

“Drawn to Jesus”

December 29, 2013

Text: John 6:41-44

Jesus used the phrase “*come to Me*” as a way to describe the conversion of a soul.

- * He said (Mt 11:28)=> *“Come to Me, all who are weary & heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.”*
- * He said (Mt 19:14)=> *“Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me.”*
- * In Jn 7 we read that, on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, a priest offered water as a sacrifice in the Temple, and Jesus chose that moment to invite the Jewish people to accept Him as the water of life, saying (Jn 7:37)=>
“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.”

Coming to Jesus describes a thought-process of the soul, by which it turns from sin and from self-made righteousness, & places its full dependence on Jesus, in order to receive His forgiveness, to make His righteousness its covering, & to trust His death as the atonement for its sins.

This “coming to Jesus” is God’s 1 provision/prerequisite for sinners who wish to receive salvation for their souls.

Coming to X is also the first result of spiritual rebirth/regeneration.

The moment God brings a soul to life spiritually, it senses its eternal lostness, & feels deeply disturbed about it.

Having heard about Jesus, that soul intuitively reaches out to Him by faith for deliverance/refuge.

And in Him, it finds its rest/peace.

Apart from life-giving regeneration, a soul remains dead in its sin.

Souls that are spiritually dead cannot come to X, which means God must start the whole process because man can't do it.

And apart from coming to Him, no one can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

In today's text, Jesus will say something that will bother & irritate those listening to Him in our text.

Frankly, it may bother you too.

This is what He will say=> *"No one **can come** to Me unless the Father who sent Me **draws** him."*

Someone: "That's not how I see it. I was taught that I can believe in Jesus, come to Him, & become born again, at my own discretion, whenever I choose to do so."

Another person: "This idea that I can't come to Jesus & become saved unless the Father draws me just doesn't feel right to me. My God wouldn't impose His own will on me like that."

My response to both these folks would be to repeat Jesus' own words to them=> *"No one **can come** to Me unless the Father who sent Me **draws** him."*

If that's not true of your God, Jesus isn't your god.

Someone might answer=> “He didn’t literally mean that. You’re misinterpreting His words.”

My response=> First, I’m not interpreting them at all—I’m just reading them; and their meaning is so clear, there’s only one reasonable way to interpret them.

In fact, in verse 65 of this chapter, Jesus will even reinforce/add-to these words, saying=> “*No one **can** come to Me unless it has been **granted** him from the Father.*”

Second, if Jesus didn’t really mean these words, then what other words did He speak that He didn’t really mean?

E.g. did He really mean Jn 3:16?=> “*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*”

Or what about Mt 11:28?=> “*Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*”

I suspect our friends would grumble, “Well of course He meant what He said in those verses!”

Why? “Because I really like those verses. They make me comfortable, & I feel good when I read them.”

But is that a valid criterion for determining which verses Jesus meant, & which ones He didn’t?

And think too about the broader implication of not believing any one of Jesus’ words=>

Ultimately, it means not believing/believing-in Jesus Himself, & that is an extremely serious issue.

It makes one an unbeliever.

I would encourage folks like these to carefully consider the words of the passage we will examine this morning, where we'll hear from some real unbelievers.

In today's text we will encounter the grumbling of some unbelievers, then Jesus' answer to their grumbling; Finally, we will consider the practical implications of Jesus' answer.

*** The Grumbling of Unbelievers**

[John 6:41]=> *“Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread that came down out of heaven.’”*

There was a grumbling—a dissatisfied murmuring—that had now begun to spread among Jesus' listeners.

The verb tense indicates that this had been going on for awhile. A number of scholars believe X had now entered Capernaum's synagogue, and *“the Jews”* John mentions here included the leaders of that synagogue.

Verse 59 will tell us=> *“These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.”*

So at some point Jesus had transitioned from talking in the open air with the crowd that had followed Him from the other side of Lake Galilee, to teaching the people who had gathered in the nearby synagogue at Capernaum.

Verse 41 may be the moment when Jesus moved indoors.

The grumbling was because of what X had said earlier=>

Not only that He was the bread of life, but even more

importantly, that He had come down from heaven, &
therefore had the power to impart eternal life to those the
Father had given to Him.

The grumblers grumbled because they thought Jesus had no right
to make such claims;

That He was being audacious, even blasphemous, for
saying what He had said.

Their unbelief prevented them from seeing/understanding
that this wasn't an idle boast on His part, but the
absolute truth.

**One of the reasons they rejected X's claim, was that He was
so familiar to them, they thought they knew all about
Him.**

[Verse 42]=> *"They were saying, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of
Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He
now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"*

**Apparently Joseph/Mary had either moved from Nazareth to
Capernaum, or they had visited Capernaum so often,
that the people there felt they knew the whole family.**

Though they thought they knew all about Jesus, they were
ignorant of several essential facts about Him=>

* His Father had not been Joseph—but God.

* His mother, Mary, had still been a virgin at the time of
Jesus' birth.

* Jesus' conception in Mary's womb had involved what Paul referred to as an "emptying," in which the 2nd Person of the Trinity set aside His right to freely exercise/exhibit the attributes of His deity, and took upon Himself all the limitations of our humanity.

There was far more to this young Man they thought they knew all about, than they had ever guessed.

* Their ignorance of Him wasn't based merely on His own suppression of His divine powers.

* It was also the result of their own spiritual condition.

Jesus will say to them in Jn 8=> "*You know neither Me nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also*" (8:19).

Knowing the Father, is knowing the Son, and
knowing the Son, is knowing the Father,
because the Son is the radiance of the Father's
glory (Heb 1:3).

Not having known the Father, they didn't recognize
His glory radiating out from Jesus in His godly
words, His miraculous deeds, & His holy
character.

**Jesus' neighbors were oblivious to the fact that the Word
(logos) had become flesh & had dwelt among them
(Jn1:14).**

Spiritual ignorance like that is a very serious condition.

Tragically, a person who chooses spiritual ignorance for himself can discover there's no retreat from it.

II Thes 2:11 says this about people who will not receive the truth about X because they have no love for it=>

“For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they will believe what is false, / in order that they all may be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.”

When man hardens his heart against the truth, God sometimes finishes the job, in an act of divine judgment, & permanently hardens his heart for him, sealing him in his ignorance.

Those who grumbled over Jesus' claim to have come from heaven, assuming He had no right to make such a claim, were teetering dangerously on the brink of such judgment.

*** Jesus' Answer to Their Grumbling**

X answered them in 2 ways=> a command to stop grumbling, and a statement about the cause of their grumbling.

1st, the command to stop grumbling

[Verse 43]=> *“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do not grumble among yourselves.’”*

This is a pres. imp. which really means=> “Stop grumbling!”

They had been grumbling for awhile now, & X was telling them to stop it.

Jesus, in His omniscience, knew exactly what they'd been saying.

If they had come to Him humbly/politely & in a spirit of sincere honesty, saying “We’ve known You & Your parents for a long time, & we don’t understand how You can claim to have come from heaven,” I think X would have explained to them His incarnation/virgin-birth.

He certainly responded patiently/favorably to the man who told Him *“I do believe; help my unbelief”* (Mk 9:24).

But instead of responding in an upright manner like that, they simply stood back & grumbled among themselves about Jesus’ words.

God hates grumbling, because it is all a form of rebellion against Himself, as sovereign God.

When Israel grumbled in rebellion against God, listening to the 10 spies who warned them not to trust Him & enter into the Promised Land as He had commanded, the Lord spoke to Moses/Aaron, saying=>

*“How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are **grumbling** against Me?”* (Num 14:27).

Then God told Moses to tell the people=> *“Just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will surely do to you; / your corpses will fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have **grumbled** against Me”* (Num 14:28-29).

When Jesus told Capernaum’s Jews to stop grumbling, it was a sober warning of divine judgment, if they didn’t stop it. And it was a warning that we too should take to heart.

Phil 2 instructs us as Xns to distinguish ourselves from the unsaved by our refraining from grumbling=>

*“Do all things **without grumbling** or disputing; / so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God” (2:14-15).*

2nd, Jesus answered these grumblers by revealing the cause of their grumbling=> They were spiritually dead in their sins and, apart from God’s intervention, they’d always be dead. Apart from being regenerated, they would remain dead-grumblers by nature.

[Verse 44] (Jesus)=> *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; & I will raise him up on the last day.”*

This is a very shocking statement=> They are spiritually lost/dead.

So they must resort to grumbling, because they haven’t come to X, & have no other way of responding to their spiritual blindness & hopelessness.

But it’s not merely that they don’t choose to come to Him;

It’s that they cannot come to Him.

And they never will be able to do so, until/unless the Father draws them to Jesus.

If, on the other hand, the Father does draw them to X, they will believe in Him, & He’ll save their souls; then He’ll go on to complete what the Father has started=> He will sanctify them, glorify them, & finally resurrect them on the last day.

In I Thes 5, Paul attributes all these blessed activities to God in general (all 3 Persons of the Godhead w/o distinction, each of whom plays a role in the process)=>

*Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify** you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be **preserved** complete, **without blame** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thes 5:23).*

Because God has drawn the believer to X, he/she is completely secure in X.

He who began a good work in the believer will perfect it, until the day of X Jesus.

No one who places his faith in Jesus can/will ever be lost by Him.

He will resurrect/raise every one of them, on the last day.

There’s an obvious question that must be asked/answered at this point=> What does X mean by the word “draw”?

It’s the word *helkuo*, and its lit. meaning is to tug/draw/drag/haul, or to lead by force.

E.g. * Jn 21=> “*Simon Peter went up and **drew** [helkuo] the net to land, full of large fish” (21:11).*

These fish did not come voluntarily.

* Acts 16=> “*When her [a demonized slave-girl’s] masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and **dragged** [helkuo] them into the market place before the authorities” (16:19).*

* Acts 21=> “*The people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they **dragged** him out of the temple*” (21:30).

* Jms 2=> “*Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally **drag** [helkuo] you into court?*” (2:6).

How does this apply to God the Father’s drawing a person to X?

Obviously, there’s far greater subtlety/elegance involved, than we find in any of these literal/physical examples.

When used figuratively, as it is in our text, *helkuo* means to exert an irresistible pull on man’s mental/moral life.

This is what we refer to as God’s irresistible call to salvation.

God places a series of circumstances in a person’s life which exert relentless pressure on him, & which ultimately reshape his thoughts/feelings.

These can include negative pressures such as affliction.

But sometimes they can be quite positive.

E.g. Jer 31:3=> “*The LORD appeared to him from afar, saying, ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; Therefore I have **drawn** you with **lovingkindness**.’*”

By whatever means our Lord sees fit to draw us, the result is that we begin to sense our sinfulness, & develop a desire for the forgiveness found only in Jesus.

In his book *Surprised by Joy*, C.S. Lewis described his own experience of being drawn by the Father to Jesus=>

“You must picture me alone in that room in Magdalen, night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity

Term of 1929 I gave in & admitted that God was God, and knelt & prayed: perhaps, that night, the most dejected & reluctant convert in all England. I did not then see what is now the most shining & obvious thing; the Divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms. The Prodigal Son at least walked home on his own feet. But who can duly adore that Love which will open the high gates to a prodigal who is brought in kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance of escape? The words “compel them to come in,” have been so abused by wicked men that we shudder at them; but, properly understood, they plumb the depth of the Divine mercy. The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, & His compulsion is our liberation.”

Q: Why is it necessary for God to draw sinners to X like that? Why don't they just choose to come voluntarily?

Why is it that even the greatest teacher who has ever lived—

Jesus X Himself—couldn't persuade all men to believe?

A: Because man's fallen/depraved nature has devastated his ability to believe spiritual truth by virtue of his own will/wits=>

* From birth, he is spiritually dead/inert in his trespasses/sins—Eph 2:1 / Col 2:13.

* As natural men, they cannot accept/understand/appraise the things of the Spirit of God (1 C. 2:14).

* The god of this world (Satan) has spiritually blinded the minds of the unbelieving—II Cor 4:4.

* Everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin—Jn 8:34.

* Satan's snares have made them his captives (2 Tim 2:26).

* The whole world lies trapped in the power of the evil one (1 Jn 5:19).

That's why no one can come to X w/o outside help from God Himself.

*** The Practical Implications of Jesus' Answer to Grumblers**

Man's need to be drawn to X, is due to human depravity.

Because of what happened to him as a result of his sin in the Garden of Eden, he cannot come to X on his own. His inborn sinfulness will prevent that from happening, every time.

I know how unacceptable that idea is in popular thought.

I can remember one woman who laughed when I referred to her as a sinner, because the world had taught her that everyone is basically good at heart, & that man's will is totally free to do whatever he chooses, and to make his own decisions.

But setting worldly wisdom & popular thought aside, & allowing the Bible alone to teach us, we inevitably come to the conclusions that sin has radically changed human nature, & that these assumptions are not valid.

Someone: I believe that anyone can be saved if he wills to be.

A: So do I, but that "if he wills" is the real issue—because nobody wills to be saved, at least not on his own, until God draws him to X.

As Jesus Himself put it in Jn 5=> "*You are **unwilling** to come to Me so that you may have life*" (5:40).

X had explained it even further in Jn 3:19=> "*The Light has come into the world, and men **loved the darkness***"

rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.”

Despite what most folks think, no one has enough unencumbered freedom of will to believe in X w/o being drawn to Him.

That’s why X leaves the 99 sheep and goes in search of each one of His sheep who is lost—it would forever stay lost if He didn’t.

Our depravity is such, that none of us would submit to the humbling terms of the gospel, otherwise.

The Bible teaches us that human will is so depraved & so inclined towards evil, that apart from the H.S., no man/woman would ever be inclined to believe in X.

Man is born a wolf at heart not a sheep till X transforms him.

A sheep feeds on grass, & doesn’t kill other animals for its food.

A wolf can eat grass, but by its very nature it is a carnivore.

You might be able to take a wolf raised in the wild and domesticate it until it appears to be tame.

But the moment its own nature takes over its behavior, it will revert right back to survival at others’ expense.

Why? Because it’s a wolf, and has a wolf’s nature.

Romans 3 describes man’s nature=>

“There is none righteous, not even one; / There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; / All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one. / Their throat is an open grave, With their tongues they keep deceiving, The poison of asps is under their lips; / Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; / Their feet are swift to shed

blood, / Destruction and misery are in their paths, / And the path of peace they have not known. / There is no fear of God before their eyes” (3:10-18).

That describes the spiritual equivalent of a wolf.

Someone: Wait a minute. People can do nice things. I just spent a lot of money on Christmas presents.

Yes, this wolf can be domesticated over time, & life itself has a domesticating effect on us.

X acknowledged that too, saying—“*You...being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children*” (Mt 7:11).

But that doesn’t change the basic fact, that man is sinful by nature (a wolf, until the H.S. transforms him into a lamb).

* His will has been so corrupted by sin, that even his good deeds are usually done for selfish reasons.

Not for the purpose of glorifying God.

* His understanding has been so darkened that he cannot comprehend the truths of God until he has received enlightenment from the H.S.

* His affections are so defiled/depraved that he loves anything and everything but spiritual/eternal things.

* His conscience is so depraved that, even though it may tell an unregenerate person that what he is doing is wrong, it will not make him realize it’s so wrong, that it’s going to condemn him before holy God.

The good news in all this is that God does draw people to X.

The Father sends the H.S. to induce them to “come to Jesus.”

And the Spirit does so by making them willing to come.

When you read C.S. Lewis' words out of context (as I did earlier), you might get the idea that people come to Christ against their will.

They don't!

But actually, the Spirit goes to the secret fountain of man's heart, & by some mysterious operation, reshapes and redirects his will.

A person comes to X longing for Him, recognizing His voice, as a sheep recognizes the voice of its shepherd.

When the Spirit has regenerated/renewed the person's spirit, that individual's good opinion of himself vanishes.

He had viewed himself as imperfect, but certainly not what you might call "sinful."

Suddenly, the Spirit lays his heart bare, for him to see the awful magnitude of the rebellion/defilement he has hidden even from himself w/i it.

He finds it breath-taking, because he had considered all his sins to be little sins, but now that he has viewed them in the light of God's perfect holiness, he stands ashamed/appalled.

Just as he's about to promise God that he will try to do better in the future, the H.S. shows him that it will do him no good at all.

His heart sinks in dismay, & right when he begins to feel truly hopeless, the Spirit points to X hanging on the cross, enabling him to understand that Jesus died to save sinners, & that because he now acknowledges himself to be a sinner, that means Jesus died for him too.

The Spirit enables this broken-individual to come to X and to believe in Him.

He believes in Jesus as his Savior w/ his own newly regenerated will, discovering in Him the incomprehensible peace of God, which surpasses understanding, and which will guard his heart/mind in X Jesus, from that time on, forever more.

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Text: John 6:41-44

1. Jesus used the phrase “come to Me” as a way to describe the [22 conversion] of a soul.

Mt 11:28; 19:14; Jn 7:37

2. Souls that are spiritually dead cannot come to Christ, which means God must [12 start] the whole process because man can't.

Jn 6:65; 3:16; Mt 11:28

3. **In today's text we will encounter the grumbling of some unbelievers, then Jesus' answer to their grumbling; finally, we will consider the practical [26 implications] of Jesus' answer...**

*** The Grumbling of Unbelievers**

[John 6:41]

Jn 6:59

4. The grumbling was because of what Christ had said earlier: Not only that He was the bread of life, but that He had come down from [14 heaven].

[Verse 42]

Jn 8:19

5. Jesus' neighbors were oblivious to the fact that the Word had become flesh and had dwelt [12 among] them.

Jn 1:14; II Thes 2:11-12

*** Jesus' Answer to Their Grumbling**

6. Christ answered them in two ways: A command to stop grumbling, and a statement about the [12 cause] of their grumbling.

The command to stop grumbling

[Verse 43]

Mk 9:24; Num 14:27, 27-29

7. When Jesus told Capernaum's Jews to stop grumbling, it was a sober [16 warning] of divine judgment.

Phil 2:14-15

The cause of their grumbling

8. They were spiritually dead in their sins, and apart from God's intervention they would [14 always] be dead.

[Verse 44]

I Thes 5:23; Jn 21:11; Acts 16:19; 21:30; Jms 2:6

9. When used figuratively, *helkuo* means to exert an irresistible [10 pull] on man's mental and moral life.

Jer 31:3

10. Why is it necessary for God to draw sinners to Christ like that? Because man's fallen, depraved nature has devastated his ability to believe [20 spiritual] truth.

Eph 2:1; Col 2:13; I Cor 2:14; II Cor 4:4; Jn 8:34; II Tim 2:26; I Jn 5:19

* The Practical Implications of Jesus' Answer to Grumblers

Jn 5:40; 3:19

11. The Bible teaches us that human will is so depraved and so inclined towards evil that, apart from the Holy Spirit, no man or woman would ever be inclined to [16 believe] in Christ.

Rom 9:10-18

12. Someone: "But people can do nice things!" Yes, but that doesn't change the basic fact that man is [14 sinful] by nature.

Mt 7:11

13. The good news in all this is that God does [10 draw] people to Christ.

14. The Spirit enables a broken individual to [10 come] to Christ and to believe in Him.