

**The Gospel of John (41); The Fourth Discourse:
Jesus, the Bread of Life (3)**

Introduction:

We are working our way through the fourth discourse of our Savior recorded in this fourth Gospel, which is before us here in John 6. In this discourse the Lord Jesus reveals Himself as the true Bread from heaven, the Bread that God the Father sent from heaven in order to give spiritual/eternal life to the world (6:33). Of course when the Scriptures speaks of Jesus Christ who “gives life to the world”, it is not a claim that everyone in the world will receive eternal life from Him. The whole world of human beings was wholly without life, in that all people everywhere are spiritually dead. Jesus Christ brings life to the world in the sense that Jesus Christ is the only source of spiritual life to this fallen this world. The reason that there is true “life” in the world today, that is, that there are those everywhere who live before God as living souls, is because the Father sent His son to give life to the world.

If we stand back and consider what unfolds before us in this 6th chapter of John, we see quite a fascinating transition take place. The chapter opens with well over 5,000 men and women who were “about to come and take Him by force to make Him king” (6:15). It would seem that upon Jesus feeding the multitude with bread and fish the day before, the people believed Him to be the promised Prophet, the one like unto Moses, even the Messiah (6:14). They would have Him become their king. As to prevent their desires from being realized, Jesus first left them to go alone into a mountain. He even left that region that night, perhaps to avoid being among them the next morning. But they followed Him, traveling along the shore until they found Him. And so, Jesus became more direct with them, for He would not be a king to them according to their desires and expectations. He rebuked them for seeking Him with wrong motives. We read in verses 26 and 27:

“Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. ²⁷Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.”

He then gave forth this discourse to them, teaching them the spiritual truth regarding their spiritual condition and regarding His true spiritual authority and mission. He emphasized their inability and unwillingness to come unto Him in faith, in order to receive the gift of eternal life. He also set before them that the only way that they possibly could come to Him on the terms He has declared to them, is if and when God the Father would enable them to do so by His sovereign grace. They did not and would not receive this teaching from Him. By the time the chapter concludes, we read that all of these would-be followers had enough of His teaching and they walked away in unbelief and, no doubt, disappointment. Often times people will react to us in the same way, they are disappointed when we do not offer them the Jesus of their desires. But we are committed to displaying Him before the world for who He is in truth. By the end of John 6, only His twelve disciples remained, but even they had been troubled by what Jesus had taught that day.

What the Lord Jesus did on this occasion was contrary to all the counsel of modern church growth pundits. Today we are instructed on how to fill our churches with enthusiastic people, who will believe on Jesus. But sadly, the gatherings are all too like this crowd at the beginning of John 6, rather than the twelve disciples at the end of John 6. A good dose of sovereign grace teaching and preaching will cause would-be believers to disperse, while leaving behind those who have truly had a work of saving grace wrought in their souls by the Holy Spirit.

The fact is that fallen man does not like to hear that he deserves hell due to his sin and that there is no way that he can remedy himself from his condition. When they hear that only God can deliver Him, and He

will only do so if He chooses to do so, it both humbles them and agers them. Fallen man has no natural affinity for God when He is set forth in His sovereign dispensing of His grace in salvation.

Charles Spurgeon once wrote a sermon on this antipathy of fallen man to the doctrines of God's free sovereign grace. The title of the sermon is, *Our Manifesto*.

We are sure that the gospel we have preached is not after men, because men do not take to it. It is opposed even to this day. If anything is hated bitterly, it is the out-and-out gospel of the grace of God, especially if that hateful word, sovereignty is mentioned with it. Dare to say, He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and He will have compassion on whom He will have compassion, and furious critics will revile you without stint. The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of sovereign grace, but he raves and rages at the mention of it. He would sooner hear you blaspheme than preach election by the Father, atonement by the Son, or regeneration by the Spirit. If you want to see a man worked up till the Satanic is clearly uppermost, let some of the new divines (ministers) hear you preach a free-grace sermon. A gospel which is after men will be welcomed by men; but it needs a divine operation upon the heart and mind to make a man willing to receive into his utmost soul this distasteful gospel of the grace of God.

My dear Brethren, do not try to make it tasteful to carnal minds. Hide not the offense of the cross, lest you make it of none effect. The angles and corners of the gospel are its strength: to pare them off is to deprive it of power. Toning down is not the increase of strength, but the death of it. Why, even among the sects (cults), you must have noticed that their distinguishing points are the horns of their power; and when these are practically omitted, the sect is effete (weak). Learn, then, that if you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead. If you remove grace out of the gospel, the gospel is gone. If the people do not like the doctrine of grace, give them all the more of it... That our gospel offends the King's enemies is no regret to us.

Now last Lord's Day we began to address the second section of this discourse, which is verses 30 through 40. A summary statement of the contents of these verses is that *God the Father sent Jesus to give eternal life to His elect*. Now, as we considered last week, we read first that...

A. The crowd challenged Jesus (6:30-31)

³⁰Therefore they said to Him, "What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? ³¹Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Then in response to its challenge,

B. Jesus corrected the crowd (6:32-33).

³²Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

And so, in response and reaction to Jesus...

C. The crowd requested a continual supply of this "bread" (6:34)

Verse 34 reads, "Then they said to Him, 'Lord, give us this bread always.'" They wanted this "bread" from heaven that would enable them to live forever. However, it had not yet registered in their thinking that this "Bread" was Jesus Himself.

We pointed out that this crowd was like many who believe that they are “coming” to Jesus, but in reality they are coming on their own terms motivated by their own concerns. But the Lord would undecieve these would-be believers in Him, and so we read that...

D. Jesus declared Himself to be the true bread from heaven (6:35-40)

³⁵And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Breaking this paragraph down somewhat, we considered...

1. Jesus’ claim to deity (v. 35a)

We pointed out last Lord’s Day that our Lord’s statement, “***I AM*** the bread of life”, was a very forthright statement of His deity. Jesus of the New Testament is Jehovah of the Old Testament. As the second Person of the Blessed Holy Trinity, He manifested Himself and spoke to Moses out of the Burning Bush (Cf. Exo. 3:1-14).

2. Jesus’ claim to grant the fulness of eternal life (v. 35b)

Jesus made the claim that He could bring full and everlasting soul satisfaction to those who believe on Him as this true Bread from heaven. We read in **verse 35b**: “***He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.***” Jesus Christ gives true meaning and true everlasting enjoyment in the life that is in Him. And so we see and read of the centrality of Jesus Christ to our existence and experience, as human beings, even as Christians. Jesus Christ is to us:

- the source of life
- the purpose for life
- the way of this life
- the greatest blessing of life
- the possession of life
- the source of meaning for life
- the source of power for this life
- the assurance of present life
- the promise of future life

Jesus Christ is to us life itself. Jesus said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the ***Life.***” He is our peace. He is our hope. He is our very life. Let all who believe on Him, confess that we are in Him, seek to be satisfied in Him, even as we confess that we are complete in Him, being content with Him, all to the glory of God. The one that comes unto Jesus in faith for who He is and what He imparts to His people, enjoys a fulness of life in that he is as one ***who shall never hunger, and who shall never thirst.*** He sees that since he has Christ and that Christ has him, He has everything in abundance, and that for eternity.

3. Nevertheless the crowd continued in unbelief (v. 36)

Jesus declared to them that although true spiritual and eternal life was in Him and would be given to them that believe on Him, none of them had actually had done so. No one present had responded to Him in

true faith, believing on Him for Who He was in truth. And so, our Lord declared these words to this gathering: “***But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe***” (v. 36).

There was something very defective and deficient about these people in that they failed to see Him for who He is. There was something very deviant and distorted that these people refused to believe on Him, given the remarkable signs that bore witness to His identity, even the incontrovertible proof of His person.

But of course there was nothing unique about this gathering of people than any other gathering of people in any place at any time in history. For this is how the Word of God portrays all people in this world unless God in His mercy and grace imparts life to raise them from their spiritually dead condition.

The Holy Scriptures, the written Word of God, do not present a favorable picture of natural man’s condition. The Word of God teaches that all people are fallen, lost, spiritually blind, enslaved to Satan, and dead in sin. In a word, all people are totally depraved. This is why we are in need of spiritual life from outside of us to come to us, even come in us, and impart spiritual life to us. The Bible teaches us that one born into this world, unless transformed by the grace of God, is adverse to the truth of God and is opposed to the will of God. Apart from a work of sovereign grace in his soul, his mind, affections, and his will are shaped and controlled by sin. And so, the Word of God sets forth mankind as hopelessly in need of God’s mercy and grace in the only Savior of mankind, being Jesus Christ Himself. Here is condition before God:

(1) The Word of God declares man is described as spiritually blind. He is ignorant as to his condition. He thinks, “Hey, God’s got no beef with me. He leaves me alone, and I leave Him alone.” Or there is the thought, “Why would God not show favor to me?” “I am not all that bad, and better than most?” He is absolutely blind to his terrible condition. But if he were to get a glimpse of what he would one day face when he stands before an angry God, he would go mad; he would faint from the fear. He would be as King Belshazzar, who when He saw the Lord’s writing on the wall of his palace announcing his judgment. We read that “Then the king’s countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another” (Dan. 5:6).

(2) The Word of God declares man is spiritually ignorant. He is spiritually stupid. He is a spiritual ignoramus. He is ignorant of who God is and of what God expects of him. He is ignorant of the ways in which God governs His world. He is ignorant of God's presence beholding every deed, considering every thought, and recording every infraction against the standard of His perfect, holy law.

(3) The Word of God declares man is sinfully proud. If through the means of common grace, he is given a measure of understanding, he is too proud to acknowledge his shortcomings. And even if he were somewhat aware of his failings, he is too stubborn to seek counsel as to how his condition might be remedied. He will push away and walk away rather than face the spiritual reality of his situation.

(4) The Word of God declares man is rebellious/self-willed. He wants to be the master of his own life, not submitting to any man or God Himself, unless he sees some personal benefit in doing so. Yes, he may attempt to change this or that in his life. Even King Herod “heard John gladly” and “he did many things.” But it is only because he wants to do so, not because God may have commanded Him to do so.

(5) The Word of God declares man is enslaved. He is bound by his sin, which will not let him go. He is controlled by his evil thoughts, controlled by his passions, led about by his wicked lusts. Unknowingly, he is enslaved to the devil. Paul wrote of the Christians in Ephesus,

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. (Eph. 2:1-3)

(6) The Word of God declares man is helpless to bring remedy to himself. He is without strength to lift himself from his condition. He is even unable and unwilling to come to Jesus Christ for remedy, unless grace moves him and enables him to do so.

(7) The Word of God declares man is lost. Unable to find His way to God. He is lost, alienated, and knows not which way to turn. God must find him, for he is lost and he cannot and will not find his way to the true God.

(8) The Word of God declares man is spiritually dead. This describes the absence of the kind of life that there is in the presence of God. Man is unable to bring forth spiritual life from his spiritually dead condition.

Only through God's grace working in the soul to bring one to faith in Jesus Christ is this sinful condition corrected and conquered. This is essentially what our Lord declared in a few words in our passage. We read in **John 6:36**, "*But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe.*" Jesus declared that they did not believe Him even though they had seen Him. This would suggest that they had seen Him and the many miracles or signs that He had performed before them, yet they did not believe. What was true of them is true of all people everywhere. Sin has rendered us not only unwilling, but also unable to truly "see Him" for who He is so as to believe on Him to the salvation of our souls. Fallen man is incapable of coming to Jesus for salvation.

Can no one, therefore, be saved? They most certainly can be, but it will be due only and wholly to the sovereign grace of God. Jesus declared to these people that God chose specific individuals out of fallen humanity and that He gave them as gifts to His Son, Jesus Christ, and then He sent His Son on a mission to save them from their sin. They would come unto Him and be saved.

And so, even though the Lord Jesus spoke of the unwillingness and inability of fallen man to come unto Him, He declared that...

4. God would save His elect through Jesus Christ (v. 37)

The Lord Jesus declared the absolute truth that the elect of God would be saved unto eternal life. Jesus declared in John 6:37, "*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*" And so, our Lord gave this assuring Word in **verse 37** that not all would be lost.

This is a very rich verse. *It affirms three of the five doctrines of grace that historically characterizes Reformed theology.* In Sunday school we are presently addressing the subject, "What is a Reformed Church." We have stated that there are at least ten major principles or doctrines that are held and espoused by Reformed churches. These include the five "Solas" of the Reformation and the five doctrines of grace, or the doctrines of Calvinism.

What are the five "solas" of the Protestant Reformation? These are five foundational principles which Protestants of Europe espoused which eventually led to their separation from Roman Catholicism in the early 16th century. These five principles are not believed by Rome. They were believed historically by all Reformed or Protestant denominations that broke with Rome. These five principles are commonly identified by five Latin phrases, each containing the word "sola", being translated in English as "alone" or "only." They are as follows:

- (1) *Sola scriptura*,
- (2) *Sola fide*,
- (3) *Sola gratia*,
- (4) *Solus Christus*,
- (5) *Soli Deo Gloria*.

These five expressions may be translated and explained as follows: The truth of God is known *by Scripture alone*, which teach justification before God is *through faith alone*, that the whole of salvation is *by God's grace alone*, through Jesus *Christ alone*, and that the work of salvation is accomplished for the *glory of God alone*. These are the main tenants and principles that were espoused through the Protestant Reformation.

But in addition to the five “*solas*”, Protestants have historically espoused *five doctrines of grace*, which are commonly referred to as the five doctrines of Calvinism, however, the doctrines of grace is the preferred label for these five teachings of Scripture. These five doctrines are the following:

- (1) the **t**otal depravity of man,
- (2) God's **u**nconditional election of the lost to be saved,
- (3) the definite (**l**imited) atonement of Jesus' death for His people,
- (4) the **i**rresistible grace of God in His calling to salvation,
- (5) the final **p**erseverance of the true believers unto their full and final salvation.¹

I do not mention the doctrines of grace directly a great deal. In fact, since arriving here almost 21 years ago, in the almost 1,000 Sunday morning sermons given, I mentioned the term, “the doctrines of grace” on just 25 occasions in our notes. But because of the content of John 6, we are compelled to address the matter here and now.

Without going into great detail, we may say that in the statements recorded in John 6, the Lord Jesus affirms the first, second, fourth, and fifth points of these five doctrines. And in verse 37 we have three of the doctrines of grace addressed by the Lord Jesus. In verse 37a Jesus declared, “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me...*” This affirms the *second* point of the five doctrines of grace-- *unconditional election* of sinners by the Father that He purposed from eternity to save through Jesus Christ. In verse 37b Jesus declared, “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me...*” This affirms the *fourth* point of the five doctrines of grace--the *effectual call* of God unto salvation. The ones the Father elected will come unto Jesus in faith and repentance. The Holy Spirit will regenerate the sinner, placing within his soul the principle of spiritual life, which shows forth itself in the grace of faith and repentance. And then Jesus declared in verse 37c, “*This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day.*” This affirms the fifth doctrine of grace, God's *perseverance of the saints*. He will secure the full and final salvation of every one of His elect.

Aside from these three of the five doctrines of grace affirmed in this one verse of John 6:37, we may look two verses farther to John 6:39. Here Jesus declared that though all these people had heard Him and had seen the signs that He had done, they remained in their unbelief. Jesus said to them, “*But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe*” (6:39). This affirms the *first* of the five doctrines of grace-- *the total depravity of man*. Later in this chapter Jesus will be more direct in this matter. In John 6:65, “*Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.*” They cannot come unto Jesus because they are sinners, who are both unable and unwilling to come unto Him in faith.

Now we might be hard pressed to find the third doctrine of the five points substantiated in this discourse of John 6, that of limited atonement, or better, particular redemption. However, our Lord will declare limited or definite atonement in a number of places later in this Gospel. For example, we read in John 10: 14 and 15 these words of Jesus: “*I am the good shepherd; and I know My own, and My own know Me, even as the Father knows Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.*” This affirms the *fifth* of the five doctrines of grace--*definite (limited) atonement*. Jesus died to save His people, and no others, only those chosen by the Father and given to Him. And so, all five doctrines of grace are affirmed quite clearly and strongly in John's Gospel, and most of them are affirmed here in this fourth discourse of Jesus in John 6.

¹ These are commonly known by the acrostic TULIP, each letter is the beginning letter of the five doctrines of grace.

Let us now consider this verse more carefully. Again, **John 6:37** reads, “*All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.*” First, Jesus describes all of God’s elect, all those who will receive salvation. Jesus speaks of “*All that the Father gives Me.*”

Here is the doctrine of God’s election as it is set forth in our confession, the ***Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689***:

Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of His mere free grace and love, without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving him thereunto. (Eph. 1:4, 9, 11; Rom. 8:30; 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Thess. 5:9; Rom. 9:13, 16; Eph. 2:5, 12).²

Election of sinners to be saved is commonly attributed to God the Father. Consider these verses:

“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, ⁴*even as He* (the Father) *chose us in Him* (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” (Eph. 1:3f)

“But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because **God** (the Father) *from the beginning chose you for salvation* through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, ¹⁴to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thess. 2:13f)

“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and **God has chosen the weak things of the world** to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸and the base things of the world and the things which are despised **God has chosen**, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹*that no flesh should glory in His presence.*” (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

Sinners who had been elected by the Father unto their salvation are said to have been given as **gifts** to His Son. Our Lord Jesus stated this in His prayer that John recorded for us in the 17th chapter of John. Jesus prayed,

⁶“I have manifested Your name *to the men whom You have given Me out of the world*. They were Yours, **You gave them to Me**, and they have kept Your word. ⁷Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. ⁸For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

⁹“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world **but for those whom You have given Me**, for they are Yours. ¹⁰And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name **those whom You have given Me**, that they may be one as *We are*. ¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. **Those whom You gave Me** I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. (John 17:6-12)

In Hebrews 2 the writer cited Old Testament Scripture as being prophetic of the glorified Lord Jesus rejoicing in heaven over the ones that He had redeemed through His life and death. Here is Hebrews 2:10ff:

¹⁰For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹For both He who

² **The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689**, Art. 3, par. 5.

sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹²saying:

“I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”

¹³And again:

“I will put My trust in Him.”

And again:

“Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.”

The Lord Jesus rejoices over His people. Here we read that He will declare the name of His Father to us. He has done this and He will do so. We read that in glory, in our presence, “in the midst of the assembly”, we will hear Jesus singing to the glory of His Father, and in doing so, He will be declaring the name of the Father to us. And we read that the Lord Jesus will rejoice when He and all the elect, the “children” ***whom the Father had given Him***, will be with Him where He is, standing before His Father in heaven. And so, in John 6:37, He speaks of His elect, ***“All that the Father gives Me.”***

Again, Jesus declared, ***“All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”*** First, Jesus describes all of God’s elect, all those who will receive salvation. Jesus speaks of “All that the Father gives Me.” He then stated that they would come to Him; that is, they would come to believe on Him as their Lord and Savior. They would repent of their sins, humbling themselves before God, and trust Jesus Christ alone for their salvation. And once having truly come unto Him, He would never allow them to be “cast out”, or thrown out, thrown away. He saves every one of the elect, everyone that the Father chose in eternity and gave to His Son, and He will not lose one of them. He will save them everlastingly.

5. The Lord Jesus declared that the Father had sent Him to save His people (6:38-40)

These verses need to be considered together. Jesus said,

³⁸For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

a. First, Jesus declared the reason for His incarnation (6:38)

Jesus said, ***“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me”*** (6:38). Jesus “came down” from heaven. Here the Lord Jesus speaks of His preexistence as the eternally begotten Second Person of the Holy Trinity. He was with the Father from eternity. He did not become the Son of God when He was born into this world. He was the Son of God in eternity. As the Son of God He came down, taking upon Himself His human nature, which is both the soul and the physical body of a man, whose nature He derived from His mother Mary.

The Father had “sent” Him. He came with a mission to save His people. In doing so He would be doing the will of His Father who “sent” Him. We see here it was the Father that intended to save His people. The Father so loved His people that He sent His Son to redeem them from their sin and state of damnation unto eternal life. Everything that Christ did, He did at the bidding of His Father. If you are a Christian, or if

you will one day become a Christian, it is because the Father loved you with an everlasting love. He loved you to such a degree, that He sent His Son on this mission to save you from your sin.

This week I was reading in the second volume of *The Works of John Owen*. One of the major themes of this book is “On Communion with God.” He showed from the Scriptures how we are to have and enjoy fellowship with our One Triune God-- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But then he wrote that we are also to have fellowship with each of the Persons of the Trinity individually. Owen wrote

“That the saints have distinct communion with the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit (that is, distinctly with the Father, distinctly with the Son, and distinctly with the Holy Spirit), and in what peculiar *appropriation* of this distinct communion unto the several persons doth consist, must, in the first place, be manifest.”³

He then wrote of how we are to have fellowship with each of the three Persons of the Trinity in the special ways each Person manifests Himself to us as His people.

Owen wrote of the difficulty and the rarity of Christians who truly experience fellowship with the God the Father.

Now, to complete communion with the Father in love, two things are required of believers:— (1.) That they receive it of Him. (2.) That they make suitable returns unto Him.

(1.) *That they do receive it.* Communion consists in giving and receiving. Until the love of the Father be received, we have no communion with Him therein. How, then, is this love of the Father to be received, so as to hold fellowship with him? I answer, *by faith*. The receiving of it is the believing of it. God hath so fully, so eminently revealed His love, that it may be received by faith. “Ye believe in God” (John 14:1); that is, the Father. And what is to believe in Him? His love; for he is “love” (1 John 4:8).

It is true, there is not an immediate acting of faith upon the Father, but by the Son. “He is the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Him” (John 6:23). He is the merciful high priest over the house of God, by whom we have access to the throne of grace: by Him is our manuduction (*leading by the hand*) unto the Father; by Him we believe in God (1 Pet. 1:21). But this is that I say, — When by and through Christ we have an access unto the Father, whether behold His glory also, and see His love that He peculiarly bears unto us, and act faith thereon. We are then, I say, to eye it, to believe it, to receive it, as in Him; the issues and fruits thereof being made out unto us through Christ alone. Though there be no light for us but in the beams, yet we may by beams see the sun, which is the fountain of it. Though all our refreshment actually lie in the streams, yet by them we are led up unto the fountain. Jesus Christ, in respect of the love of the Father, is but the beam, the stream; wherein though actually all our light, our refreshment lies, yet by Him we are led to the fountain, the sun of eternal love itself. Would believers exercise themselves herein, they would find it a matter of no small spiritual improvement in their walking with God.

This is that which is aimed at. Many dark and disturbing thoughts are apt to arise in this thing. Few can carry up their hearts and minds to this height by faith, as to rest their souls in the love of the Father; they live below it, in the troublesome region of hopes and fears, storms and clouds. All here is serene and quiet. But how to attain to this pitch they know not. This is the will of God, that He may always be eyed as benign, kind, tender, loving, and unchangeable therein; and that peculiarly as the Father, as the great fountain and spring of all gracious communications and fruits of love. This is that which Christ came to reveal,— God as a Father (John 1:18); that name which He declares to those who are given Him out of the world (John 17:6). And this is that which He effectually leads us to by Himself, as He is the only way of going to God as a Father (John 14:5, 6); that is, as love: and by doing so, gives us the rest which He promises; for the love of the Father is the only rest of the soul.⁴

³ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 2 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), p. 9.

⁴ John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, vol. 2 (The Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), pp. 22f.

John Owen is not an easy read, but his writings are rich. **J. I. Packer** wrote of him:

“I owe more to John Owen than to any other theologian, ancient or modern; and I owe more to [*The Mortification of Sin*] than to anything else he wrote.” And, “For solidity, profundity, massiveness and majesty in exhibiting from Scripture God’s ways with sinful mankind there is no one to touch him.”

And **Sinclair Ferguson** wrote of Owen’s writing,

“There is constantly in Owen, even when we are in the thick of him (and some of his writing is dense indeed) a doxological motive and motif. If we can persevere with his style (which becomes easier the longer we persevere), he will not fail to bring us to the feet of Jesus.” And Ferguson also said of him, “To read John Owen is to enter a rare world. Whenever I return to one of his works I find myself asking ‘Why do I spend time reading lesser literature?’”

Let us return to our text.

b. Jesus declared the nature of this mission into which His Father sent Him (6:39)

Jesus said, “*This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day*” (6:39). The Lord was commissioned by His Father to come into this world in order to save His chosen people, and in doing so that He would not lose a single one of them. He saves everyone that the Father gave Him in eternity. He came into this world and then later returned to His father. But through His mission He secured the entrance of every one of His people to join Him one day in the presence of His Father.

Note also, Jesus spoke here of “the last day.” This is a phrase found in six places in John’s Gospel. It is in this chapter on four occasions (6:39, 40, 44, 54), and then it is also in John 11:24 and 12:48. It speaks of a future single day, the last day of human history, in which the general resurrection of the dead will take place and Jesus Christ will execute judgment on the entire human race. All the elect will be delivered from condemnation that Day. They will all be raised, that is, resurrected from the dead unto eternal life. All others will be judged and damned for their works, and will be sent into everlasting punishment.

c. Jesus further declared the will of His Father (6:40)

We read in **verse 40**, “*And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*” There is the need to “see” the Son, that is, to see Him with the eyes of faith, to see Him for who He truly is, as the incarnate Son of God. And those who see and believe on Him regarding their need for salvation from sin, will be raised one day unto eternal life.

Do you see Him for who He is? Do you believe on Him as the only hope you have for eternal life? Do you understand that you are spiritually dead and will be dammed forever, unless and until you “see” Him and “believe” on Him?

May the Lord give each of us eyes of faith to behold His Son in faith! But also, may He give us eyes to see and perceive the love of the Father toward us in sending His Son in order to save us unto Himself!

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God,
be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Tim. 1:17)

Charles Spurgeon

Quoted in Arthur Pink, *The Attributes of God*.

There is no attribute more comforting to His children than that of God's Sovereignty. Under the most adverse circumstances, in the most severe trials, they believe that Sovereignty has ordained their afflictions, that Sovereignty overrules them, and that Sovereignty will sanctify them all. There is nothing for which the children ought more earnestly to contend than the doctrine of their Master over all creation—the Kingship of God over all the works of His own hands—the Throne of God and His right to sit upon that Throne. On the other hand, there is no doctrine more hated by worldings, no truth of which they have made such a football, as the great, stupendous, but yet most certain doctrine of the Sovereignty of the infinite Jehovah. Men will allow God to be everywhere except on His throne. They will allow Him to be in His workshop to fashion worlds and make stars. They will allow Him to be in His almonry to dispense His alms and bestow His bounties. They will allow Him to sustain the earth and bear up the pillars thereof, or light the lamps of heaven, or rule the waves of the ever-moving ocean; but when God ascends His throne, His creatures then gnash their teeth, and we proclaim an enthroned God, and His right to do as He wills with His own, to dispose of His creatures as He thinks well, without consulting them in the matter; then it is that we are hissed and execrated, and then it is that men turn a deaf ear to us, for God on His throne is not the God they love. But it is God upon the throne that we love to preach. It is God upon His throne whom we trust.

Spurgeon on the Sovereign Grace of God in Salvation:

We are sure that the gospel we have preached is not after men, because men do not take to it. It is opposed even to this day. If anything is hated bitterly, it is the out-and-out gospel of the grace of God, especially if that hateful word "**SOVEREIGNTY**" is mentioned with it.

Dare to say "He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compassion on whom he will have compassion" [[Romans 9:15](#)], and furious critics will revile you without stint.

The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of sovereign grace, but he raves & rages at the mention of it. He would sooner hear you blaspheme than preach election by the Father, atonement by the Son, or regeneration by the Spirit. If you want to see a man worked up till the Satanic is clearly uppermost, let some of the new divines hear you preach a free-grace sermon.

A gospel which is after men will be welcomed by men; but it needs a divine operation upon the heart and mind to make a man willing to receive into his inmost soul this distasteful gospel of the grace of God. My dear brethren, do not try to make it tasteful to carnal minds. Hide not the offence of the cross, lest you make it of none effect. The angles and corners of the gospel are its strength: to pare them off is to deprive it of power. Toning down is not the increase of strength, but the death of it. Why, even among the sects, you must have noticed that their distinguishing points are the horns of their power; and when these are practically omitted, the sect is effete.

Learn, then, that if you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead. If you remove grace out of the gospel, the gospel is gone. If the people do not like the doctrine of grace, give them all the more of it! Whenever its enemies rail at a certain kind of gun, a wise military power will provide more of such artillery. A great general, going in before his king, stumbled over his own sword. "I see," said the king, "your sword is in the way." The warrior answered, "Your majesty's enemies have often felt the same." That our gospel offends the King's enemies is no regret to us. [**Excerpted from C. H. Spurgeon's sermon #2185. "Our Manifesto", Vol. 37, 1891, page 49.**]

"I preach the doctrines of grace because I believe them to be true — because I see them in the Scriptures — because my experience endears them to me; and because I see the holy result of them in

believers. I confess they are none the less dear to me because the advanced school despises them: I should never think it a recommendation of a doctrine that it was new. Those truths which have enlightened so many ages appear to me to be ordained to remain throughout eternity.”

“The doctrine which I preach to you is that of the Puritans: it is the doctrine of Calvin, the doctrine of Augustine, the doctrine of Paul, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost! The Author and Finisher of our FAITH himself taught most blessed truth which well agreed with our text. [Ephesians 2:8 — "For by grace are you saved through faith; & that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God."] The doctrine of GRACE is the substance of the testimony of Jesus.” [Excerpted from **The Sword & The Trowel Magazine, January 1887**]

“There is a tendency in this age to throw doctrinal truth into the shade. Too many preachers are offended with that stern truth which the Covenanters held, and to which the Puritans testified in the midst of a licentious age. We are told that the times have changed; that we are to modify these old (so-called) Calvinistic doctrines, and bring them down to the tone of the times; that, in fact, they need dilution, than men have become so intelligent that we must pare off the angles of our religion, and make the square into a circle by rounding off the most prominent edges. Any man who doth this, so far as my judgment goes, does not declare the whole counsel of God. The faithful minister must be plain, simple, pointed, with regard to these doctrines. There must be no dispute about whether he believes them or not. He must so preach them that his hearers will know whether he preaches a scheme of freewill, or a covenant of grace — whether he teaches salvation by works, or salvation by the power and grace of God.” [Excerpted from **C. H. Spurgeon's sermon #289. The Minister's Farewell, Vol. 6, 1860, page 25.**]
