

Such A Significant Verse
John 6:37

We have seen the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, then the departure of Jesus, and then the crowds follow Jesus. And Jesus indicates their feeble reason for following him was not worship or trust but in order to get their physical desires and needs met. He indicates that God has bread that if anyone eats he will never hunger again. And they say they want this bread, no doubt thinking of physical bread. So look at what Jesus says in verse 35, **“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.’** Notice the title Jesus gives to himself, “I am,” and again, we mentioned last time that this is the name of God and would not have been lost on the Jews. He is the God who always was and is. He is the all supreme and self-sufficient one. And he is the one that provides both bread and water, which were staples of life, and what he is talking about here is eternal life. Notice the offer is “to come to me,” and “believes in me.” He is talking about life eternal. He is the only one anyone ever needs. It is based on his life and death alone.

And notice to who this life is offered. It is offered to “whoever” and you see that word used twice in this verse. It is a promise irregardless of who they are and what they have done, and the offer is just to believe on Jesus Christ. It is an incredible offer in its scope, it is eternal in nature, and in its ease - all one has to do is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. It is almost like the Philippian jailor in Acts who says in 18:30, **“Then he brought them out and said, ‘Sirs, what must I do to be saved?’** Notice what he asks, “What must I do?” The emphasis is on self, and some kind of self-atoning work that can cover sin or appease the wrath of God because of his sin. But listen to the answer of Paul in verse 31, **“And they said, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.’** Believe! That is it. It is an incredible promise in its scope and simplicity.

But look at verse 36 of our text and what Jesus says about this crowd, **“But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.”** What have the crowds done? They have seen and heard Christ. They have seen his miracles and heard his words, and look at the word “yet” because it intensifies their failure and rebellion and guilt in not believing on Jesus Christ. And for any reader of this gospel it must be heart-breaking. I think many think that if only I saw Jesus and heard his teaching or seen the signs and wonders that he performed then I would believe. And it is incredibly depressing how hard the heart is in sin, and the refusal to believe what is so gracious a promise and so easy to do - believe - believe in Him.

And if that was all that was said it would be extremely depressing, but then we come to verse 37. And verses 37-40 are so significant because they are verses that display and reveal God’s sovereignty in salvation. Bible teachers, preachers and theologians have turned to these verses to show to God’s people what is known as the doctrines of God’s grace, and they are many times taught with the acronym of a tulip. They are total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. And tonight we come to verse 37, and verse 37 is such a significant verse because it teaches three of those doctrines of grace. And what they

offer after the free offer of salvation, and the depressing response of the crowd is hope, hope in the purposes and plan of God - a salvation that is founded on his sovereign purposes in which he will act and effect salvation for those who are his people, people of his grace and a grace alone. And I truly believe the more we see the activity of God in our salvation, the more we are brought to rejoice, take greater pleasure, have glorious confidence and trust in Him. And I want us to look at this verse and see the glorious of God in this most significant verse.

1. We see divine election. V.37a.

The more that you see the portrait of man throughout the Scriptures the more we should be amazed that God has chosen any for salvation. Here are these people, and through all the advantages and the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, but they will not submit to Christ. How hardened in their sin must they have been. But you see that in Noah's day. Genesis 6:5 says, "**The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**" We see that in the time of the judges that we have that repeated refrain that "**Everyone did what was right in their own eyes.**" They didn't care what God had said. We realize before our Lord comes back people will continue in their wickedness. Jesus says in Matt. 24:37-38, "**For as were the days of Noah, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark.**" It does not matter what advantages are give, how clear the revelation or how wondrous the miracle our hardened hearts will not turn. So what hope have we, and it is here that salvation is all planned of God, and will be effected by God.

Look at what Jesus says here, "**All that the Father gives me.**" There is so much that we can say about the phrase. The last verse he uses the pronoun "you," speaking of their response to the work and message of Christ, but here with the words, "All that the Father gives me," he is talking about a different group of individuals. And it is those that are given by the Father to the Son, and as we continue through this verse we realize that although the giving has already taken place, there is still a future coming to Christ that will take place. When were they given by the Father to the Son? Listen to Ephesians 1:3-4, "**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.**" He has chosen us before the foundation of the world. And Romans 9 indicates that this choosing was not based on anything that we would do good or bad, in other words, God is not looking down the corridor of time seeing something that we would do. And notice that this is indicating that the eternal destiny of every person is in God's hands. He is the ultimate decider. There is a sense where we freely make decisions, and we love to believe that we are in our own hands, but we are ultimately in God's hands. And out of the multitude of sinners God the Father in grace will give some to the Son.

And notice that they are given by the Father to the Son, because so often we think of salvation as something that we receive or election something that we receive.

We are the recipients of this unmerited and ill-deserved choice of God, and we are. But here the emphasis is on Jesus receiving from the Father all that the Father gives Jesus. In the eternal counsel of God before there was anything or anyone God the Father in counsel with the Son chose to give certain out of the mass of humanity to be his. It is his ultimate choice. You can see this on chapter 17 in Jesus' high priestly prayer. He prays in verse 2, "**since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.**" Verse 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.**" Verse 9, "**I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.**"

And what we are is the promised gift of God the Father to the Son because of his accomplished mission. And it really indicates what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ. So often we put ourselves in the centre, about our needs or our satisfaction. But we are foremost a priceless gift that is given by God the Father to the Son that we might ultimately exult and glorify the Son who is worthy of all worship. We are the bride of Christ. And again, election is about the ultimate glory of the Son because of his suffering and his redemption of mankind. And if this is the purpose it should cause us to not only be amazed that God would choose people like us but also glory in Jesus Christ to whom we are eternally given.

2. The second truth here is that of irresistible grace of God. V.37.

And where we talk about election taking place in eternity past, when we talk about irresistible grace or also called efficacious grace, we are talking about what happens in time based on God's election. And that is God's grace will come to those whom God has chosen and it will have the desired effect that they will believe and trust in Christ. As the promise of verse 35 says, they come to Christ, believe on Him, and they will never thirst or hunger again. They have Christ. And the plan and glory of God are not left up in the air. It is not that Jesus comes and dies on the cross, and makes salvation possible but we do not know if it will be successful. We do not know if some will come and believe on Christ. We do not know if the Son will be magnified by a people called by his own name. There is the potential that no one comes and Jesus' sacrifice is unsuccessful in saving any because it is ultimately up to man. The purposes of God are never "might," but always certain. They are always "yea and amen" in God.

And this is the meaning of this verse here. Look at the verse again, "**All that the Father gives me will come to me.**" In time there is a believing on Christ. And notice who comes, the ones who come are all, not some or most but all that the Father gives the Son. It is future but there is no doubt about what they will do. The question is: why do they come? And they come because they have been given by the Father. And this is where irresistible grace can be misleading. Because it has been taught that those who are elect, many of them come kicking and screaming but are made to come against their wills just because they are chosen. And notice what Jesus says here, "will come to me." The language used here is one of coming or motion on behalf of the one who comes. And this is indicating that they freely and willingly come. They hear the gospel, they recognize their sin and their only hope is Jesus Christ, and they willingly come to

Christ. Listen to how John Murray explains this absolute certainty that all who are given will come, **“Jesus does not say: all that the Father giveth me are brought to me. He uses the term that denotes motion on the part of the person—‘will come to me.’ Coming to Christ is the movement of commitment to Christ, coming that engages the whole-souled activity of the person coming. It is not that he may come, not that he has the opportunity to come, not that he will in all probability come, and not simply that he is empowered to come, but that he will come. There is absolute certainty. There is a divine necessity; the order of heaven insures the sequence.”** And that is well stated.

So why do they come? Why not just leave it up to the individual? And you see that in verse 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.”** It is because they are effectively drawn by the Father. And there are two impossibilities that are taught in these two verses. One is that it is impossible to come unless the Father draws. No one means no one. Here is the first impossibility is that without the Father drawing individuals to Christ no one can come. They will freely, like the crowd, reject the Christ of the Bible. The other impossibility is for those who are given by God the Father, it is impossible for them not to come to Christ. That is what we mean by irresistible grace. The grace of God will be effectual in the “all” that are given to Christ, so much so that they will come to Christ. And God’s grace will be so effectual that they will want and desire to come to Christ.

And let me say this before we move on, and that is that it cannot mean what Arminians many times call prevenient grace. Prevenient grace is grace that is given to all people, and it makes it possible for all people to believe on Christ, but some can still resist. But God has overcome the natural hatred and hardness of human sin making salvation possible but still resistible. But this verse is so definite, especially in contrast with the last verse. You do not believe, but “All that the Father gives me will come to me,” and it is all of them, no more than them but the “all” even suggests that there will be many. The main message is that there is a particular people that are given to the Son, and they will come to Christ. They will believe and trust in Christ, and they will glorify Him for all eternity.

Now how can we apply this passage to our own hearts and lives? Well let me name a couple of ways. One is that ministry can be one of the discouraging things that you can ever engage in. Think of it even for Christ. This whole mass of people following him to Capernaum, and it seems like such a great thing, until we learn why they came. Even if ten, fifteen or fifty percent were there for the right reason that would at least seem to be productive, but like I said what can be so discouraging is that they are there for physical bread and food. We will follow and believe on you if you give us what you want. I can remember explaining the gospel once to an individual and he kept saying that he would believe, trust and follow if God gave him something particular that he wanted. If you can guarantee me that God will do this then I will come. And if you love Christ and desire the best for individuals then you want them to trust Christ. And here is where it can be so discouraging: the vast majority of those who hear the gospel through you will reject that message. I can think of scores of people that have sat in a service or at a funeral or at a special holiday service like Christmas or just watched a sermon online but never responded, never bowed the knee and believed on Christ. I

can think of scores of people who looked like real followers of Christ only to depart, and it is painful. That can be so discouraging, so why would you ever preach and teach the Gospel?

And the reason why is because of this verse. The gospel of Jesus Christ will find a home. It will come to those who God has chosen before the foundation of the world. Some, maybe not many, but some will believe whom God has chosen and planned. And he will send the message of grace into their lives so that they believe that gospel. We might get overwhelmed at the evil and depravity that is all around us but the gospel has given a vast multitude to the Son. Listen to what A.W. Pink writes about this: **“So take heart fellow worker, you may seem to be sowing the Seed at random, but God will see to it that part of it falls onto ground which he has prepared.”** Carson writes in his commentary, **“Jesus’ confidence does not rest in the potential for positive response amongst well-meaning people. Far from it: his confidence is in his Father to bring to pass the Father’s redemptive purposes.”** And listen to what the apostle Paul says in 1 Cor. 15:58, **“Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.”** the meaning of vain is useless or empty. Encourage your heart if you are involved in ministry that God the Father will make his grace effective in the ones he has chosen and they will believe and follow Christ.

And the other application should be that this truth should humble us as believers and followers of Christ. He caused me to see what I could not and did not want to see or believe in. I think one of the favourite activities of believers is just to deride in utter disgust those who do not believe, and never realize that there go I if not the grace of God - his effectual grace that caused my will to be willing to believe and follow Christ. We need to realize we are saved because of the sovereign act of God and not because we are greater or better than what we might consider the worst of sinners out there. Nothing will cause you to have more compassion and preach the gospel more authentically than realizing your own need of effectual grace in your life. And nothing will cause us to revel in what God has done in our lives and hearts.

This is such an amazing and significant verse that if we as believers meditate on the truths taught here causes us to glory in God and grow in our love and devotion and awe of the God of all grace.