

I Believe by His Power, Forever!

John 6:35-59 (text: Jn 6:37 & 44)

21 February 2021, Reformed Church of Wainuiomata 10:30 a.m.
(Put together by Pieter van Huyssteen with due acknowledgement)

Intro

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ,

About twenty years ago, Annette & I knew a godly elderly couple. They had two adult sons who both were married. However, whereas the younger son loved Christ, the older son adamantly rejected Christ! And because that elderly couple knew that their time on earth was short, they asked me to continue praying for their son who had rejected Christ! I promised to do that even after their deaths! Well, this elderly couple are no longer with us – he for about 20 years, and she for about 10 years! And, on & off when I think of their unbelieving son, I still pray for his conversion! However, up until now, I have not heard the news his parents so badly wanted to hear!

So, here's the question: Why is it so that, within a godly family in which two sons received the same Christian education, one receives Christ and the other one vehemently rejects Christ?

Here's another question, which flows out from the first: How does a human being (anyone) become a Christian? What makes you/me and our children love Jesus and believe in Him? Well, (in Jn 6:37 & 44), our Lord Jesus Himself gives us the answer: **It's the work of God the Father, and it's a work that cannot be made undone again!**

So, here are two points of our sermon...

- The Father's Work
- Forever

The Father's Work

Verse 37 makes it clear that only those whom the *Father* gives to the Son – only *they* will come to the Son.

It's clear, isn't it?

No human being will bring him/herself to faith in Jesus Christ – only, "All that the Father gives to the Son will come to the Son..."

And in v.44, Jesus makes it even clearer when He straight-out says, "No one can come to Me unless the Father... draws him..."

And what a beautiful & powerful word – the word "draw!"

You see, some people have tried to say that this word does not mean *drawing*, but rather *wooing*,¹ i.e., like a young man *woos* (or *wins over* the heart of) a young lady so that she willingly, gladly & joyfully surrenders herself to him!

And Annette and I are again seeing this with our daughter, Caroleen, and her boyfriend.

- Firstly, it's the *words* young Freddie speaks to Caroleen – tender & endearing words. For example, he does not call her Caroleen. No, he calls her "Karlien." His *words*!
- Then, it's his *deeds* – considerate, caring & protective deeds. For example, he opens the car's door for her; and, late at night when she finishes work at a West-Auckland restaurant, if young Freddie is in Auckland, he will be promptly at her restaurant door to make sure she arrives safely at her car in the dark carpark, or else he will pick her up with his own car and drops her off where she stays!

¹ Cf. the comical incident explained and corrected by SPOUL, R.C. 2006. What is Reformed Theology? Understanding the basics. Grand Rapids, MI : Baker Books. p.154-155.

See what wins the heart of a young lady? Apart from a young man's whole character, which speaks of faithfulness & truthfulness, it's his *words & deeds* to the young lady he loves by which he wins her heart!

Now, on the one hand, one should admit that, just on a much more powerful level, that's also how God does it, i.e., through His *Word* and through His *love-deeds* for you & me – best of all: His love-deed most clearly expressed on the cross (which we will remember later this morning at the Lord's Table). And, indeed, such great love *will* move the hearts of God's elect (will drive them to tears of repentance and) to receiving Christ as their Lord & Saviour!

But, my brother & sister, this is where the young-man-young-lady illustration reaches its limit, for, you see, despite a young man's kind words & deeds, all his efforts might still fail so that he will not be successful in winning her heart!

But *God's drawing* of His elect to Christ never fails – it's only ever effectual!

You see, the Greek word for “draws” in v.44 describes a very powerful action!² It's not merely describing a *wooing* action – or a *pleading* action!

It means to *powerfully draw* or even *drag*! You see, this same word is used where we read in Jn 21:6 how the disciples were not able to *draw/drag/haul* in a net because it was overloaded with fish; also, in Acts 21:30 where we read how some real angry Jews grabbed Paul in the temple area and *dragged* him out.

See? God's pull on the minds & hearts of His elect whom He *draws* to Christ, is powerful and will never fail in its purpose!

But here's a qualifier: When God powerfully & irresistibly draws His loved ones to Christ, He does not do this against their will (or bypassing it). No, so wonderful is His drawing of them that when they receive Christ in faith, they receive Him not because they were forced to, but because they want to!

See?

Those whom *God* has decided to call to Himself through Jesus Christ, He *will* call – and *effectually* so!

How does He do it?

With His Word and Spirit!

Yes, through His Holy Spirit, God works the right place and time – the right circumstances! And the Spirit and the Word work together to perform that strong pull on the heart of God's elect – yes, to spiritually “drag” (“haul in”) their hearts for Christ!

Allyshia, that's what God has done to/with/in you! And I don't know exactly *when* God did that in your heart – it could have been many years ago, for your zeal for the Lord and your love for Him have been visible in your life for quite a time. So, I don't know when exactly God “drew” you to Christ!

- Could it be the fact that your grandmother and parents spoke fondly of the fact that, as baby, you received the sign of covenant baptism?
- Could it be the discussions you & Luke had about God and His Word?
- Or could it be the adult catechism classes of Brother Leen van Vliet through which God imparted His Word to you – and exercised a strong pull/draw on your mind & heart?

² ἐλκύση Aorist Active Subjunctive of ἔλκω to pull or drag, requiring force because of the inertia of the object being dragged—‘to pull, to drag, to draw’ (Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). [Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: based on semantic domains](#) (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition., Vol. 1).

Yes, I don't know by which exact words & deeds of God He powerfully drew you to faith!
But the elders & I have seen in you all three components of true faith:

- Knowledge (of God Triune and of His Word)
- Assent – yes, an intellectual assent – that God's Word is true!
- Trust – yes, a heartfelt entrusting of your life into the hands of God Triune!³

And so, whereto has God's powerful & unfailing drawing of your heart brought you?

Well, His powerful drawing has led you to, this morning, publicly profess your faith in Jesus Christ as your Saviour & Lord! Yes, publicly – i.e., in front of God's people!

It was *God's* doing! Yes, as with all who have come to faith in Jesus Christ, it was God who worked it – not the human being him/herself!

See why many a Christian has looked back on his/her conversion and, with the benefit of hindsight, sung with awe the words of Sing-to-the-Lord 440, "*I sought the Lord and afterward I knew He moved my soul to seek Him, seeking me; it was not I that found, O Saviour true; no, I was found, was found of Thee...*"⁴

Now, certainly, we as church family pray that what our Heavenly Father has done in your heart, Allyshia, He will also powerfully do in the hearts & lives of *all our congregation's children!*

And when exactly this will happen, no human being can determine! It might happen when our children are young adults, or teenagers, or, in some of our children, our Heavenly Father might already have done it – even when they were still little!

Well, so far, re point 1: "It's the Father's work!"

Here is the last small point!

Forever

Look at the following words of blessed assurance...

Christ says, "...and he who comes to me, I will never cast out, but raise him up on the last day!"⁵

What comfort!

What peace!

What assurance!

Once you belong to Jesus Christ, He will never ever let you go – even in/through the toughest of times!

Perhaps someone might say, "But I have seen someone who once professed his faith in Christ, yet now he has rejected Christ!"

Well, you have to ask this question: "Has such a person then really ever belonged to Christ?" I mean, does not the saying go, "If you lost it, you never really had it, for if you really had it, you would have kept it!"?

It's like what John says in 1 Jn 2:19 "***They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.***"

³ In Latin these three parts of a saving faith are called: *Notitia*, *Assensus*, and *Fiducia*.

⁴ Stanza one of Hymn no. 440 in *Sing to the Lord*. Published by the hymnal committee of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. Text: Anonymous, 1878; Tune: Finlandia by Jean Sibelius 1899.

⁵ Cf. v.37, 39, 40, 44

But here is the comforting word of Christ our Lord to all whom the Father has given Him: “I will never cast you out” (Jn 6:37)!⁶ “Yes, no one will snatch you out of My hand” (Jn 10:28).⁷ “And I will raise you up on the last day” (Jn 6:44)!⁸ The Apostle Paul says (Rm 8:38-39) that nothing – not even death – can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!⁹

However, here’s a question: If a young lady does not even want to *listen* to words of the young man who tries to win her heart – yes, if she blocks her ears from hearing his kind words, and if she is blind to his deeds of care, love & protection, then is it not true that she will *never* receive him and never get to know him personally?

Boys & girls (young people, my brother & sister), if you & I never take the time to read God’s Word – or hardly ever, then will we ever stand the chance to be impacted by God? Will we then ever see His love-deeds for us in Jesus Christ?

So, think with me: What will place you & me in the best position to be powerfully drawn by the Father to Jesus? Is it not when we regularly immerse ourselves in God’s Word?

Children (Young people), do you yearn (long for it) to be drawn to Jesus and to know that you are right with God?

Well, then, be busy with God’s Word! Read it! Pray over it! See God’s love-deeds for you, and believe!

AMEN (1,759 words excluding footnotes)

⁶ Jn 6:37, ***All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out*** (NASB).

⁷ Jn 10:28, ***and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand*** (NASB).

⁸ Jn 6:44, ***No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day*** (NASB).

⁹ Rm 8:38-39, ***“For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”***