

The Free Offer of the Gospel

by John Murray

The gospel is the provision for man's total impotence and it is the means by which God the Father draws men to Christ, who will assuredly receive those given to Him.

Duration: 47:27

Topics: "Gospel"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the limitless nature of God's grace and the assurance of salvation through faith in Christ. He quotes John 6:37, where Jesus declares that all those given to Him by the Father will come to Him and will not be cast out. The preacher challenges the belief that man's contribution to salvation is simply believing in Christ, highlighting the necessity of God's drawing and enabling grace. He also emphasizes the security of those who come to Christ, stating that nothing can separate them from the love of God.

Transcript

The Gospel according to John, chapter six, verse thirty-seven. Gospel according to John, chapter six, 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.

It is supposed by many in the professing Christian church that the one thing man can do in the exercise of his own sovereign will is to believe in Christ for salvation. And it is thought that that is the one contribution that man himself makes in order to set the machinery of salvation in operation. And that appears to be the assumption upon which a great many people proceed who are at pace with the claims of the Gospel but who are unwilling to renounce their own ways and the attractions of this present evil world.

They suppose that in one grand moment of final decision they will repent, they will believe in Christ and settle all their accounts with God for time and for eternity. Now in that attitude there is a complete failure to assess human depravity and also a complete failure to understand the very nature of faith. As far as our depravity is concerned, we must bear in mind the word of the Apostle that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God and therefore the mind of the flesh recoils from every manifestation of the glory of God as the glory of God makes its demand upon us.

Now Christ himself is the supreme manifestation of the glory of God and it is in him that the demands of God's glory upon us are most urgently expressed. And so it is precisely at the point of the manifestation of

the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that the enmity of the human heart is most violent in its expression. And the fact of the matter is that to believe in Christ is the one thing that the natural man will not do and cannot do.

Is that not the explanation of what the Apostle Paul himself wrote? For the Jews, he says, require a sign and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified. To the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greeks, foolishness.

But unto them which are all, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. But a greater than Paul, even though Paul wrote by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, a greater than Paul said the very same thing and he said it even more simply and directly. It is that very same truth that our Lord himself testifies to in this very chapter when he says, No man can come unto me except it were given unto him by my Father.

No one can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him. And that is the testimony of him who knows the Father as the Father knows him, who knows the working of the Father as the Father himself knows it, and who knows the will of the Father as the Father himself knows it. And not only does he know the Father through and through, but he also knows man through and through.

And that is the testimony of him who is himself the Savior and who is himself the truth. And it is to this very simple effect that it is a moral and spiritual impossibility for a man to come unto him except by the secret and efficacious drawing of the Father and by free gift from the Father. It is just the very same witness of the Apostle himself again, that is the Apostle Paul, when he says, No man can say Jesus is Lord but by or in the Holy Spirit.

Well, if that is the case, if it is a moral and spiritual impossibility for a person to believe in Christ apart from this efficacious drawing on the part of God the Father, and if man now himself in the exercise of his own autonomy and sovereign will is unable to believe in Christ, you might well ask, what hope is there then for man? And that is the thought of a great many people. They proceed on the assumption that if this is true, then there is no use proclaiming the gospel. For what hope, what gospel can there be for man if the gospel proclaims man's impotence and helplessness even in respect of that very instrumentality by which he comes into the possession of salvation? Well, the great truth is that it is just because of man's complete impotence and helplessness that the gospel exists.

And blessed be the name of God, there is the gospel. And it is a gospel that does not ignore the fact of our total depravity. A gospel that does not ignore the fact that the mind of the flesh is enmity against God.

A gospel that is the provision for man's total impotence. And it is that gospel that meets the need of our desperation, to which our Lord witnesses in this particular text. This is the gospel, and it is the gospel from none other than the lips of our Lord himself.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. And that is a gospel with the certification of him who came from heaven that there might be a gospel. It is the gospel by the certification of him who is the image of the invisible God, who is the brightness of the Father's glory in the express image.

And there are three elements in this guarantee, and they're very simple. They are these first, giving on the part of the Father, coming on the part of man, and receiving on the part of the flesh. Don't you see it's very

simple? All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

And so, first of all, we have giving on the part of the Father. All that the Father giveth me. Now what does that mean? It is true enough that a great multitude, commensurate, of course, with the multitude that will ultimately be saved, were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world.

And they were chosen to be holy. They were predestinated in love to be conformed to the image of God's Son. And that action on the part of God the Father before the foundation of the world is sometimes spoken of as giving on the part of the Father to the Son.

But there is very good reason for thinking that that is not the precise thought in this text. The giving spoken of in this text is the giving that occurs in the actual operations of grace. It is a giving that is simultaneous with the coming on the part of man and the receiving on the part of Christ.

And if you read this very chapter carefully, also the tenth chapter and the seventeenth chapter of this same gospel, I think you'll discover that that is the precise thought of our Lord in this text. The giving on the part of the Father in the efficacious operations of His grace. But it refers to that very same thing as Jesus speaks of elsewhere in this chapter when He says, No man can come unto Me except it were given unto him of My Father.

No one can come unto Me except the Father who has sent Me to draw him. Yes, we very commonly and quite properly think of the operations, the effectual operations of God's grace in the hearts of men as the work of the Holy Spirit. That's quite proper.

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Yes, right. But my friends, we are failing to appreciate the manifoldness of God's grace and the richness of the provision of grace if we fail to recognize the action of God the Father Himself in the efficacious operations that occur in the hearts of men.

God the Father draws men, and He is directly and intensely active in that drawing. He places holy constraint upon them. It is generally spoken of as calling them into the fellowship of His own Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

And in this particular text, Jesus is referring to that action on the part of God the Father, and He speaks of it in terms of a giving on the part of the Father to Himself. And it simply means that God the Father, in the effectual operations of His grace, presents men to the Son as trophies of the redemption which the Son Himself accomplishes. That's the grand truth that is drawn to our attention in this text.

Now, we are sometimes amazed at the conversion of certain people. They seem to be the most unlikely people to be savingly affected by the gospel, the most unlikely to be candidates for discipleship of Christ and members of the Church. In the first century of the Christian era, when the Christian Church began to feel the full brunt of the opposition of the Jewish hierarchy, there was one man who breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the people of God.

And this man went to the high priest and he desired of him letters to Damascus, that if he found any of this way, that is, any who belong to the Christian way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And he just breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the people of God. And in

that age, people might well have said, as we are oftentimes in subsequent times disposed to say with reference to others, people might well have said, if anyone is to be won to the faith of the gospel, it is not Saul of Tarsus.

And the enemies of the gospel might well have said, if there is anyone on whom we can rely as the unrelenting enemy of Jesus Christ, it is Saul of Tarsus. And I wouldn't be surprised that some of the high priests at Jerusalem, and perhaps the high priests who gave him these letters, might have said with reference to Saul of Tarsus, well, his zeal and his animosity are very much greater than my own. I can depend on Saul of Tarsus really more than I can depend upon myself.

And behold, it is Saul of Tarsus who was converted, and in the history of the church, is thrown with similar surprises for the people of God and for the enemies of the gospel. So why have such people, such people as Saul of Tarsus, who later called himself the chief of sinners, less than the least of all saints, why should people such as Saul of Tarsus have become the trophies of redemption? Now the answer which this text provides is simply this, that God the Father has drawn them and donated them to his own sons. And think of it, my friends, think of it if you haven't thought of it before, that when a sinner comes to Christ, in the whole Saul commitment of faith, when a sinner comes to Christ because his will has been renewed, it is because a mysterious transaction has been taking place between the persons of the Godhead.

That God the Father has been making a presentation, a donation of that person to his own sons. That's the reason, that's the reason why Saul of Tarsus was converted at Damascus. God the Father and God the Son were engaged in a very mysterious and precious transaction, and God the Father presented to Saul of Tarsus, the great arch-enemy of the Church of God, the arch-persecutor of Christ, he presented him as a donation to his own sons, a trophy of the redemption which Jesus himself had brought.

And perish the thought, my friends, that coming to Christ finds its explanation in the sovereign determination of the human will. Perish the thought, it strikes at the very heart of the gospel. When a Saul comes to Christ, this event finds its explanation in the factual presentation of that person on the part of the Father to his own sons.

And if any person has that childlike faith in Christ, whereby he has made to that person wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, if he is all precious to that person, if he is all and in all to you, my friend, the explanation is simply this, that God the Father took delight in you, he set his heart upon something even greater than delight in you. He set his heart upon something greater, and that is, he set his heart upon the delight that it would cause to his own sons. That's the reason that God the Father had defined and had accomplished that raptures of holy delight would arise in the heart of his own son, in the breast of his own son, by presenting that person to the Son in the effectual drawing of his grace.

And that's the marvel to which our Lord here is giving us the index when he says, All that the Father giveth to you does Christ attract you. As you think of the great issues of life and death, of time and eternity, is it only Christ that comes between you and the dismal outlook of everlasting perdition? I ask you that question. When you think of the issues of life and death, of time and eternity, is this your case? That there was but the only thing that comes between you and the flatness of darkness forever is Christ Jesus? And that's your only resting place, your only hope? If that is your situation, my friend, if Christ is to you so precious that he is your all and in all, and you vest all your interests and hopes in him against all the issues of life and death, of time and eternity, it is because God the Father took delight in you, and he took such delight in his own Son that he presented you to his own Son in the effectual operations of his grace.

And oh, for you life, don't fail to understand the implications. You are doing dishonor to God the Father if you fail to recognize that if Christ is supremely precious to you, it is because God the Father made a presentation of you to his Son. And that's the explanation.

But in the sphere of his effectual grace, that's the only explanation, at least it's the ultimate explanation. You see, what honor? Dishonor? Oh, what dishonor is done to the gospel when people say that the one thing, the one explanation for salvation in procession is the sovereign determination of the human will? Don't you see it strikes at that which is sinful in the grand gospel? Now second, we have coming on the part of man. Jesus not only says all that the Father giveth me, but he says all that the Father giveth me shall come.

And the stress here falls, remember, just as definitely upon the activity of the person concerned, the person who is the subject of his salvation. And it might appear to us that the stress which falls in this text upon the action of God the Father and upon the action of God the Son, that it would be quite inconsistent and quite alien to mention the activity on the part of the person who is saved. And of course that's the way a great many people, they are so much upset with one aspect of truth that they forget something else.

That's pernicious. But likewise attacks the gospel, because Jesus not only said all that the Father giveth me, but he also said shall come. And we must take account of the fact that the action of God the Father is in the most intimate way joined with the activity of the person.

Now coming to Christ is simply believing on him. If you had been discerning you would have seen that in the part of the chapter that succeeds this verse. Just believing on him, trusting him.

It simply refers to that commitment to him against all the issues of life and death, time and eternity. And of course it is the Father that gives the person truth. It is not the Father that comes to the person.

It is the person acted upon who comes. Or the person who is donated. And that coming is nothing else than that whole-souled activity of commitment to Christ.

It's a whole-souled activity. It is not something that is momentary. It is not something that is evanescent.

It is not something that as it were strikes the emotion but not the world. Something that strikes the understanding but not the emotion. O my friends, this is an action on the part of the person concerned that is whole-souled commitment to Christ.

Now we have found already that it is a moral and spiritual impossibility for a person to come to Christ. That is to believe in Christ in the whole-souled commitment of faith. Unless there is the efficacious drawing on the part of God the Father.

And what we find now is that it is a moral and spiritual impossibility for the person who is drawn by the Father, who is donated by the Father, not. And the moral and spiritual impossibility is now just accentuated in this regard as it is in the other. I say it again.

It is a moral and spiritual impossibility for the person who is donated by the Father to the Son not to come to Christ. All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. It is not that he may come.

It is not that he has the opportunity to come. It is not simply that he will in all probability come but that he will certainly come. There is an absolute certainty.

So it is not simply a moral and spiritual impossibility. Far more than that. It is a divine necessity.

Do you know that the order of heaven would be violated unless there would be this sequence? Now my friends, have you experienced the in-principle attraction of Christ? Have you become so drawn to him that you invest your all in him? Are you able to say with the apostle whom having not seen we love, in whom though now we see him not yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory? Is that what you can say with reference to Christ? Well, if that is the case, I come back again to this, that you may be assured that the Father gave you to his own Son and that that is the reason why you have come to him in your poverty and in your need. And I ask you also this question. Is Christ nothing to you? Can you get along perfectly with him? When you, as it were, perhaps in a very superficial way, confront yourself with the issues of life and death, of time and eternity, when you think of your hope for the future, maybe indeed in a very superficial way, but when you think of your hope for the future, what is it that looms up in you? I ask you that question very pointedly and very urgently as I ask it of myself.

What is it that looms up foremost in your thought and outlook as you think of eternal issues? I have been a decent person. I have been a good neighbor. I never did anyone very much harm.

Oh, I have my peccadilloes and all that, but my friends, don't you see that in that there is disclosed the awful poverty? And the explanation of that is just this, that God the Father has not, at least not so far, that mysterious transaction of God's grace has not taken place because if it had, then Christ would be paramount in your affection, paramount in your thought, paramount in your outlook, paramount in your hope. For all that the Father giveth me shall, and that coming to Him, remember, is the commitment of all soul's faith, of all soul's trust, of all soul's investment, of all your time. Now third, we have the receiving on the part of trust.

All that the Father giveth me shall, and that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast. You may sometimes have been struck by the way in which Jesus says it. You might have expected Him to say, I will assuredly receive, and make it very positive, but instead He puts it in a negative way.

I will in no wise cast, He put it in that way in order to give emphasis to the certainty of His reception. The negative form is for the sake of assuring us of the certainty of His reception. Christ will assuredly embrace in the arms of His saving and loving security personhood in order to appreciate the significance of that statement.

I want to say three things. First of all, this receiving on the part of Christ is the reception of the Father's treatment. Oh, what goodness it is to receive a gift from a friend.

Do you think that in the proprieties of heaven God the Son would refuse a presentation on the part of God the Father if it has pleased God the Father to present to His own Son in the efficacious operations of His grace? It would violate all the considerations of divine propriety for the Son to reject the donation, don't you see? It is divinely impossible for that person to be rejected. I have been speaking all along about moral and spiritual impossibility. Well, you have here something that is far greater than moral and spiritual impossibility.

You have divine impossibility. It is absolutely impossible for God the Son to reject that which is the donation on the part of the Father because the Son came down from heaven not to do His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. And here is the will of God the Father in operation.

And He presents a full-life sinner to His own Son as the trophy of redemption which the Son Himself has come down. Oh, He has no disposition to refuse. It is into the arms of His loving salvation and security that He receives that person who is the donation on the part of God the Father.

But the second thing to be noted about this reception on the part of Christ is that the assurance includes not only the first reception but also the ever-continuing the ever-continuing embrace of Christ's love and preservation. It is that of which Jesus Himself speaks as we call it elsewhere in this Gospel. I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish.

Neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave them Me is greater than all. And no one can pluck out of the Father's hand.

This is the Father's will which has sent Me that of all which He has given Me I should lose nothing. I should raise it up at the last day and mark the emphasis. I should lose nothing.

There will be absolutely nothing of what belongs to the personality of that person that will be finally lost. There is nothing that belongs to the highest interest of that person that will be deceived. I should lose nothing.

Not simply I should not lose one or I should lose not one but I should lose nothing. I should raise it up at the last day. And that, my friends, is the grandeur of the security that is involved in coming to Christ.

That neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And the third thing I want to say about this reception on the part of Christ. Here is the gospel in its free, full and unfettered overture.

In this word of Christ the gates of hope and of grace are flung wide and I defy you to place any limitation whatsoever upon that simple word of the Savior, Him that cometh unto me. I will in no wise, that word I will in no wise cast out, is surely but the freeness of the gospel power, the full, free and unfettered overture of Christ in the gospel. And we are advised of this great and precious truth that the sovereign operations of God's efficacious grace and the free overtures of grace in the gospel are not antithetical the one to the other.

They lie side by side. That's the way the Lord put it. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out is just as emphatic in our Lord's word as is the preceding part of the text.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. And my friends, it is not only that the full and free overture of Christ in the gospel is placed side by side with the efficacious operations of God's grace, but the full and free overture of the gospel comes to us, as it were, on the crest of the way of God's Father. You remember that other precious word of our Lord in which the full and free overture of the gospel is so explicitly expressed.

Matthew 11, 25-30. We say, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto me. Even so, Father, for so it seems good in thy sight.

And you won't find anywhere in Scripture a word that so emphatically expresses the sovereignty of the Father's grace. That's when Jesus says, Even so, Father, for so it seems good in thy sight. And you can

speak of that as the closed circle of the Father's sovereignty.

And then Jesus says, All things are delivered unto me of my Father. And no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal it. And there you have again just as emphatic an assertion of the sovereignty of the operations of grace on the part of God the Son, he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal it.

And the emphasis falls upon the sovereignty of the will of the Son, just as in the preceding context it falls upon the sovereignty of the will of the Father. And so you can now speak of the closed circle of the Son's sovereignty. And it is just like this, as if the closed circle of the Father's sovereignty passes into the closed circle of the Son's sovereignty.

What is the expression of all that? So far as the overture of the gospel comes into confrontation with us, it is that overture of Christ, Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Or as it perhaps might be stated with a little more directness, Hither to me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. And what's the significance of that correlation? It's not simply that they lie side by side.

It's this, that the full and free overture of the gospel proceeds out of the very heart of God's sovereignty. It comes out of the very heart of the closed circle of the Father's sovereignty, and the closed circle of the Son's sovereignty. And it comes to us with all the sanctions of the Son of God himself.

And it is just that, a prejudice that we can do to the correlation which the gospel itself establishes, if we do not realize how precious to us, in relation to our opportunity, in relation to our responsibility, and in relation to our integrity, the full, free, and unfettered overture of Christ in the gospel. And I must say it with all emphasis, that in this text, the overtures are most emphatically presented to us in this word of our own infallible Lord. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.

My friends, you cannot leave your own depravity at any reason for not believing, or your own inability at any excuse for unbelief, if you are confronted with the full and free overture of Christ in the gospel. It confronts your responsibility, and it confronts your responsibility with that awful sanction, which is the sanction of none other than our infallible Lord. And we are doing the gravest prejudice to the gospel of His grace, unless we confront ourselves with that awful sanction, which is implicit in the full, free, and unfettered overture of Christ in the gospel.

They are correlative. All is in this text, and if the word come unto me, all the evil labor, and the heavy labor, and I will give you rest. And if you come in all the desperate, in all the dismal outlook of your expectation, come to Christ in the simplicity of that self-commitment to Him in which He has freely offered it to you, then you may come to that very simple faith that is yours, by which He is supremely precious to you as your Redeemer, as your Savior, as your Lord.

And with God finds its explanation, not in the sovereign determinations of your world, but in that mysterious trance that go on between the persons of the Godhead and the efficacious operations of His grace. A presentation, a donation from the part of God the God, and every presentation that He makes fills God the Son with ineffable delight. And the more abandoned the sinner you may be, the greater will be the ineffable delight that will be aroused in the breast of God's own Son when you, in your desperateness, in your hopelessness, for all of you, I say, were sin above grace, much bolder, that a sin hath way to death, even so my grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O thou eternal and ever-blessed God, we would render praise and thanksgiving unto thy great and holy name that thou hast given us a gospel of sovereign and efficacious grace, that thou hast given us a gospel which has its epitome, its manifestation in Him who is the Savior and the Friend of sinners. Blessed forever be thy name that it is a faithful name and worthy of all acceptance. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

May we be drawn, O Lord, by the cords of love, and may we be bound in the bonds of the Redeemer's faithfulness. Do thou grant unto us that more and more we may abound in that grace that will glorify Him in the fruit of His Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, against which there is no law. And do thou grant that thy grace may be more abundantly manifest in all thy people to the ends of the earth, that they may grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

For His name's sake. Amen.

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