



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 6:43-45

“Efficacious Grace of the Drawing of the Given”

TRANSCRIPT

“The Jews then, were murmuring concerning him because he said, ‘I am the bread which hath come down out of heaven.’ And they were saying, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How now does he say that I have descended out of heaven?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Stop murmuring among yourselves (literally, with one another), no one is able to come to me except the Father which hath sent me, or who hath sent me, shall draw him. And I will raise him up at the last day. It has been written in the prophets; and they shall all be taught of God. Everyone who has heard from the Father, and learned, comes to me.’”

Let’s bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Our heavenly Father, we pray that we may experience in this hour, the teaching that comes from Thee. We know that as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we have received the teaching concerning the salvation that Jesus Christ provides. We are grateful to Thee for that, and we ask, Lord, that Thou wilt continue to teach us in this hour. Enable us to truly understand the word of God and may it also mean something to us in our daily lives in our Christian thinking and in our Christian action.

We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] To the question, “How do we come to Jesus Christ,” varied answers have been given. Pelagians have said, “I came by myself”, for they deny grace altogether. Semi-pelagians, who believe that some measure of grace is necessary, but that men have the power of their own free will to make the initial decision toward God have said, “I wanted to come, and God helped me.” They deny prevenient grace or grace before our salvation. They admit cooperative grace, if man first chooses to come. Arminians of evangelical stripe have said, “God gave me sufficient grace to come because Christ died and I cooperated.” Arminians admit total depravity, that is, Arminians of the evangelical stamp. They admit total depravity, but they claim that Jesus Christ, by his death on the Cross, has made it possible for all men to have sufficient grace, and sufficient grace becomes efficient grace when we cooperate with the Lord. Lutherans have answered, “God brought me, and I did not resist.” Lutherans deny the Arminian contention that we have the power to cooperate, but Lutherans have historically believed, “While we do not have the power to cooperate, and we do not believe in the decision of the free will, we do have the power to resist the word of God.”

I was looking again today in George Muller, “Delighted in God” a biography of Mr. Muller by Roger Steer, a rather recent work. And in it there is a paragraph on how Mr. Muller changed his attitude toward the doctrine of election. Mr. Steer writes, “Secondly, Muller changed his attitude to the doctrine of election. This is the doctrine that God chose Christians before the foundation of the world, Ephesians 1:4, that nothing could happen to shake God’s resolve to save them and that once saved, they are saved forever. A few days after arriving in Tainmouth,” that’s in Great Britain or in England, “He had called this a devilish doctrine.” Incidentally, I smiled when I read that because I have half a dozen people around the country that claim that I preach devilish doctrine when I teach efficacious grace, so I’m following in Mr. Muller’s steps to that extent at least. I wish

I could follow more fully in his other steps. “He did not believe,” Mr. Steer continues, “that he had brought himself to God, for that was too manifestly false.

“But yet, I held that I might have resisted finally, Mr. Muller wrote. He now read the New Testament through with this doctrine in mind. To my great astonishment, I found that the passages which speak decidedly for election and persevering grace were about four times as many as those which speak, apparently, against these truths. And even those few, shortly after, when I had examined and understood them, served to confirm me in the above doctrines. Muller was aware of the danger that the belief that Christians are eternally secure could sanction a careless attitude to holiness, but held that the doctrines were only dangerous if believed in the head, and not in the heart. Looking back some years later to the time when he first adopted these views in Tainmouth he wrote, for in time of temptation, I have been repeatedly led to say; should I thus sin? I should only bring misery into my soul for a time, and dishonor God. For being a son of God forever, I should have to be brought back again, though it might be in the way of severe chastisement. Thus I say, the electing love of God in Christ; when I have been able to realize it, has often been the means of producing holiness, instead of leading me into sin.” So Mr. Muller’s views at one time were similar to the Lutherans. He believed that God saved men but, nevertheless, that he could resist the grace of God.

Calvinists have always affirmed very simply, “God brought me to Christ.” And that, I think, is the teaching of the Bible. Today I must confess I had a most interesting letter and I have been smiling about it all afternoon. There is a theological seminary in the south that has been started in recent years by some Arminians. Now, these Arminians happen to be friends of mine. In fact, they are some of my former students in theological seminary. Now, the theological seminary here in Dallas is not an Arminian seminary, but these men are Arminians, and they have pushed the doctrine of Arminianism rather strongly. They are at best, one point Calvinists, and which I would say leaves them almost entirely in the Arminian camp. Well, they’ve started the theological seminary, and

I received a letter from one of their students today, and I say, I've been smiling. I've told Miss Ray, the church secretary about it. I've told my wife about it, and now I'm going to tell all of you about it because I've enjoyed it.

“Dear Dr. Johnson,” it says, “I'm dropping this note to inquire for information concerning a ‘Systematic Theology’ that you have published or are going to publish. If you have published or are going to publish one, I would appreciate it, if I could purchase a copy when it is available. I'm a student at” and he's a student at the Tulsa Seminary for Biblical Languages, “and I have been coming to more Calvinistic conclusions in my own study of the Scriptures and would like any help I can get. Also, if you could recommend a strong five-point Seminary or Bible Institute that still holds to dispensation or pre-millennialism. Thank you for any assistance you can offer.” Now, the interesting thing about this to me is, there he is studying with Arminianism. He's getting it all day long, but he's beginning to see it's not true, and so now he's looking for something else. So by their very presentation of their doctrine, they evidently are driving him into the arms of the teaching that we think the Bible has. So I've really been enjoying this, and I'm going to write him a nice little letter and recommend some other places where he can go to study.

The subject of efficacious grace is, of course, the biblical answer to the question, “How and why we come to Jesus Christ.” And John in his Johannine theology or in his theology makes a very distinct contribution to this debate, particularly, in the section that I've just read and, especially, in verse 43, verse 44, and verse 45 of John chapter 6. There is hardly any doubt, that on the surface at least, even before we look at the words of the text that his teaching is very congenial to “Calvinism” or the teaching of what is known as Calvinism. But before we look at it, it might help to look at the theological background of the matter, and so in our outline I want to, first of all, discuss the theological background of efficacious grace. This is Roman I in the outline and capital A: The Distinction between External Calling and Internal Calling.

“External calling” refers to the declaration of the plan of salvation with its command to repent, its appeal to motivation such as well sometimes, preachers of the word, following the teaching of the word appeal to men’s fear of judgment. That’s perfectly all right. When we preach the Gospel, we appeal to men’s hope. We also appeal to gratitude when we set forth the saving ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and call upon men in the light of this manifest exhibition of the love and grace of God to respond by repentance and faith and the reception of salvation. This is also called “general calling.” So when anybody preaches the Gospel of Christ, there is an “external calling” to respond to the ministry of the word of God. For example, on Sundays, generally speaking in this church, there will be “external calling” taking place. The Gospel is preached. Sometimes it’s reserved for the end of the message, but generally it is preached, and that appeal to men on the basis of what Christ has done to believe in Jesus Christ is “external calling”; that is, it is something outside of the individual’s heart. It’s from the preacher. It’s from the teacher. It comes audibly to their ears, and they have the opportunity of responding to it. That is called “general calling” in the sense that it goes out to all men. All men are called upon in Scripture to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, so “external calling” is the general preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all men; both the elect, and the non-elect.

“Internal calling” is the effectual work of the Holy Spirit by which men are savingly influenced to salvation. Grace is the initiation of the work. “Calling” is the result of the action of grace. Grace is the general description of what God does in our hearts through the preaching of the Gospel. And then the “calling” -- that is, the work of the Holy Spirit calling us to relationship to God, is the product of the work of the Holy Spirit in grace. The “calling” comes from the Holy Spirit, as distinguished from the word of God, but the “internal calling” is the combination of the preaching of the word and then the word applied by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible teaches the two “calls” suggested right here. For example, in John chapter 6 in verse 45, we read, “And they shall all be taught of God.” Now the “taught” suggests that there is instruction given, but “taught of God” used in this context explain – explaining the preceding statement of the Father drawing men to Christ, is a reflection of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit who applies the word of God. Now, we also have reference to these matters in verse 64 and verse 65, of this chapter, and I want you to turn over there too. The Lord says, “But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who were not believing, and who is the one betraying him. And he was saying, ‘For this cause I have told you that no one can come to me except it be given him by the Father.’” Now, to be “given by the Father” is to be the recipient of this internal calling. So we have the combination then, of the outward preaching of the word of God, and then the inward calling of God the Holy Spirit who brings men to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1, verse 5 and verse 6, describes the preaching of the Gospel in Thessalonica which he did, and also the response that was given to his ministry there. This is what he writes beginning with verse 5 and verse 6. He said, “Knowing brethren, beloved by the Lord your election, because our Gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance; as you know of what sort we came to be in your midst on account for your sake. And you became imitators of us and of the Lord receiving the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Spirit.” So notice. We have here, “The Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit” and then also that “they received the word with joy of the Holy Spirit.” So the apostle combines the two here. He speaks of his own preaching of the word of God, and the fact that as he preached the word of God, the Holy Spirit applied the word, and there was the accompanying manifestations of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit. So there are two calls. There is the “general call” and there is the “special call.”

Now, capital B: The Description of Efficacious Grace. Efficacious grace which secures the saving internal call is a divine influence. We read in 1 Peter chapter 1 in verse 2 that “individuals are set apart by the Holy Spirit.” In John chapter 6 in verse 44, Jesus says, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” So the work of the Father in “drawing” is a reference to efficacious grace. In 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 13 and verse 14, we again have reference made to the sanctification of the spirit, and then belief of the truth. It is something that precedes belief of the truth; that is, the work of the Holy Spirit in setting a person apart for faith. So it’s the Father’s drawing. It’s the Spirit’s work of setting men apart for faith in Christ. It’s the work of the Holy Spirit in applying the word that is heard to the individual and, of course, by that we learn that he belongs to those who are the company of the elect. It operates, this efficacious grace operates immediately; that is, now I should explain that, because that’s a theological term. When we say, “operates immediately,” we mean, “apart from some mediator.” So that what happens, is the word of God is preached and then the Holy Spirit works immediately upon the heart of the individual. He does not work through some other agency than the divine word, of course, which is really his word. He operates immediately. “Directly”, is the force of that “immediately.” It’s a supernatural work. It’s the work of the Holy Spirit in overcoming men’s deadness of heart, for all of us are dead in trespasses and sins. We are all, because we are dead in trespasses and sins, blind. And we are also possessed of hardness of heart. So it is the work of the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of the elect and to transform their nature; making the unwilling, willing.

Now, capital C: The Infallibility of Efficacious Grace. The elect is subject to moral and mediate influences upon the will, common to him and to the unconverted. For example, the elect person does hear preaching of the Gospel and he does in his experience often fail to respond. For example, almost everyone in this room who is a Christian, you probably remember that when the first preaching of the word of God came

to you, you resisted. It is possible for the elect to resist the preaching of the word of God, but not to resist it finally. That's the point that is significant. We, all of us, resisted for a time, generally speaking, but the time comes when God so works in the hearts of the elect that he overcomes, and wins the battle. In other words, he operates by his own special influences within the will, and this operation, this special influence, is neither resistible nor irresistible because it acts from within and it carries the will spontaneously with it. I think, this important.

The other day after one of the classes in Chicago, I had a young man, a man who had been thinking, come up to me and say, “What you seem to be saying is, that the preaching of the Gospel is when the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the Gospel. Well then, we are forced to believe in Jesus Christ.” And I tried to tell him, “No, it's not that we are forced to believe in Jesus Christ. We don't have any sense of wanting to stay unbelievers, but being dragged screaming, and crying, and resisting into the kingdom of God. But we know, that through the preaching of the word, and through those unseen influences of the Holy Spirit, we who at one time were unwilling, become willing.” Now, that is the work of the Holy Spirit in efficacious grace. That's the reason Charles Hodge, one of the great theologians of the nineteenth century, prefers the term “effectual grace” rather than “irresistible grace” which might give the impression that you really didn't want to believe in Christ, but there you found yourself believing in him.

Well now, we all remember a time when we didn't want to, but at the moment of our salvation, we are carried through the preaching of the Gospel and the Holy Spirit into a willing response to the message concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And we feel that we make that decision, and we do as free agents, but we learn from the teaching of the word of God, that it is the Holy Spirit in efficacious grace who brought us to make that decision as a free agent. No free will, but free agency.

Now Roman II: The Johannine Teaching on Efficacious Grace. John says the Jews were murmuring over the great revelation concerning the bread of life who had come

down from heaven. That’s evident from verse 38, here, and from verse 42. They, of course, ask the Lord, “What do you mean when you say you have descended out of heaven?” Now, the Lord doesn’t answer the objection, which was based upon his known parentage. They said, “We know his mother and his father, and how does he say; I’ve come down from heaven?” Well, the Lord doesn’t bother to answer that question, but he goes right to the heart of the matter. They must be taught of God to respond to the teaching that he is giving. Whispering will not help. Teaching from God will. The forty-fourth verse spells it all out, and it’s repeated in verse 65. Listen to that forty-fourth verse again. “No one can come to me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” This is, in a sense, the fundamental doctrine of the Gospel of John; the divine activity of the Father in the salvation of men, and that divine activity is the initiating force in our salvation.

J.H. Bernard, who has written one of the technical commentaries on the Greek text of John in the “International Critical Commentary Series” says, “Here is the fundamental doctrine of the fourth Gospel; that is, that the approach of the soul to God or Christ is not initiated by man himself, but by a movement of divine grace. That truth is adumbrated in chapter 4 in verse 23, where the Father is said to “seek true worshippers.” That expresses the activity of the Father before our salvation. He’s seeking true worshippers. The impossibility of anyone coming to Christ was implied in the statement of verse 37, but it’s stated plainly in verse 44.” Verse 37, says, “Everyone whom the Father gives me shall come to me, and the one coming to me I shall by no means cast out.” Notice. “Everyone whom the Father gives me shall come to me.” Not everyone shall come. Not everyone who hears the Gospel preached, but, “everyone whom the Father gives me shall come to me.” And then in verse sixty-five again, “For this cause I have told you that no one can come to me, except it be given him of the Father.”

Now, the key word here in verse forty-four is the word “draw.” “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” What is that? What does that

mean? Well, we know it's the biblical term for “efficacious grace.” If someone should say, “I don't believe in efficacious grace,” all you need do is say, “Well, what do you mean by the drawing of the Father?” “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” This word translated here “draw” is a word that is found in other places in the Gospel of John, but here it clearly seems to refer to the divine attraction. It also, incidentally, is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Jeremiah chapter 31 in verse 3, where the text says, “With loving kindness have I drawn Thee,” a reference to Yahweh's work of efficacious grace in the salvation of the nation Israel in its beginning days. It's used of the attractive power of Christ crucified in chapter 12, verse 32. “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men to me.” Incidentally, that's one of the many passages in the Bible in which “all men” does not refer to every individual because our Lord was lifted up, and not everyone is drawn to him. Some are. Some are not. But what is meant is, not all men without exception, but all men without distinction. “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men,” that is, Jews and Gentiles, “for I am the Savior of the world.”

This word is used also in John chapter 18 in verse 10, of the “drawing of a sword” by Peter, who drew out his sword. It's used in John chapter 21, verse 6 and verse 11, of the dragging of the net which had the fishes in it to shore. It's used in Acts chapter 16 in verse 19, of the dragging of Paul and Silas before the magistrates of the city. It generally seems to connote a certain resistance on the part of that which is dragged or drawn, but the significant thing about it, is that in every case in which this word is used, it is an effectual drawing; that is, the attempt is successful. So “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” Now, we don't like to hear this kind of teaching sometimes, until we begin to rejoice in sovereign grace. Then we look all through the Bible to find it. But until we come to understand sovereign grace, we tend to respond negatively to this, and try to find different ways in which we don't have to believe it.

William Barclay, the well known Scottish interpreter, who's no longer with us now, he gave a lot of this very data that I've just given you, acknowledged that it was generally true as I've said, but then adds, “Always, there is this idea of resistance. God can and does draw men, but man's resistance can defeat the pull of God. Not a one of the uses of this verb supports that idea. Not a single usage.” Calvin's comment is worth hearing. I like him. I like Johnny better than Billy; Johnny Calvin better than Billy Barclay. This is what Johnny says, “As far as the manner of the hearing goes, it's not violent so as to compel men by an external force, but yet it is an effectual movement of the Holy Spirit, turning men from being unwilling and reluctant into willing. It's a word of successful force.” “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.”

Now, I want you to notice it says, “The Father who has sent me.” In other words, there is a correlation between the subject “he who sent me”, and the verb “draw.” The same God who sends Jesus Christ for the souls of men is the one who draws the souls of men to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, the last clause of the verse is the consummation of that spiritual progress, which begins by the divine drawing. He says, “And he shall raise him up at the last day.” So the drawing, which begins with the Father, which brings us into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, is not only an effectual drawing, but it will be completed by the resurrection and everyone drawn shall ultimately stand before the Lord in resurrection glory. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” So the Father draws men to Christ. They come to Christ. They receive eternal life. They find they're members of the elect family of God, and Jesus Christ guarantees that he will resurrect them at the last day. So between the extreme of drawing on the one hand, and the raising up, lies the whole development of a man's spiritual life. We begin with the drawing. We conclude with the resurrection. In the mean time, we're enjoying the Christian life.

Now, the next verse is important too. Jesus adds, “It is written in the prophets; and they shall all be taught of God.” Notice again the “all.” To what does the “all” refer? To every single man? No, no. Again, all who are drawn. The context determines the sense of terms like that. “And they shall all be taught of God.” What “all”? Why, those that are the recipients of efficacious grace. Now, this is a citation from the Old Testament. The Lord Jesus reaches back in the fifty-fourth chapter of the Book of Isaiah, and just takes this text out and says, “Look, this is just the fulfillment of what the Bible taught in the Old Testament. They shall all be taught of God.” Now, if you’ll look at that in the context of Isaiah 54, the “all, “that is, the people of God referred to there, is a reference to the messianic covenant community of Israel. “They shall all,” that is; all who are members of this messianic covenant community of Israel. They are all who are to be the recipients of the kingdom blessings, they are taught of God. Those who belong to the Messiah don’t need instruction from men. They carry within them the effects of the divine instruction. The following “who” or “whoever” simply individualizes this specific “all.” So he says, “They shall all be taught of God. Everyone who hath heard from the Father, and learned, comes to me.”

In the Old Testament text, there’s a reference to the sons, but that’s omitted here; just simply “all.” And the reason the Lord may have omitted that is because it might introduce a possible misunderstanding that Isaiah referred to all individual Jews, but he’s talking about the messianic covenant community; that is, the Israel within Israel who are true believers in Jesus Christ.

So our Lord then makes an application of a timeless principle in the divine dealings with men. To be taught of God is to be drawn by God to Jesus Christ. I wish I had time to look at passages like 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 1 Corinthians 2:13, Philippians 3:15. All of these texts express the idea of being taught by God.

So the Father’s drawing then, involves three steps, as the next sentence indicates. It involves hearing. “Everyone who’s heard.” Second, learning. And third, coming. The

Father takes the initiative, and he teaches. Everyone who listens and learns, comes. Sometimes in our meetings we sing, “O Happy Day.” It has a stanza that goes like this. “’Tis done. The great transaction’s done. I am my Lord’s, and he is mine. He drew me, and I followed on, charmed to confess the voice divine.” That’s efficacious grace. That’s effectual grace. If you like the term “irresistible grace,” that’s irresistible grace. Now you can see from this, that faith is something that God gives. That’s taught in many places. It’s not specifically referred to here, but it’s implied here, because the whole process is a gift of God, as he points out.

Now, I don’t know whether I’m going to get over my head or over your head, but I want to mention something. In logic, you can speak of a necessary condition as a circumstance in whose absence a given event could not occur or a given thing could not exist. A necessary condition. A sufficient condition, is a circumstance such that, whenever it exists, a given event occurs, or a given thing exists. A necessary and sufficient condition for the occurrence of a given event or the existence of a given thing, is therefore, a circumstance in whose absence the event could not occur or the thing could not exist, in which is also such that, whenever it exists, the event occurs, or the thing exists. The terminology is sometimes extended, I will explain this, the terminology is sometimes extended to the formal relations that exist between propositions. Thus, the truth of a proposition; ‘A’ is said to be a necessary condition for the truth of another proposition ‘B’, if ‘B’ implies ‘A’. And the truth of ‘A’ is said to be a sufficient condition for the truth of ‘B’, if ‘A’ implies ‘B’. Now, I know that’s something that you’d like to see written before you, so you could think about it.

But now, here we have in verse 44, the statement made. “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” But look above at verse 37, “Every thing which the Father hath given to me shall come to me. Everyone that the Father has given me shall come to me.” Now notice verse 65. Verse 65 says, “No one can come to me, except he be given or it be given him by the Father.” Everyone given shall come.

No one can come unless he's given. All right now, I'm going to ask you a question. Suppose you didn't like this teaching. You didn't like this teaching that, “we are given by the Father to the Son” and that everyone given shall come. Suppose you say, “Suppose everybody is given; everyone without exception. Well now, if everyone is given, what would be the result?” Because everyone given shall come, what would be the result? Come on, speak up. Universalism. Universalism. All right. John 6:37 refutes that, because we know universalism is not taught in the Bible, but John 6:37 does say, “Everyone that the Father has given me shall come to me.” Well, suppose you reply, “Well, suppose none are given?” Well, verse 65 says, “No one can come except it be given him by the Father.” If none are given, then who will be saved? No one will be saved. Suppose we come by our free will. Well, John chapter 6 and verse 65 says, “No one can come except it be given him of the Father.” So how can we come by our free will? How can we come of ourselves? It must be given of the Father. Verse 44 says, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” That eliminates free will. Well someone says, “Suppose we must exercise faith too.” Well, that's true. That's very true.

Will you look at verse 35? Verse 35 says, “Jesus said to them; I am the bread of life. The one coming to me shall by no means hunger, and the one believing in me shall by no means thirst.” Those are equated. Coming is believing. Believing is coming. So “No man can come to me, exercise faith in me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” So the beginning of our faith is the drawing of the Father. “No man can come to me, except it be given him of the Father.” Well, to be given of the Father and to come is to exercise faith, but of course, it is the product of the drawing. Those two texts, verse 37 and verse 65, express both the necessary condition of salvation and the sufficient condition of salvation. It is sufficient to be given by the Father. It is necessary to be given by the Father and those who are given, come. “No man can come, except he's given.” Who can possibly come who is not in this company? No one. No one can be

saved, except those that are given, those that are drawn. But everyone given and everyone drawn shall come. What does that mean? That means only the elect are saved, but it means all the elect are saved. Now, I defy anyone to find any loophole in this. If you think there is any possible way for you to stand up and say, “Men are not saved by the divine activity first, who elects and draws men to Christ.” I’ll answer you with verse 37 and verse 65. Now, if you want to break your mind, try to find some way in which you can get around this absolutely, it seems to me, inviolable logical situation.

Well, it’s Calvin’s contention that verse 45, overthrows free will, for he comments, “The whole faculty of free will which the papists dream about, is utterly overthrown by these two clauses, for if we begin to come to Christ only when the Father has drawn us, neither the beginning of the faith, nor any preparation for it lies in us. But that’s what the man who believes in free will says. On the other hand, if all come whom the Father has taught, he gives them not only the freedom to believe, but faith itself. When, therefore, we willingly obey the Spirit’s guiding, it is a part and as it were, sealing of grace. For God would not draw us if he only stretched out his hand, and left our will in a state of suspense, but he has properly said to draw us when he extends the power of his Spirit to the full completing of faith. They are said to hear God, who willingly submit to God when he speaks within them because the Spirit reigns in their hearts.” Thank you Johnny. That’s a good statement.

Now, we must conclude very quickly by just saying a word or two about the practical effects of efficacious grace and capital A: The Magnification of the Divine Purpose. Salvation is a work of God. It’s, therefore, not to be hurried along, effectuated by stronger appeals, mightier arguments on the part of the preacher, more sparkling personalities, more telling illustrations, longer invitations, keener psychological insight, better eye-catching pedagogical helps or methods, and we must not forget that. On the other hand, we do not contend that salvation is helped by insipid thinking, dull personalities, windowless sermons, shunning of aids and teaching that the Spirit lays

before our eyes. All that we say is, that salvation is a work of God, and though we may use aids, and helps, and illustrations it is still a work of God. And when we realize that from beginning to end, it is something produced in us by God, then we will magnify the grace of God as seen in his magnificent purpose, and he included us too.

How senseless then is it for a preacher or a teacher or a Christian to be discouraged because the response is so slight? Now, I confess, I get discouraged every now and then. I've preached in Believers Chapel for almost twenty years, and when I look out and see some in the audience whose growth I haven't noticed very much, that doesn't mean it's not there. But I sometimes get a little discouraged, not simply here, but in other places too. But there is no reason for us to get discouraged. It's God who saves man. It's God who uses his word. And if we are faithful, and get down upon our knees, and thank God for the privilege of expounding the Scriptures or telling our next door neighbor about the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we can leave it in his hands. Discouragement, in the final analysis, is often a form of self-centeredness. Our need is to be faithful to the word of God, because he promises to save his people. He will draw them and he will draw all who are given, every single individual of them, will ultimately be brought to the Lord Jesus Christ. What a wonderful grace it is that I might be the instrumentality in some one person being drawn to Christ. May God help us to be faithful.

Let's bow together in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for these wonderful statements from the Lord Jesus Christ. O Father, how wonderful it is to be drawn, to be given. How wonderful it is to believe, and we know, O God that, that work is Thine. We worship Thy name through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For His name's sake. Amen.