sacrificial life, death, burial, and resurrection. The person who comes and believes is the person who receives permanent satisfaction for his soul.

Now Jesus gets personal with His audience. He puts the spotlight on them in verse 36, “But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.” How’s that for getting to the point! Here’s the third subject the responsive sinner must face.

**C. He needs to grasp what he has failed to do (36).** “As I told you,” says Jesus. He seems to be referring to what He just told them in verse 26 when He challenged their motives. He told them, “You are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.” You don’t believe in Me. You just want to use Me. That’s a deficient response, and I love you enough to tell you so.

This sounds similar to what we saw back in John 5:36-38. There Jesus was talking to the people in Jerusalem. Here He is addressing the Galileans. He faced it wherever He ministered, down south, now up north. *Unbelief*. People saw Him, liked His miracles, were fascinated by His teaching, but did *not believe*.

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<sup>1</sup> Brooke Westcott, *The Gospel According to Saint John*, p. 229.

Here is the proper response to Jesus, my friend. Nothing short will do. It is the work of God, says verse 29, *to believe in the One He sent*.

Answer this. How does the Lord respond when people *refuse to believe*? Does He fret and agonize over what to do next? Does men's unbelief cause Him to wonder what to do next? Absolutely not. Notice the very next words that come out of Jesus' lips. Right after confronting what these apparent seekers failed to do in verse 36 ("you have seen me and still do not believe"), Jesus said this in verse 37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me."

Listen to F. F. Bruce, "Men's blindness cannot frustrate the saving work of God."<sup>2</sup> Let that sink in. Nothing frustrates God, including the refusal of sinners to receive His Son. Jesus says that the Father has done something that guarantees that there will be sinners who will repent and believe in His Son. That brings us to the fourth subject the deficient responder needs to grasp.

**D. He needs to grasp what the Father is doing (37).** "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

Let's be honest. This is shocking. You're not supposed to share deep theological truth when you evangelize non-Christians, are you? You're supposed to keep it simple. And by all means, stay away from controversial doctrinal issues, like election and predestination. Those subjects don't belong in an evangelistic presentation. They're for the spiritually mature, some would say, if not optional, as others would say, but certainly irrelevant to the non-Christian.

Not so according to Jesus. He didn't shy away from the subject of God's sovereignty in salvation. He talked about it openly, and in this case, openly with *non-believers*. "You don't believe in Me," He told them. "But all that my Father gives to me will."

When Jesus ministered to lost people, He talked a lot about His Father. Let me point out seven things that Jesus revealed about His Father's actions.

1. *He is seeking true worshippers (4:23)*. That's what Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:23, "Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."

What's the Father doing? Jesus told this lost woman that He is *seeking worshipers*. That's why Jesus went through Samaria to begin with, to meet this woman, rescue her from her immoral past and give her new life, and then turn her into a true worshiper.

Last week I met with a young man who came seeking help for personal problems. "How'd you find out about us?" I asked. "I did a google search, found your church, and noticed you offer counseling." "It's no coincidence that you found us," I told him. "The Lord directed you to us."

It's true. The Father is seeking true worshippers. He's after them. That's what makes evangelism possible. Sinners don't seek God. They go their own way. That's what *sin* means. But God is seeking sinners with the purpose of turning them into worshipers of His Son.

Two weeks ago a man's car ran out of gas right in our church's parking lot. As I was driving that man to get some gas, and as he began to open up and tell me about the problems in his life, it became quite apparent that this was no coincidence. Jesus said that the Father is indeed seeking true worshippers.

About a month ago a man stopped by the church building on a Friday afternoon and asked to speak with the minister. "I've been to five churches today and haven't found one yet with someone there. You're number six. I need to talk with someone." And as he began to open up and share his story of pain, I saw the reality of what Jesus said. The Father is seeking true worshippers.

But He's not just seeking them. Jesus says the Father has done something that guarantees that those He is seeking will indeed be found. What's that? He gave them to His Son as a love gift. Verse 37 again, "All that the Father gives me will come to me." In the Greek "all" is in the

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<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, p. 153.

neuter, singular form, which “views those whom God gives to Jesus as a collective body, those chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.”<sup>3</sup>

So here’s what the Father did. Simply stated...

2. *He gave His Son a gift of people (6:37, 39; 10:29; 17:2, 6, 8, 24; Phil. 1:29).* Jesus talked about this love gift throughout John’s Gospel. For instance, He said in John 10:27-29, “My sheep hear my voice...and I give them eternal life. My Father, **who has given them to me**, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand.”

He referred to this love gift throughout His high priestly prayer in John 17. He said in verse 2, “For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life **to all those you have given him.**” Why did Jesus come to the world? To give eternal life. To whom? To the people His Father gave Him. Notice verse 6, “I have revealed you **to those whom you gave me** out of the world. They were yours; **you gave them to me** and they have obeyed your word.” And verse 24, “Father, I want **those you have given me** to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”

In a very real sense, the gift of salvation is for the whole world. “Whoever comes to me I will never drive away,” says Jesus at the end of verse 37. The offer is universal. But who will come? “All that the Father gives me will come,” says Jesus at the beginning of the verse.

Beloved, the Father didn’t send His Son into the world merely to make salvation possible. He sent His Son to save a people, a specific people, a chosen people, an undeserving people. And that’s the way the New Testament letters refer to these people. Philippians 1:29 says, “For it **has been granted to you** on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him.” Why did they believe? Because the Father granted them the ability to believe.

And for this He deserves thanks, says 2 Thessalonians 2:13, “But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning **God chose you to be saved** through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.”

Don’t miss this. The Father knows who the love gift is. 2 Timothy 2:19 says, “Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: “The Lord knows those who are his.”

Now back to John’s Gospel where Jesus reveals something else about His Father. Not only did He give His Son a people, but thirdly...

3. *He gave His Son a work to do (4:34; 5:36).* That’s what Jesus said in John 4:34, “My food,’ said Jesus, ‘is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.’” Then He elaborated in John 5:36, “For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has sent me.”

What’s this work Jesus is talking about? In short, the work the Father gave Him is to rescue the people He has given Him and turn them into true worshipers. And that’s what He did.

4. *He sent His Son into the world to do that work (5:23, 24, 30, 36; 6:29, 57).* A word we see again and again in John 5 & 6 is the word “sent.” For instance, Jesus said in 5:23, “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who **sent** him.” And in 5:24, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who **sent** me has eternal life.” And in 5:30, “I seek not to please myself but him who **sent** me.” And in 5:36, “For the very work that the Father has given me to finish, and which I am doing, testifies that the Father has **sent** me.”

Put this together now and what do we see? Jesus says that in eternity past, the Father gave His Son a gift of people, a people who would worship Him forever and ever. But how does a sinner become a worshiper? He can’t change himself. “That’s your work,” said the Father to His Son. That’s what I am sending You into the world to accomplish.”

And so He did. The Father sent His Son into the world to do that work, and His Son would not be detoured from it. It’s why, when the crowd wanted to make Him king, Jesus left them.

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<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, p. 246.

He didn't come to give sinners what they think they need. He came to save a people. That's why He went to the cross where He died for those undeserving, helpless, and hell-bound people.

The Father did something else...

5. *He placed His seal of approval on His Son (6:27).* That's what Jesus told this crowd in verse 27. He didn't live to please the crowd. He lived to please His Father whose approval was already His. "This is my beloved Son," said the Father at His Son's baptism. "With Him I am well pleased (Matt. 3:17)."

But there's more, says Jesus. Not only is My Father seeking true worshipers, and not only has He given a people to His Son and given His Son the work of rescuing that people, but this also...

6. *He is drawing people to His Son (6:44, 65).* Listen to Jesus in 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me **draws him.**" What's the Father doing? He is drawing people to His Son. Is that necessary? Can't they come to Jesus on their own? No, as Jesus emphasized in 6:65, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me **unless the Father has enabled him.**"

Please notice that in the work of salvation God the Father and God the Son are on one and the same page. The Father chose a people and gave them to His Son. The Son came to rescue those people. The Father is drawing those people to His Son. And there's one more thing...

7. *He is giving His people a guarantee (6:37).* "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me," says the Son. That's a guarantee. There will not be one lost sheep for whom the Shepherd gave His life that doesn't make its way home to the fold. If my Father has given them to Me, they're coming home. And "Whoever comes to me," says the Son, "I will never drive away." That's another guarantee. How could the Son ever drive away a gift from His Father? Impossible. They're secure in His care. As F. F. Bruce explains, "And when they come, they find that Christ undertakes the entire responsibility for their full and final salvation. He does not turn them away when they come, nor does he subsequently disown them."<sup>4</sup>

This may be new to you, so let me give you some words, some texts, and then a story.

First, some words. Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and Arminianism are theological systems that say that God's salvation is dependent on man's will. Yes, God made salvation possible, they say, but only man can make it a reality. God's hands are tied. Man is in the driver's seat.

But that goes against the clear Scriptural teaching of text after text. Let me give you some more texts that show that salvation is God's sovereign work...

Jonah 2:9 "Salvation comes from the LORD."

Matthew 22:14 "For many are invited, but few are chosen."

Acts 13:48 "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed."

Romans 8:28-30 "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

Ephesians 1:4 "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons."

2 Timothy 2:10 "Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory."

Titus 1:1 "Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God's elect."

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<sup>4</sup> F. F. Bruce, p. 153.

1 Peter 1:1-2 “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God’s elect...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood.”

1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”

But terms and texts can make God’s grace seem so academic, so let me tell you a story. You’ve perhaps heard of George Muller, a great man of God in Bristol, England in the 1800s who built orphanages and cared for more than ten thousand orphans. He was a man of great faith who raised millions of dollars without asking anyone but God for funds. What you may not know, and I didn’t until recently when I began reading his biography, *George Muller of Bristol*, by Arthur T. Pierson, is how wicked he was prior to his conversion.

As a teenager George Muller was a liar, a gambler, a drunkard, and a thief. He actually stole money again and again from his father. He ran up a huge bill once by staying in a plush hotel, then left town before paying and went to another hotel in another town. When he tried to run from the second bill, they caught him and threw him in jail. This was how he lived for his first twenty years. He was a slave to his self-centered passions, a disgrace to his own family, and an enemy of God.

And then, in November 1825, the Lord saved him. I’ll let Muller’s biographer tell the story:

After a score of years of evil-doing George Müller was converted to God, and the radical nature of the change strikingly proves and displays the sovereignty of Almighty Grace. He had been kept amid scenes of outrageous and flagrant sin, and brought through many perils, as well as two serious illnesses, because divine purposes of mercy were to be fulfilled in him. No other explanation can adequately account for the facts.

Let those who would explain such a conversion without taking God into account remember that it was at a time when this young sinner was as careless as ever; when he had not for years read the Bible or had a copy of it in his possession; when he had seldom gone to a service of worship, and had never yet even heard one gospel sermon; when he had never been told by any believer what it is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to live by God’s help and according to His Word; when, in fact, he had no conception of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and knew not the real nature of a holy life, but thought all others to be as himself, except in the degree of depravity and iniquity. This young man had thus grown to manhood without having learned that rudimental truth that sinners and saints differ not in degree but in kind; that if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; yet the hard heart of such a man, at such a time and in such conditions, was so wrought upon by the Holy Spirit that he suddenly found entrance into a new sphere of life, with new adaptations to its new atmosphere.<sup>5</sup>

That’s when it happened. Muller wasn’t searching for God, but God was searching for him. On a Saturday afternoon Muller and a friend named Beta were out taking a walk when Beta, who wasn’t even a believer, invited him to go to a meeting at a Christian’s house. Muller felt out of place, but someone told him, “Come as often as you please; house and heart are open to you.”

Once inside he watched in amazement as a man got on his knees to pray. “This kneeling made a deep impression on me,” said Muller, “for I had never either seen anyone on his knees, nor had I ever prayed myself on my knees.”

Then the leader of the little meeting read a chapter from the Bible and read a printed sermon, since it was illegal for a non-ordained man to preach extemporaneously. The meeting closed with a hymn and another time of prayer. That was it. Nothing flashy, nothing sensational, and nothing initiated by Muller.

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur T. Pierson, *George Muller of Bristol*, pp 17-18.

Yet when Muller went home that night he was a new man. “I was happy,” says Muller, “though if I had been asked why I was happy, I could not have clearly explained it.”

How did that happen? Here’s how. “All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”

There are two more subjects that Jesus says the responder must grasp.

**E. He needs to grasp what Jesus came to do (38-39).** “For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.”

Why did Jesus come? In short, to do two things.

1. *He came to do the Father’s will.* That’s verse 38.

2. *He came to rescue the Father’s gift.* That’s verse 39. The two go hand in hand, don’t they? It’s the Father’s will to rescue the Father’s gift, and that’s why Jesus came.

**F. He needs to grasp what the Father’s will is (40).** And this is it, says Jesus in verse:40, “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day<sup>6</sup>.” What’s the Father’s will? Two things...

1. *His will is to give sinners eternal life now.* And...

2. *His will is to give sinners resurrection life at the last day.* A lot of people talk about going to heaven as if that’s the goal of salvation. It’s not. Heaven is just a temporary dwelling place for the believer’s soul, my friend, wonderful for sure, but temporary. For the believer, something better than heaven is coming, something permanent. *I will raise him up at the last day,* says Jesus.

What’s He talking about? The same thing He mentioned back in in John 5:28-29, “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out—those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”

The goal isn’t heaven, beloved. That’s just a stop on the way. Your Father’s will is that you live forever with Him in a resurrected and glorified body in a new creation—a new heaven and a new earth—where you will worship, honor, and enjoy your Savior, His beloved Son, forever and ever.

#### Response: How should this affect us?

I’ll mention four ways.

1. *We should praise.* Why did Jesus tell non-believers all this amazing truth about the Father’s gift and the Father’s guarantee to draw sinners to His Son? It’s so that, when He does, the proper person gets the glory! To the praise of the glory of His grace, says Paul three times in Ephesians 1 (verses 6, 12, and 14). I hope you talk about salvation—that’s your salvation and others’ too—in ways that magnify the Savior and not the sinner. Give Him the praise!

2. *We should preach.* It’s through the preaching of His Word that the Sovereign Lord has chosen to bring sinners to Himself. I don’t know whom He’s chosen. I don’t need to know. It’s my assignment—and yours too—to preach. He’ll bring them home.

3. *We should pray.* I can’t touch a sinner’s heart. I can’t remove blinders. I can’t produce conviction. I can’t generate saving faith. But He can, and He does. So let’s ask Him to do so! Let’s pray for the lost.

4. *We should persevere.* Don’t let a sinner’s resistance today keep you from preaching and praying for his salvation again tomorrow, and the next day, and the next. The crowd rejected Jesus on this day, and eventually they put Him on a cross. But in God’s time many did come to believe in His Son. So while we praise and preach and pray, let’s also persevere.

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<sup>6</sup> The last day is the judgment day. See 5:28-29