

A Gift That Can Never Be Lost

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Date: 05 February 2023

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[0 : 0 0] Well, as I mentioned, we are going to turn back to John chapter 6 this evening. We were in this passage this morning and we're working our way through the Gospel of John in our morning services, so it probably seems a wee bit strange to be coming back to it in the evening, but the reason I wanted to is because there's a few verses, three or four verses that I didn't really touch on this morning and which we won't have time to come back to next week, but which I really wanted us to get to tonight because they're beautiful, beautiful verses. I'll bring them up in the screen there, that's it. It's verses 37 to 40, so John chapter 6, if you're not familiar with John chapter 6, it's the chapter where at the start Jesus feeds the 5000 and then he walks on the water and then you have this long discussion between Jesus and the crowds, particularly the religious leaders, where Jesus says that he is the bread of life, that he has come to give eternal life to all who come to him. And we're looking at that this morning and next week because it gets to the heart of what the Gospel is all about, the fact that God has sent his son to be our Savior, but it also just really pushes the crowds who are around Jesus into a kind of, just into a corner where they really have to either accept what he's saying and follow him or they reject him and that's what we'll see next week that happens at the end of the chapter, but as I said that's what we're looking at in the morning. Tonight I wanted just to come back to these four verses because they are amazing verses and we're going to look at them together.

Jesus said, all that the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out, for I have come down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me and this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day for this is the will of my Father that everyone who looks in the Son and believes in him should have eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day.

Our title this evening is a gift that can never be lost. Now when we, when you read that title and I imagine and in many ways I hope that when you see that title you immediately realise and recognise that that that is what the gospel is offering you, that in the gospel Jesus is saying, I have come to save you, I have come to die on the cross and rise again in your place so that you can have salvation and that's the amazing gift of the gospel, the fact that all of our sins, all of the mistakes that we've made, all of the things that break our relationship with God and make us unworthy of him, all of those are wiped away because of what Jesus has done and he's not just made them disappear, he has taken our sins upon himself, died in our place, risen again, conquering death and he does that so that we can have the incredible gift of salvation and Ephesians 1 speaks about that, how our salvation is all of God's grace, nothing that we deserve, he just poured it out upon us in his astonishing mercy and that gift is a gift that cannot be lost.

We emphasise that with a doctrine that's given the wonderful title, perseverance of the saints and what we mean by that is the fact that for those who put their trust in Jesus, so if you are a Christian or if you become a Christian you become a saint and saints persevere, in other words your salvation cannot be lost and so as we go through the journey of our lives as Christians even though you know, even though we think it should be this journey of like conversion and then perpetual improvement, even though it's not actually like that for anyone and actually our Christian lives are full of ups and downs, joys and sorrows, successes, struggles, triumphs and stupid mistakes, times when we feel great and times when we feel awful, you cannot lose your salvation.

What God has given you cannot be lost and that's one of the amazing truths about the gospel, the fact that when God gives you salvation you're not going to lose it, he's not going to take it away, once he's adopted you as his child it's absolutely impossible for you to be unadopted, you're never going to be rejected, the saints will persevere, so in so many ways the gospel is a gift to you that can never be lost and I hope that you all, I hope you all understand that, but that's not actually what I'm going to talk about tonight because that's not what this passage talks about, it talks about something different, it is talking about a gift that can never be lost but it's a different gift because what this passage is telling us is that it's not just the case that salvation is a gift to you that can never be lost, this passage is telling us that if you are a Christian or if you become a Christian you are a gift to Jesus, you are a gift to Jesus, you are a gift to Jesus that can never be lost, you are a gift from the Father to him and you can see that if you look at this passage, all that the Father gives me will come to me, whoever comes to me I will never cast out but I came from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me etc etc just focusing to begin with on that first part that's describing everyone who is a

[6 : 37] Christian or everyone who becomes a Christian describing him as a gift from God the Father to God the Son, now I don't know about you but I never think of myself in those terms, I think of me receiving a gift, I've never really thought of myself as being the gift and yet that is what's been said before us here and so I want us just to spend a wee bit of time thinking about that tonight and unpacking some of the remarkable truths that these four verses are setting before us. As Jesus describes this reality that all who come to him are a gift to him, he relates that immediately to a wonderful theological topic that we probably don't talk enough, talk about enough, he relates it all to the will of God, let me change my pen slightly so you can see it more clearly, the will of him who sent me, this is the will of him who sent me, this is the will of my Father, that great concept of the will of God, this is something that's so so good to think about even though I confess I don't think about it often enough.

When we think about the gospel a good question to sometimes ask is you know well where does it start, where does it all start from, we think about how you know coming to faith in Jesus a relationship being restored to God, where does that start from, well you might think oh well it starts from the day I became a Christian, you can think back if you can identify a day when you became a Christian most of us can't and for many of us it's something that happens much more gradually and it's not necessarily a specific day or time as more just a period when God is working an amazing change in our lives, we think back well well that's when it started but of course that's not when it started it goes back further because the day we come to faith or the period when we come to faith is when our eyes are open to see the significance of something that happened in the past and of course it's pointing us back to the cross, that's the historical moment that the Christian gospel is centred on, the death and resurrection of Jesus but even that's not the start of the gospel because Jesus's cross was actually the culmination of something that he did, culmination of something that started in Bethlehem, conceived in Mary's womb, born as a child, lived a life and then died and rose again in his early 30s but even that's not the start because we know that that actually comes right in the middle of the Bible and actually you had the whole

Old Testament before that foreshadowing what Jesus was going to accomplish in the cross so you think okay I've got to go back even further, I can't just go back to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John, I've got to go back into the Old Testament, keep on going back, back, back, back, you come to Genesis, you read about the great creation of the universe, the creation of humanity and the fact that our relationship with God was broken by sin and so much of what happens in the gospel is set in the context of those first three chapters of Genesis, God is our Creator, he's made the universe, he's made us with a unique and special role in that universe, a freedom and a responsibility that no other part of creation has and yet we have rejected that privileged position and we've abused that freedom, we've sinned against God and that has shaped human history ever since but that's not even the start because really the start of the gospel is in the eternal will of God and that's the way it gets us to territory where we're like this is where our minds are getting stretched beyond, stretched to our limits but you know when we think about God in all eternity that's where the gospel finds its starting point, that's where we discover that everything that's worked out across the ages of history is an outworking of of God's amazing plan so what was

God doing before he made the world, he was planning to save you and he was setting out the great plan of restoration that would be needed now that's hard to get our head around and the interface between time and eternity is something that we as finite time bound creatures will never be fully able to do but it's amazing to think about it, to think that you know you're not you know you like even you've been here tonight is not some just just event in a whole pile of random stuff it's all all feeding into that great will and plan that God has and that's something that we see so so powerfully in this passage we're being pointed towards the fact that God has a will now when we say that God has a will what we mean by that is simply that there's stuff that God wants and you know you think about your own will our will is is just the means whereby we exercise our choices we show what we want and what we don't want that we have preferences that we have things that that that we would like to see things that we don't want to see things that we choose things that we don't choose that's part of the means by which we we display it's part of the means by which we bear the image of God the fact that he has a will we also have a will that reflects that in many many ways and and at the heart of God's will is saving you and me and you think well that that seems a bit too much you know maybe that's saying a wee bit too much you know you think of God in all eternity you think of Father Son and Holy Spirit you think of you know of all the things that are important to Father Son and Holy Spirit you think you know well you know the bond between Father Son and Holy Spirit is so strong so perfect so unique so beautiful there's that eternal and just eternal relationship of love of communion of togetherness you see in God please don't ever think of God as this isolated being don't ever think that God was once just Father and the Son and the Spirit came later on none of that's true for all eternity

Father Son and Holy Spirit together beautifully together and you think that bond is really the ground of reality and nothing nothing could disturb that bond unless it is incredibly incredibly important to God and only one thing disturbed that relationship his desire to save you because the disturbance in that relationship happened when Jesus came down God the Son leaving the glory and majesty and beauty of of heaven leaving all the worship and adoration from the from the heavenly beings that was due to him disturbing and that's probably not the best word but I don't really have a better one but disturbing and disrupting that eternal relationship of Father Son and Holy Spirit for the first time ever never done before never ever ever has anything ever disturbed that beautiful relationship and yet this disruption happens and it's to save you because that is the will of the Father that is what God wants and so you see that that brought out in in this passage that Jesus describes his coming and it describes that coming in the context of the will of the one who sent me I'll just skip over so it's all clear again he's saying I'm coming down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me now that little bit that says not to do my own will it's not saying oh Jesus doesn't actually want to save you what Jesus is saying is to the crowds he's saying look I'm not here on my agenda I am here to do the Father's will now there's a couple of crucial things I want to just unpack there in relation to the whole concept of of will of God's will first is that that in our our lives sometimes I think that question of God's will can cause us should I say problems well maybe it can cause us problems or it can cause us uncertainty because we we will often in our lives as disciples think of God's will in terms of like like forks so we're going along so we're going through life and there's a fork so say you reach the end of school do I go to university or do I get a job which one's God's will and then you come you think okay right it's university I'll go for this one okay right university right will I study maths or will I study English oh which one's God's will and you try to find God's will and then you think okay that that seems to be God's will we look for answers and then okay I'm going to do maths which university should I go to uh Aberdeen or Edinburgh okay

[16 : 49] Edinburgh go to Edinburgh which church should I go to this one or this one who should I be friends with what job should I get where should I live and there's all these decisions and we think you know is it God's will that I do this is it God's will that I buy this house in carlaway or this house in jobless is it God's will that I I go out with this girl or this girl or whatever it may be and we often think of God's will in terms of these day to day decisions that we have to make now I'm not saying that that's wrong we obviously want God to guide us in in the decisions that we make but I think that if we just think of God's will in terms of you know these kind of paths it's it can very easily unsettle us because we're going through life and we're thinking oh right I better make sure that I get the right one better make sure they get that one oh and what if I get that wrong and just there's this kind of fear what if I make the wrong decision and I end up and not doing God's will and all that kind of stuff and I think it all comes from approaching the idea of God's will in in a in a way that has the wrong emphasis because when God speaks about his will he doesn't

I don't think speak in terms of these day to day decisions really is the most scruffy drawing I've ever done but I hope you can still follow what I'm trying to say I don't think God really thinks of it in those terms as it's like decision decision a b c d all that da da da da I think in terms of God's will he speaks much more in terms of the fact that we are here in a position and he wants us here in a destination and he thinks much much more in terms of of bigger picture much much more in terms of of of where we are and of where our destiny is and and and in that there's boundaries that God wants us to stay within and so he stays heaps us within those boundaries and those boundaries are not boundaries that it's like oh better choose Aberdeen or

Edinburgh make sure you get it right you know boundaries are not in terms of not in terms of the stuff you do or the job you have the boundaries are in terms of the way you behave morally and that's what God is concerned about far far more than the specific decisions of this that in the next thing I'm not saying that those things don't come into God's will I'm just saying that's not where the emphasis lies the emphasis lies in the fact that God sets moral boundaries that we should stay within as we make that journey from here to be taken home with him in glory and those moral boundaries are set by his law as he reveals it in scripture and as we go through our path as Christians what will tend to happen is sometimes we're within the boundaries sometimes we fall to the right sometimes we fall to the left but all the time his words calling us back to the boundaries even though we sometimes fall off and I think that's a really important thing to remember that that you know I think it's more important to God that you are kind and gentle and patient and merciful and forgiving than it is whether you're a lawyer or a teacher or a doctor or an engineer or whatever it's our moral conduct that matters more to God and I think that's because God's perspective is so different to ours we tend to be you know very blinkered by the fact that we're going through lives and we think oh right what's God's will for me this week I've got this this this and this to decide what should I do and we're very much just caught in the kind of the thick of that moment trying to make those decisions all the time God is looking at something much much bigger because his goal is not it's not really about what you achieve or don't achieve this week in your life his goal is to take you home to be with him forever in his new creation so that forever and ever you will be his so that he can love you and care for you a good illustration is this well maybe it's not a good illustration but but maybe it's helpful you know well there's a couple of couple of illustrations like um going back nearly 20 years um to when me and you know we're going to get married and if you know phone me up the week before I said should I have white shoes or red shoes on my wedding day what's your will I'm like I don't care I just want to marry you or if you imagine that you're that you're you're in trouble in the sea uh off the pier at the the the lock there and and I and I go down and I throw the ring to you and you're like do you want me to grab the ring with with my right hand or my left hand it'd be like I don't care I just want you to grab it I just want you to be safe and and I say this with reverence and I hope that that that that you understand what I'm saying that if you're standing before God today thinking should I go to the free church or should I go to the church of Scotland should I be a teacher or should I be a mechanic should I read this part of the Bible or should I read that part of the Bible should I do this thing I think God is saying

I don't care I just want you to trust me and follow me because I just want you to be my child because that bigger picture is so much more important than the little stuff that we make massive now again I'm not saying that the little stuff's not important but I hope that you can see what I mean that when Jesus talks about the Father's will he is talking about making you safe about the Father's desire to make you safe for all eternity but the other thing that we see in terms of the this will is that we think okay the Father's will he says I want I want to save my people I want to come and I want to I want to provide a pathway of salvation for humanity so that all who come to Jesus can be saved that's what I want to do I want it to be possible for humanity that fell to be saved you know we think to ourselves oh God's like a magician you know God you know he wants it therefore he can have it but that's not how it works and that's never what scripture presents to us because because attached to that will let me go back to red attached to that will of God to save us is a massive cost a massive cost to the Father and it's all bound up in these verses that that Jesus God's Son has come down and that in coming in being sent by the Father it's not sent for glory and status and recognition and he's not sent to you know enjoy a nice adventure he's sent to die he's sent to experience all the horror and agony of the cross he's he's sent in order to be cut off and so that will of God comes at such a massive cost

God the Son as we say leaving his Father's side that eternal bond between Father Son and Spirit disrupted and Jesus exposed to all the frailty of human flesh and ultimately to all the all the consequences of sin and all the all the the agony of the Garden of Gethsemane and all the the horror of falling under the Father's wrath that will to save you came at such an enormous cost but that cost also means that that that you know when you think about you know when you think about the Father's will in order that we're going to be saved there's so much that's involved and you know there's there's God the Son leaving heaven there's there's the mystery and the wonder of the incarnation as Jesus becomes one of us there's the life and ministry of Jesus all directed towards his betrayal his arrest his suffering on the cross that cross is the great battle between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil where where where all the implications of our sin are poured out on the Son and yet he overcomes and it leads to the resurrection the ascension and Christ's exaltation as he's now at the right hand of God ruling over all having conquered death all these massive steps have to take place and there's loads more and I've missed far too many out the point I'm trying to make is who does them God does and you and I do nothing that mission is all God's doing and that's why all all we are asked to do in response is to believe and there's just such a magnificent imbalance in the gospel and I think that's such a wonderful thing to recognize you know we sometimes think that you know well fairness is about balance you're so it's like well okay I'll do this you do that you do this part I'll do that but that's paid enough let's try and even the balance okay God you do that we'll do this and so many people have distorted Christianity over the years by thinking that that's how it works that you know okay God yes you've done you a bit but I'll have to do my bit and don't think for one second that you're immune from that disease because I see it in you all the time people thinking oh I have to do this I have to do that the next thing and if I do this that'll make me more acceptable to God that is all theological rubbish it's not true because the gospel is about him doing everything and you simply receiving that's what grace means that he does everything needed for our salvation and we just receive through faith in Jesus that's why that's why we can say that you come with empty hands that's why you can say you can come as you are that's why we say that you don't need to renovate your life before you become a Christian none of that's in the gospel we just come to Jesus as we are we believe because he has done absolutely everything that's needed there's such a magnificent imbalance in terms of what what what we do we don't do anything the scale is right up there's

[29 : 51] nothing on it all the weight falls on God that's his plan that's his will that's how it works and honestly that's the only reason it does work because if it was up to us it wouldn't work but he does it all he does absolutely everything so you've got this magnificent description of the Father's will God's great plan from all eternity you've got this incredible reality that that even though that will comes at a huge cost Jesus is willing to bear that cost God is the Father's willing to bear that cost God the Holy Spirit is willing to sustain Jesus through all the steps that are going to need to be taken until he's finally abandoned on the cross all of that falls into place all of that is the outworking of God's mission you've got the great will you got the cost that he will take it shows itself in the great mission we respond in faith and the result is that you become unloosable not just that your salvation becomes unloosable in the sense that nothing can undo what the cross has done nothing can undo what Jesus has done and nothing can undo that nothing can undo the reality of Jesus's death and resurrection it's just a reality you can't undo a reality but it's more than that Jesus is saying here that that for everyone who's a Christian everyone who becomes a Christian you become unloosable why why because you're a gift from the Father to the Son in fact you are his bride and I I cannot think of anything that that can compare to that in telling you how precious and special you are and how utterly incredible the gospel is you think of today how so many people struggle with their self-esteem and they struggle with their identity and they're trying to find some sort of worth and and even ourselves as Christians you know we feel like when things are going well that God likes us and then that when we stuff up he's fed up and we think about how you know in our Christian walks we go hot and cold and things are good and things are bad and we look at ourselves and on the whole we generally feel depressed and frustrated and we feel like we're doing a terrible job and I sometimes feel like God would want to give us a row for thinking like that not in an angry way but in a in a way to say come on that's not how I think of you you are the precious gift that I have given to my son and that I sent him to purchase through his blood and the result the result is that that that you are an unloosable gift that's why he says whoever comes to me I will never cast out it's never gonna lose interest never gonna grow cold never gonna decide no I actually don't want them anymore but for all eternity

and for every day this week and for the rest of your life you if you're a Christian or if you become a Christian you can stand and look in the mirror and not just say God has given me salvation you can actually say God the Father has given me to Jesus and that's why that's why it's just amazing that that that you know when we talk about you being safe when we talk about you being safe as a Christian that's got nothing to do with you you because you're not the one doing the holding and I think that that's so important to remember you know we we think that you know we're the ones who have to hold on we're the ones who have to sustain it we're the ones who have to do it rubbish he is the one doing the holding and if you think that he's gonna let go then then you've got it completely wrong he left heaven he went to the cross he conquered death so that he could take hold of you and so that he could say I'm gonna lose nothing of what my father's given me and I want to close by saying this that for every one of you and for anyone watching online wherever you are this is this is what Jesus wants this is what Jesus wants for you this is what it is all about it's not reserved for me or for anyone it's for everyone and I want to just stamp the word whoever on your heart because whoever cares nothing for background or baggage or history or mistakes or fears or doubts or whatever whoever is whoever and if you're hearing his voice tonight then please just put your trust in him amen