

(John - Part 28): The Basis of True Conversion

by A.W. Tozer

God's sovereignty means that He is free to do as He pleases and fulfill all His good will without hindrance, while man's freedom is a gift from God that allows him to make his own choices.

Duration: 52:23

Scripture: Isaiah 54:13, Jeremiah 31:34, Matthew 6:33, John 6:37, John 6:44-45, Acts 9:1-9

Topics: "Expositional"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the misconception that God is constantly watching for the devil's next move and trying to block him. He argues that this belief leads to a lack of fear and trembling before God and a low level of Christianity. The preacher emphasizes that before God brings a person to Jesus, He tests them and teaches them. He references the Bible verse that says 'they shall all be taught of God' and highlights the importance of God's guidance in drawing people to Jesus.

Transcript

Now please turn to the sixth chapter of the Gospel according to John, John's Gospel, sixth chapter, verse forty-five. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.

Verse forty-four. No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him. And then verse thirty-seven.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. Now this will be, I think, of all the sermons that I have preached and may yet preach on the book of John, this will be the most difficult. It will be the most difficult to preach because it deals with the deep profound of Bible truth.

And it will be the most difficult to understand because it may sound self-contradictory. And to use the language of Peter, it could easily be that the unlearned and the unstable might rest these words to their own destruction. But I notice that even though Peter said that, he didn't recommend that we forego reading Paul.

He said, Paul's there, and go ahead and trust God somehow that it won't happen, but it's potential dynamite for the people who come in the wrong spirit. I think the same thing might have been said about

all the scriptures. But it was said by Peter of Paul's writings, and I would apply the same passage to the text before us tonight.

And what I want to bring to you, there will be many familiar truths appearing. But you know that I think of the Bible like a loom with, say, about a hundred threads, each of a different color, each of a different color, shades of the same color but distinct from each other in their shades and tone, about a hundred and no more than a hundred. And yet, using that same loom and using no more than that hundred, and I might easily have cut it down to half a hundred, using no more than that hundred or half hundred threads, each of a different color, there can be produced in that loom tapestries and rugs of the most exquisite beauty of shades and richness of tone such as might make it worthy to hang in the palace of kings.

So in the scriptures, whether it be a simple pastor in some country church, or whether it be some great, well-known preacher in some cathedral, if he is true to the scriptures, he has only about, I've said, a hundred threads to work with. They are the familiar threads of Christian doctrine. And no matter what he's preaching on, and no matter to whom he's preaching, no matter where he gets his text, and no matter what passage he's expounding, he'll always be using those same threads.

But out of those threads the Holy Spirit weaves the gorgeous tapestry that hangs in the church of the living God and makes it not only a safe haven for sinners, but a place of charming beauty for the saints. Now, we notice here that nine times Jesus in the passage is read, nine times he refers to the Father. And he refers to him in such a context as to present him as sovereign.

And I want to talk for a little while about the sovereign Father, the sovereign Lord. For it always must be kept in mind that the Father was not incarnated. It was the Son who was incarnated.

The Father and Jehovah are the same. Jehovah and the Son are not the same persons. So that it is never proper to say, and right here I'm throwing a tiny little zoop bomb into the neatly made up theology of the average fundamentalist, for I am myself a fundamentalist on the edges, and certainly an evangelical all the way through.

But there are those who say that the Jehovah of the Old Testament became incarnated in the New Testament, which is false, it's bad theology, it isn't so. The Father is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, but Jesus Christ is the Son, the second person of the Trinity. It was not God the sovereign Father who became flesh and dwelt among us.

It was Jesus Christ the Son who became flesh and dwelt among us. There's a distinction there. You say, how do I prove it? Well, take such a passage as this.

Jehovah said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand. Find that in the 110th Psalm. Jehovah said unto my Lord, who is David's Lord? Jesus.

Who is it that sits at the right hand of the Father? Jesus. So that Jehovah said unto Jesus, sit thou on my right hand. Jehovah the Father said unto the Son, sit on my right hand.

That text alone ought to make it clear, but you'll find it throughout all the Bible. You'll find the sovereign Father mentioned here, and it was the Son that became incarnated, not the sovereign Father, Jehovah, the Great I Am. And yet the Son was as much sovereign and as much I Am as the Father.

For as I have said over and over again from this pulpit, the three are one. And what can be postulated about the Father can be postulated about the Son. And what can be said about the Father and the Son can be said also about the Spirit.

I received a letter this last week from a Presbyterian brother out somewhere on the California coast. And he ended up by saying something of this effect, God bless you and may the Lord the Spirit bless you and your ministry. I like that, I've never had that in any letter that I remember, nor have I ever seen it in print except in the book of 2 Corinthians.

The Bible has no hesitation at all in calling the Spirit the Lord. It has no hesitation in calling Jesus the Lord, and it has no hesitation in calling the Father the Lord. For as the old creed says, the Father is Lord and the Son is Lord and the Holy Ghost is Lord, yet there are not three Lord but one Lord.

This is also very wonderfully beautiful to me. I preached one time in a Bible conference this summer on the Trinity, and when I was through, the man who ran the shebang said to me, shaking his head, he said, Brother, when you preach thus on the Trinity, it makes it sound as if there were three gods. Well, I don't understand how anybody can be so infamously and exquisitely plain dumb as not to understand English when it's preached in their presence.

And when I have explained and explained that there is one God and that he is of three persons, the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet there are not three gods but one God. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, the Holy Ghost is Lord, yet there are not three Lords but one Lord. The Father is sovereign and the Son is sovereign and the Holy Ghost is sovereign, yet there are not three sovereign gods but one sovereign God.

That doesn't sound like three gods to me. That sounds like one God in three persons. And so we have the Father spoken about here, the Son is speaking about the Father, and he calls him nine times here, the Father, and calls him and puts him, I say, in the context of the sovereign, most high ruler and the God of heaven, earth, and hell.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about sovereignty. I preached a sermon several years ago on the sovereignty of God, and if I ever get around to it and God ever delivers me from little duties that I can write my book on the attributes of God devotionally considered, I want to deal with the sovereignty of God. And when I do, I will have the Calvinists on one shoulder and the Arminians on the other pecking away at my poor, rapidly bawling head.

But tonight I want to talk a little bit about the sovereignty of God and show you what it means as applied to God the Father. Well, now I give you a definition. I like to give definitions, I like to define, because if I use a word and I mean it one way and when you hear it, you mean it another way, I haven't communicated with you at all.

I might as well have been talking Sanskrit or Welsh. So that if I use a word and you don't know what I mean by the word, not that you are not as well educated as I am, but merely that you may give a different meaning to a word. So when I use the word sovereign, I think it well that we define what we mean by the word sovereign.

So I want to give it to you simply like this. I don't borrow it from any book. It comes out of my own heart and I trust out of the scriptures that God's sovereignty is that by virtue of which he is free to do always as

he pleases and fulfill all his good will without hindrance.

That's sovereignty. That turns God loose in his universe, free to do as he pleases in heaven, earth and hell and to have his final way and to carry out his eternal purposes to perfect completion in the time to come. Now that's sovereignty.

That's what it means and that's all it means or at least that's the outline of all that it means. Now, God's will, when I say that the sovereignty of God means that God is free to carry out his will, then we come to what is the will of God and I point out something to you here which you may not be familiar with or hear some places by oversight and that is that the will of God is on two levels. There is the primary will of God and the secondary will of God.

The primary will of God is the sovereign purpose of God whereby he has his way always and always succeeds in getting everything he wills to have done. That's the primary will of God. Now, the primary will of God touches all of God's eternal purposes.

I'm a great believer in the eternal purposes of God. They talk about our State Department. I saw a cartoon.

Now, you won't think I'm getting political with you, but I saw a cartoon that, well, I don't like the cartoonists. I had to admit he had something there. It showed a picture of Dulles, the Secretary of State, our present Secretary of State, our peripatetic traveling Secretary of State.

And it showed his desk there and here was he just disappearing on his way to catch a plane. And he had his briefcase in his hand and one thing he had not. He had no head on him.

His head was still on his desk and his head was saying, well, you can't blame a fella for forgetting something sometimes. Here he was, hustling off, but he lost his head. Now, that, of course, was the politician, the political cartoonist's way of saying that he was no good and that he didn't know where he was going.

Brethren, I think he may be a good man, but you know, I wonder if he knows what it's all about. And I think that these brethren, these men are all opportunists and they are like a mother with 14 sets of twins trying to keep them in line. She never can predict what anybody's going to do and the best she can hope is to block something when she sees it start.

Junior starts over this way to knock over a quart of milk and she grabs him and blocks that and another one starts over here to wreck a mirror and she grabs him and she spends her blessed life just blocking. But she never knows ahead of time what she's going to do. The best she can ever hope to do is to watch these, how many did I say, 14, that'd be 28 kids, to watch these 28 kids and get to them before they get it done.

Now, brethren, my dear friends, without any political meaning whatsoever, that's where dear Harold is. He has no more purpose in what he's doing than the boy down the street. But he's just hoping if he sees a commie jump out, he'll block him and rush there and break Eddie's head, but get to him in time.

And so we have a foreign policy of watch him and then jump and stop him before they get it done. Ah, brethren, if I thought God Almighty was like that, I'd hold my Bible, shake hands with my friend Maccabee and leave the whole business and say, what's the use of being a Christian when all God does is stand up there nervously watching for the devil to make the next move and then blocking him? Oh, no, my brother.

This is not a football game.

God Almighty is the sovereign Father. And before the hills in order stood, earth received her frame. God had it all planned.

And in his primary will, he is carrying it out. And he will do his will. And heaven and earth and hell someday will bow and declare that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God's eternal purpose, the glory of God the Father.

So that's why I can be as relaxed as I can ever get. Because I'm not worried about the future. I'm not scared.

Because I know it's going to work out all right. God has a primary will. And I can see now that I've got two sermons here instead of one, but I'm hoping that... But brethren, God has a purpose for the universe.

He has a purpose for the earth. He has a purpose for the human race. He has a purpose for the church.

And he has a purpose for Israel, his people. And every one of those has a specific interlocking purpose which God himself brought out of his own triune heart before the world was. When there wasn't a cloud in the sky nor a drop of water in the ocean nor the ocean bed there nor a star in heaven or an angel beside the throne.

And as the poet said, Thou didst live and love alone without creation. God had it all planned. So never worry about God being afraid and rushing in and hurrying off and grabbing a long-distance phone and trying to get somebody blocked.

Nah. God wouldn't stoop to that kind of child's play. His eternal thoughts move on his undisturbed affairs.

And his primary will means that he is carrying on his purposes. That's God's primary will. Then there's a secondary will.

And that secondary will is that God has given people a will. And he's given them a right even to exercise that will even if one opposes the will of God. I wonder if we could illustrate it like this.

I wonder if we could say that the primary will of God is like a great ship. It pulls slowly and majestically away from Pier 39 and starts out down toward the ocean, down the great mouth of the Hudson. Liverpool is its destination.

The ship's papers, the captain, whoever handles them, has the ship's papers there. Liverpool. He's responsible to get that ship in and have her pulled in and tied up at the dock in Liverpool in five days.

About, I think it takes five days. Is there six for the great ships? Well, all right. He's going over there and he's the captain in charge of that ship.

So the purpose is that that ship should leave New York at such a day, pull into Liverpool at such a day. That's the purpose. Now that purpose is going to be fulfilled.

And the owner of the ship, all that are on board the ship in the capacity of crew and the captain and all the rest, that's their purpose. And they'll carry that purpose out. But now in the meantime, there's a great deal on that ship that doesn't know a thing about that purpose.

A little baby may be tumbling around over the deck and a weary mother may be lying out there trying to get a little sun. And a fat old boy that can barely see over may be playing shuffleboard. And there may be rats running about the ship and sailors playing cards and people just naturally doing as they please.

They're not paying any attention to the purpose of the captain. He knows what the purpose is. His primary will is to get that ship into the dock at last.

But the secondary will is you can do as you please as long as you're decent on board. And I won't bother him. So God has a primary will.

It is to bring the ship of His purpose into the ultimate, to the ultimate goal, to the harbor. In the meantime, the rats run all over the ship. Brother, we're alive with them today.

And somebody says, if God is God, why doesn't He stop this? God knows where He's taking the ship and all of His purposes will be worked out. But in the meantime, His secondary will allows certain people to oppose His will, to be careless of His will, to be ignorant of His will, or to go directly against His will. Now, if you were on board the ship and it was moving at so many knots an hour due east and you decided to buck that ship and you'd start in the prow, that's the front of the ship, and walk to the stern, and you'd say to yourself, I'm not going.

I'm not going. But you'd be going all right. I don't imagine you wouldn't.

You'd just be getting some exercise. But even though you determinedly walked in an opposite direction, the great old ship would be carrying you there. So we have our Hitlers and our Mousselines and our Starlings and all the rest of them, our Moussipons, and our Go and Lies.

And we have them all. And we have them all around over Chicago. They're walking against the direction of the ship.

But don't you think for a second God won't have His way with them at last. It'll be heaven or hell. Heaven for those who do His will and believe His Son and hell for those that don't.

God's in charge of His great purpose. And while He allows people to have a lot of freedom, He still will fulfill His purposes in that day. Now, I want to give my definition again.

I've given this definition. We're in colleges and before people who are supposed to know the difference. And I've never had it challenged.

Nobody's ever come to me and said, How come? And yet I never read it anywhere. I don't know whether it's in print. It ought to be.

But here's our difficulty, you see. If God is sovereign and has His will and can't be thwarted, then how can man be free? There it is. Now, you put a Methodist over here and a Presbyterian over here, and you ask a Presbyterian, How can it be? He says, Man isn't free.

He is God's sovereign. Ask a Methodist and he says, God isn't sovereign. Man's free.

And they can't get together. But I don't see why they shouldn't link up. Because I believe in both the freedom of man and the sovereignty of God.

And I'll show you how it is. God's sovereignty is His freedom always to have His own way and to do His will. And man's freedom is his right to say no to God's will and to go the other direction.

How then can you bring them together? You bring them together like this. That when God in His sovereign freedom created the heaven and the earth and all things that are therein and made man on the earth and put a soul within him, He said in His sovereign freedom, Now to man I bequeath a limited freedom and the right to oppose me within limits. And I give you that right and I hand it to you.

Now use it. Use your own free will. I sovereignly declare that it's my will that you shall have your will.

So when man rises against God, he is exercising the free will which God sovereignly gave him. And when Judas Iscariot turned his back on God and sold the Son of God for thirty pieces of silver, he was fulfilling this much of God's will that he was using the freedom God gave him, ladies and gentlemen. And so instead of canceling out the sovereignty of God, he was only using that limited freedom which God sovereignly had given him.

So when I refuse to obey God, I am only doing what God has sovereignly given me the right to do. That's God's secondary will. He allows the rats to play over the ship and the winds to beat the waves across its deck.

But he's going to carry her through to the harbor nevertheless. And that doesn't mean that everybody's to be saved. It only means that those are to be saved who are repentant, believe in Jesus Christ, and are born again.

But it does mean that the overall purpose of God will be sovereignly fulfilled and that man in his freedom has the right to make his own little choices on the little deck of that moving vessel. And if he makes choices that are contrary to the will of God, it's because God said, Son, you're free to do it if you want to. I give you that freedom.

So when a man readily raised his fist against God, he is not thwarting the will of God. He is fulfilling God's gift to him which made him free. Now, if that's as badly confused as I'm afraid it is, come back next week and we'll see what we can do.

But I've never had that challenge. Nobody's ever said, Now, wait a minute here. That isn't true.

It can't be true. And I have given this little definition of mine before a great many people and before a great many theologians. So that's what I mean when I say that the Sovereign Father is sovereignly carrying on his will.

Now, it says here, They shall all be taught of God. You see, men are in the hand of God and subject to the sovereign disposal of God's primary will. Thine they were, said Jesus, thine they were, and thou gave them to me.

And they have believed that thou didst send me. So God deals with the men whom he has created. He deals with them as fallen creatures.

And how does he deal with them? He deals by testing them and teaching them and instructing them. They shall all be taught of God, Jesus said. And so he teaches and tests and instructs.

Now, this is the Sovereign Father who does this. And he does it with these creatures by virtue of their creaturehood and his creatorhood, not as Christians, but by virtue of their being creatures of his hand and beings whom he has created. And so God teaches and tests and instructs.

They shall be all taught of God. How does God teach and test and instruct sinners? By the light of intelligence, working on natural creation, plus moral conscience, plus the mysterious presence of the Logos. My brethren, I don't know in all Christian theology anything that shuts my mouth tighter and makes my head bow more quickly and silences me when I am not forced to speak in the Lord's name as I am now.

But that makes me more, bows my head more quickly than the thought of the mysterious Logos. The Word that was in the world before Bethlehem, before Mary was born, before Abraham, before Adam, before oceans and seas, before stars and planets, that was in his universe. And when stars and planets and oceans and seas and creatures came into being, the mysterious Logos, the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, was present instructing, teaching.

And wherever there is a moral creature, that holy one is there. This is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And in Romans 2 we are told of that strange light, that strange moral knowledge that men have who have never heard of the law of God as given by Moses or the scriptures as given in the New Testament.

And so God goes among men. They shall all be taught of God. And God goes among men.

And he tests them, I say. And they are tested in a hundred ways for their basic reverence. Now there was Esau and there was Saul.

What was the matter with Esau? Find a bad thing Esau did. He never did a bad thing. At least I can't find anything evil that he did.

He got hungry and sold his birthright. But that was a bowl of soup. No more immoral act there.

Mess upon us. I can't find anything bad that Esau ever did. But God was testing Esau for basic reverence and didn't find it there.

And found that Esau was akin to the red clay and they named him Edom, red clay. He had no side of his soul open to heaven. The window at the top of his soul was shut in the blind pool.

There was no window open toward God. No reverence there. Nothing basically reverential.

Look at Saul. Great strapping tall fellow. And the beginning of his life was all right.

But there was something wrong with Saul in that he was not basically a reverent man. God, before he ever brings a man to Jesus, before he ever presents Jesus to a man, God tests man. This is the doctrine you don't hear.

But brethren, if it isn't here, and you prove it isn't here, I'll buy you the best chicken dinner at Walgreens. It's here all right. They shall all be taught of God.

I'd better read my text a few more times. They shall all be taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him. And all that the Father giveth me shall come to me. And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

And there you have the mysterious working of the sovereign God over the souls of men. And ladies and gentlemen, this is to my mind one of the most awe-inspiring thoughts in the Bible. That before I ever heard the name of Jesus, before the Holy Ghost ever presented him to me as Savior, the Father was dealing with me.

The sovereign Father. They shall all be taught of God. And he was determining and finding out whether I was a basically reverent man, whether I was a greasy Esau, fond of the sticky, slippery red earth, or whether I was a man with the top side of my soul open so God could look down and I could look up.

And then God looks for humility in a man. The sovereign Father goes among the men, as he is going among you tonight, and looking for humility, and seeing if it is there. And he is looking for that hidden something that I have said the top side of his soul is uncovered.

Now, I don't say that saves any man. I know it doesn't. But I only say that there are some people that God never preaches to.

It is a great mistake, ladies and gentlemen, to believe that every man who has heard the gospel has been evangelized. It is a mistake to believe that every man that has heard a Christian or heard a sermon has been talked to by God. There are some people to whom God can't talk.

Their ears hear, but having ears they hear not, and having hearts they cannot obey. They shall all be tested of God. They shall all be taught of God.

And the sovereign Father who created them before he sent his Son to redeem them, as their Creator, is testing them to see which ones will go to his Son. And as many as hear the Father and are taught, they come to Jesus Christ, and he doesn't cast them out, but he gives them eternal life, and no man can pluck them out of his hand. Now, we make a mistake.

And that is, we urge the claims of Christ upon men that have never heard God. They are not prepared for Christ. They will not believe, and they could not if they wanted to.

No man can come unto me except the Father drawn. And he that has heard of the Father will come. But, oh, the millions that hear the gospel without hearing the Father, the millions that hear the truth without ever being affected by the truth.

But our trouble is that we rush in with our tract and try to ram Christianity down the throat of a person that has never had a moral preparation for it. There has been no evidence of humility there. There has been no repentance there.

There has been no fearing and trembling there. There has been no willingness to break with the world and serve God. But in our mistaken zeal, we try to make converts, and then we wonder why they backslide or why the level of Christianity is so tragically low.

It's so low because we've forgotten part of our Bible. We have forgotten that the Bible says they shall all be taught of God, that God deals with men as Creator before he deals with them as Redeemer, and that the light shines in the world. Two men are riding in the same car and they pass a church.

They are both sinners, both lost and both on their way to hell. One man looks up and sees the church and instinctively something in him causes his head to bow a bit and he's silent for a moment. The other man laughs as though it were a tavern, goes his way.

Two women playing cards together, both lost and both on their way to hell. The third person comes in and raises a religious question. One laughs it off.

The other is strangely silent. They shall all be taught of God, and the Sovereign Father that created them deals with them and prepares them. And as many as have heard the Father, they come straight to Jesus.

And when they come, he gives them eternal life. Am I wrong on this? 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. It is written in the prophets, and they shall all be taught of God.

Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father come unto me. Then he said, But I said unto you that ye also have seen me and believed not. And why have they not believed? Because they have not tested us.

Because there is no sight of their soul open to heaven. They would enjoy singing a fast chorus, I suppose, and they would enjoy a banquet, a three-course banquet, a five-course, ten-course banquet. They love religion all right.

They like to be around where there is something nice going on. But there is nothing open to God in their soul at all. They hear the word, but they don't hear the word.

They have ears, but they hear none. They have not been taught of the Father. Then they get jockeyed into believing in Christ, and they make such poor, hopeless Christians.

And the reason is that they are not Christians at all. Every man therefore that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, he cometh unto me, not that any man have seen the Father, save he which is of God, he has seen the Father. I am that bread of life.

And this is the bread which came down from heaven that man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. So you see, my friends, there is such a thing as the mysterious workings of the Holy Ghost, of the Sovereign Father through the Holy Ghost, before the Spirit ever presents the claims of the Savior to the soul at all.

How different this is from our come when you want to, do what you please, think it over, and then decide. That is a modern heresy. And it's not biblical, and there's no place for it in the entire Scriptures.

No man can come to me except the Father which is sent me draw him. So before God has tried and tested and proved, and at that hour then there's no impotent will of the man. The man has a will, and he knows it, but no more the impotent will that says, my will, my will, no more of that.

There is conscience. The man that can't sweat because he's sinned can never repent. And the man who can't repent can never be forgiven.

And the man who can't be forgiven must perish. And by sweat, of course I don't mean physically, physical perspiration. I mean grown before God for his own iniquity.

And I've said reverence and repentance in our general attitude toward God and the world above. O brethren, the sovereign Father is here, and the Holy Spirit is exercising his right to select and test and try and prove and see and know whether we will or not, whether there's anything here that can respond. Ah, Jacob, who would want to save you, you crooked conspirator? Jacob, you're a wicked young chap, you're a delinquent.

Why don't you be like your brother, a good, obedient fellow that smells of his work? The Bible says he did. It says he smelled of the field which the Lord had blessed. Esau was a good fellow.

Jacob was a crooked, nasty little guy that you wouldn't want to live around. But the difference was, Esau loved Esau, and Jacob hated Jacob. Therefore, God hated Esau and loved Jacob.

And though Jacob was deserving of death and damnation a thousand times, there was something inside the heart of Jacob that leaped to the voice of God, that leaped up. The top side of Jacob's soul was open to heaven, and he could look up, and God could look down. Esau was well thatched.

He had no top to his soul. What top he had, had no window in it. He was a pretty good man and a forgiving man and a nice, stodgy fellow, but he belonged to the earth.

Jacob was a man who didn't know where he belonged, but he was a miserable fellow. He hated himself, and he sinned and all the rest, and he wanted to do God's will, and couldn't, and tumbled and fell. But all the time, God knew he had a man.

So no matter how bad you are and how crooked, no matter what a sinner you've been, that doesn't need to mean anything to you if you've been honored by God, if you've heard the voice of the Father. And in your spirit, there is that basic reverence and a desire to do God's will and a hatred, self-hatred for your sin, and you want to come to the Lord Jesus. You come, all right.

They that have been taught of the Father, they come to me. And them that come to me, I never turn away. And I give them eternal life, and no man can ever cut them out of my hand.

They're mine because I am the Father as they were, but he has given them to me, and I have given them eternal life. That's how every Christian became a Christian, the mysterious working of God, conscience, repentance, and our general attitude toward the world above. Oh, how different from all this mechanical conveyor belt Christianity, this conveyor belt Christianity.

Do you know what I heard this last week, brethren? You won't believe this. I heard of a man, a soul winner, so-called, who was too eager to make converts and to get the convert to say he believed in Jesus Christ, that he actually tricked sinners into saying, I believe in Jesus. Moved the conversation and got the conversation going around and got the fellow to moving and got him in a corner and jumped him back on the checkerboard.

And when the fellow finally admitted he believed in Jesus Christ, he said, there, you're a Christian. There, I got you, you're a Christian. Now, that fellow, he's supposed to be a Christian.

I'm glad there aren't very many men with ears that long in the world. We'd be worse off than we are. God knows we have hair enough on our long ears in a lot of places.

But when they get that bad, brother, somebody ought to throw a net over them. But that kind of soul winning. I've heard that almost that bad.

I've heard it talked from this pulpit on one occasion. It wasn't my image, this fellow in here preaching for some other organization, but I was present. And I heard something almost that bad.

You can trick a man into saying I believe in the Son of God. All right, then, you're a Christian. You're a Christian, you hear? For the Bible says, he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.

You said you believed. You're a Christian. Goody, goody.

The sovereign Father has never, and the Holy Ghost has never prepared him. And he's never been taught to God. And he's never heard of the Father.

And the basic reverence isn't in him. And basic humility isn't there. And repentance isn't there.

But they've jockeyed him and tricked him into saying I believe. And that's why we're as we are. Oh, my brethren, if God's people would only pray and pray till the presence of God would become as thick as fog, holy fog, and men would walk around with a sense of reverence and fear and repentance on them so terrible that sin would become intolerable and the thought of hell and judgment and death would be unbearable, we'd get some converts that would come bounding out like a healthy child.

But we jockey them and trick them and push them and massage them into the kingdom of God. And when they get in there, they don't know what it's all about. How about you, sir? All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.

He said, verse 37, All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. All I want to ask is, are you of the kind of moral material God can give to his Son? Is there any repentance there? Any sorrow for sin? Any grief that you're wrong doing? Any fear in the presence of the great mysterious? Is there anything there God can handle or deal with? Then you'll have reason to hope. Turn thou to Jesus Christ, God's Son.

He is the bread of life. And I said last week, believing is eating. Just as you take the bread into your mouth by eating, you take Jesus, the bread of life, into your heart by believing.

So you can come tonight and you can believe tonight and you can be saved tonight. And he says, I will in no wise cast him out. Now, whether that means, various translations have it differently, whether that means I will not turn him away when he comes or I will not cast him out after he's in, to me it means both.

Because if he takes him in, he has no reason to cast him out. So there he is. When I think of how many, many years ago it is now, I came up out of a pagan home, a father that had no knowledge of God, a mother who hadn't been but two or three times to church in probably 30 years, surrounded by ungodly people, not bad evil people, because my mother managed to keep the moral standards very high, very high, so high indeed that not one of her three boys ever smoked or drank, and not one of her three girls ever did anything that you could consider evil, perhaps except one.

Apart from her, Mother's family was a high-living family, and they were all that on morals. They didn't have to get born again to live right. They were living right on sheer morals alone.

And into that home, to a 17-year-old, jangling, ignorant boy, came the Sovereign Father in the Holy Ghost, and talked from anywhere else in fear and terror of God, in reverence and a longing to be right, and a

yearning to sin. It all played like shadows and light. And then one day I heard a man on a street corner say, If you don't know how to pray, pray, God have mercy on me, a sinner.

I went to my mother's attic and got on my knees, stretched my two hands up to God, and said, God have mercy on me, a sinner, and God save my soul. Then, after that, it was all like the opening of a flower, like the developing of a field. Jesus Christ became all in all to me.

I trusted him perfectly as I do this night. Why did God come to the worst member of the family? It was generally, generally and publicly stated. I'm not trying to be humble now.

Everybody knew that. Mother knew it. Everybody knew it.

I was the only one who would swear. I was the only one who would sass my mother. I was the only one who would disobey my father.

I was the only one that was a little devil. Why did Jesus Christ find me and my brother, seven years older, a gentleman, walk into his presence? He makes me look like a hillbilly, gracious, suave, friendly, knows what, when to talk and when to keep still. And I dealt with him and talked to him and preached to him and dealt with him until I gave it up.

Never a spark. They shall all be taught of God. And they that have heard and have learned of the Father, they come to me and I give them eternal life.

So if there is the longing, the dream, the aspiration, the want to be good, the fear of sin, the future, you are already one upon whom God's hand has been laid. Oh, how wonderful. More than the check for a million dollars, more than being elected president, that God has laid his hand upon you.

That out of those teeming millions, God's laid his hand on you. How about it tonight? How do you feel about it? What's your response? Anything there? Any live nerve there? Or are you another Esau without a live nerve? You can jab and probe and not a response. No live nerve.

But if God the Father has taught and tested and by the Holy Ghost convicted of sin and righteousness and judgment, there's a live nerve, you can come. No man can come to me except the Father drawing. But if you've got that live nerve that the probe of the Holy Ghost makes you wince, come unto me, all ye that labor under heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Will you do it?

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