

Irresistible Grace

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[0 : 00] What is your story of grace?

Appreciate some of the language that Jesse used describing his state before salvation! and then describing the irresistible work of God in his life.

To call him and to lead him into salvation. What is your grace story today? How would you describe the work of God in your life?

How would you describe what God has accomplished for you in terms of leading you and bringing you to salvation?

You've heard Pastor Kenorrier say on numerous occasions, he says, I am not the hero of my story. Perhaps no other passage in the Gospel of John brings that front and center like the one that we'll look at today.

[1 : 13] Not only have we sung about grace this morning, but we've sung about Jesus being Lord. The question for you today is, is Jesus Lord for you?

Is Jesus King? Is He sovereign? Is He Lord for you today?

And how far does that Lordship go? How much room do you give God to be God in your life? And in salvation?

Oh, it is with tremendous fear and trepidation I come to this passage this morning. We're in a series of verses that summarize the final words of Jesus in the last moments of public ministry.

Feel the weight of this moment. Feel the gravity of the things that Jesus will say.

[2 : 29] How will He leave ministry? How will He exit His public ministry? What will He leave these people in Jerusalem with?

People He's wept for. People He's ministered to. People He has taught on a regular basis.

People who we will see today continue to turn their back on Him in unbelief. What will He say to them?

And what will the Gospel writer's commentary be about the ministry of Jesus that ended up with so many in unbelief?

Is this really a testimony to what Jesse described in the video as irresistible grace? And if it's irresistible, how is it that so many have walked away from grace?

[3 : 31] And this morning, as this passage lands on us, as the words of Jesus weigh down on us, the question for us this morning is, what will you do with God's irresistible grace?

How will you respond to grace today? There is grace. Immense, eternal, lavish grace available to you.

What will you do with grace? John chapter 12 is where we are this morning. If you're visiting with us this morning, grab a pew Bible.

We're on page 899. John chapter 12. This morning is challenging, not only because of the content, but because of so many individuals that we would love and respect who disagree about what we're going to talk about today.

So that it has been perhaps one of the most divisive truths and doctrines in all of church history. And we're going to talk about it this morning.

[4 : 55] Thank you, Pastor Knoyer. There is perhaps nothing in the Gospel of John that we will read that will confront us with the sovereignty of God more than this truth that we will look at this morning.

And if you thought this week was bad, come back next week. It will continue.

It will continue to shake us to the core. It will demolish your self-sufficiency. And it will put God on the throne of your life if you embrace this truth.

That's what we want. Is it not what we want to put Jesus on the throne of our life? As we spoke about last week, the whole purpose of the cross was to exalt the glory of God, to let Jesus and let God the Father make known His identity to the world, the fullness of all who He is, His mercy, and yet His justice, His purity, and yet His forgiveness, His enduring patience, and yet His wrath that comes on sin, His love for the sinner, and yet His hatred towards sin, His wrath against it, He will judge it.

All of those things come into view on the cross. His eternity, and yet His subjection to frailty, His sovereignty and glory, and yet His immense eternal humility.

[6 : 58] the masterpiece of the portrait of God is being written across the page, across the canvas, through this text today, and through our text last week.

The cross stands for Christ and His glory. What will we do with the cross?

How will we respond to God's amazing grace? John chapter 12.

Picking up from last week in verse 32, it will kind of set the text, the context for us as we move into the troubling waters of verses 37 to 41.

What does the work of the cross accomplish in verse 32? Jesus says, And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to Myself.

[8 : 06] And then in 37, we find the contrast. Though He had done so many signs before them, they still did not believe.

So that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled. Lord, who has believed what He has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore, they could not believe.

For again Isaiah said, He has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.

Isaiah said these things because He saw His glory and spoke of Him. I want to speak this morning about irresistible grace.

We find on the cross that God wins. He is victorious in every way. He wins. But in our text today, we find two sides of the same coin.

[9 : 22] In verse 32, we find, first of all, the recipients of grace. There are those who receive the grace of God. There are those who partake in fellowship with God.

There are those who can rejoice in the work of God in their life. Are you a recipient of God's grace today? Oh, I pray that you are.

And if not, that by the end of this message, you will decide, you will become one of those recipients. Well, who are these recipients of grace?

Who are they after all? Matter of fact, Jesus, here in His words, these final words to the public people there in Jerusalem, says that He will draw all people to Himself.

Who are these all people? And what kind of drawing will He do? Are these all men universally? Is that what it's referring to?

[10 : 23] Is it referring to the world and its entire population? Well, it's going to require us to look at some words. We need to look at some words in this text and also look at some words and how they're used throughout the Gospel of John.

John, I have found in my own study that the best answer to the tough questions that I will raise about a particular passage can actually be found within the book.

As the Gospel writer, and particularly John, I'll tell you what, this guy keeps coming back over and over and over again. These same themes he keeps churning through so that his audience will understand and not miss the point.

What does it mean to draw? Well, this word is used predominantly in the Gospel of John, in a spattering of times in other parts of the New Testament.

It's also used in the book of Acts and in the book of James. But it means specifically to pull in, to draw in, to haul in, to lead by force.

[11 : 40] John 6.44 gives us a clear witness to how Jesus intended this term to be understood. John 6.44 says this, No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.

And I will raise him up at the last day. It's also used in narrative sections. And as this group of disciples is with Jesus there in the Garden of Gethsemane.

And remember what takes place, this crowd comes and Peter thinks he's going to help Jesus out a little bit, decides to draw his sword and he cuts off the ear of Malchus.

That same word for drawing the sword that Peter does in the Garden of Gethsemane in John chapter 18 verse 10 is this same word here.

Later on once Jesus is resurrected we find that there's a haul of fish that is collected and Jesus is on the shore. Peter jumps out of the boat and swims the shore, greets Jesus, but then he realizes that his buddies are still out in the boat and they need some help.

[12 : 57] So Peter in John 21.11 climbs aboard that boat and drags the net ashore and it was full of large fish. It's used in the book of Acts.

Acts chapter 16 verse 19 says, when the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope for making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

there is a sense in which the dragging that is done by God is a dragging that is done by force.

Jesus says, I will draw all men to myself. This is the language that Jesus uses in John and John chapter 10 to talk about salvation.

He talks about himself as the good shepherd. He talks about himself as bringing in the sheep. Jesus was not interested in just gaining attention.

[14 : 01] He wasn't interested in being the rock star of the first century. He was about saving lost souls. He came to seek and to save the lost.

Perhaps the best passage which gives us a corollary to what Jesus is talking about here is in John chapter 3 verse 14 and 15. Just jot it down and let me read this for you.

It says, As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up. That should sound familiar. In John chapter 12, Jesus says, When I am lifted up, I will draw all men to myself.

In John chapter 3, he says, As Moses lifted up the serpent, he says in verse 15, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

The mission of God in being raised up was to draw men to himself in terms of salvation. Now we're faced with some big questions.

[15 : 10] That little neat package of doctrine and theology that maybe you have built for yourself begins to get unraveled a bit. Because in answering this question, now it just raises many, many more that we're not going to be able to address in totality this morning.

But hopefully through the course of our time together, just to continue to raise for us this question, Is Jesus Lord?

throughout Jesus' ministry, even moving past the unmistakable testimony of the resurrection, once Jesus raises from the dead, there are still unbelieving individuals.

And here, in our passage today, we find in verse 37, though he had done so many signs before him, they still did not believe. And looking around in this world, we can see neighbors and coworkers and maybe even family members who have yet to bow the knee in worship, in faith to God.

No, Jesus is not talking about calling men, all men to salvation universally. So what other options do we have? Well, perhaps he is speaking about all men representatively, that he will save and rescue men from all over the world, every tribe and tongue and nation, not just the Jews specifically, but he'll save the world representatively, people who are Jews and Gentiles alike.

[16 : 57] And certainly, we find this throughout the Gospel of John, we find this open invitation of Jesus to the masses. Fifteen times, Jesus makes the statement in the Gospel of John, whoever believes, in the Gospel, I think I've jotted them for you in your notes so that you can reflect on those later.

But just by way of whetting your appetite, John 3.15 says, whoever believes in him will have eternal life. John 3.18, whoever believes in him is not condemned.

In John 5.24, whoever hears my word and believes in him who sent me has eternal life. In John 6.40, everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life.

And in 6.47, whoever believes has eternal life. Certainly, there is openness to the Gospel. It's not just for the Jews.

It's not just for the covenant community, those who are descendants of Abraham. It is for the larger population. Jesus refers to this in John 10.16 when he says, and I have other sheep that are not of this fold, speaking of the Jewish flock.

[18 : 17] I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice, so there will be one flock and one shepherd. Even here, at the end of Jesus' public ministry, he beckons to those who he believe.

Next week, as we look at these later verses in John 12, we see Jesus repeating these same things in verse 46 and 47. He says, I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

There is a wide appeal, a wide proclamation, a crying out, requesting that there be entrance into the Gospel.

people. But even this is not the complete answer. Jesus isn't just talking about a representative group of individuals. I believe that Jesus is speaking of men exclusively, all men exclusively.

There will be an irresistible nature to God's grace. God leaves nothing to chance. the cross spells victory and triumph and it shows up even here in drawing men to himself, those whom he intends to save.

[19 : 42] Well, how do we support that? Well, in our text this morning in verse 32, it says, the ESV translates it this way, will draw all people to myself.

The word people is not there in the original language. It's, I will draw all to myself. Well, who is the all? How does John define all?

Well, it's all who believe. That's certainly true. But do we get any help throughout the rest of the Gospel to know how John defines this group of individuals that he calls the all?

Well, in John 6, 37, he gives us some help. Keep your finger in John chapter 12. It's worth turning to John chapter 6 so you can underline and go back to these verses.

John chapter 6, verse 37. Let's back up to 35.

[20 : 54] Jesus says, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger. Whoever believes in me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe.

How is that possible? Verse 37, all that the Father gives me will come to me.

and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. Dropping down a couple of verses to verse 39. And this is the will of him who sent me that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me but raise it up on the last day.

Jumping down to verse 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.

Verse 65. And he said, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by him by the Father.

[22 : 13] Verse 66, and this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. So Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go too?

Simon Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and come to know that you are the holy one of God. Throughout the gospel of John and if we were to work our way into John chapter 10 we'd see the same kinds of things where Jesus says I am the good shepherd the good shepherd will get his sheep they will come they hear my voice they know my voice and they have been given to me by my father they will be my sheep I will accomplish my work I will lose none of those for whom God has given to me what a wonderful and perplexing truth oh the questions that rise to the surface as a result of this reality can they not respond why would

God not call everyone universally if he has the power to do that are they not responsible if God is the one who has governed this process through his sovereignty and how can God judge those who seemingly have no hope in the mind of God these truths do not compete in the mind of mortality in the mind of our finite limited scope we can't begin to put together the tension that is created by the fact that God is sovereign and yet we are responsible and yet in the mind of God there is nothing that competes with this truth so we've seen positively the call of God's grace on the hearts of those who believe but in verses 37 to 41 we find the flip side of the coin we find not the recipients of grace but here we find the rivals of grace we find the enemies of grace we find the opponents of grace and in spite of the lavish goodness of God in spite of all of the evidence in spite of all the proof that

Jesus laid before them they still reject they reject first of all the miracles of Christ we find that here in verse 37 though he had done so many signs before them they still did not believe we've heard the the the quote seeing is believing for these Jews in Jerusalem seeing was not believing it was not adequate it was not enough and as we move through this text we'll find there was a reason for that there is a divine reason for rejection they did not believe it says although they had the enduring patient overwhelming testimony of God Jesus Christ God in the flesh there before them the present fleshly mortal impersonation of God himself standing in their midst and yet they still did not believe truth you can tell that

John is wrestling with this truth at the beginning of his gospel he writes in John 1 11 and 12 he says he came to his own and his own did not receive him and here at the end of Jesus public ministry we find the outworking of that very truth he came to his own he came with power he came with working and signs and wonders and yet they still did not believe they did not believe with all the evidence in front of them they did not recognize the glory of God working through Christ the word believe occurs at least 98 times through the gospel of John and 67 times up to this point in chapter 12 it's almost breathtaking at this point to hear the words they did not believe in light of all of the testimony of those who have gone before and who did believe his disciples who believed in chapter 2 many who saw the signs and believed in chapter 2 23 the

[27 : 18] Samaritans who believed in chapter 4 the many more who believed because of his words in chapter 4 41 those who believed who had signs and wonders performed for them throughout the testimony of Jesus' time in Jerusalem Jesus unmistakably shows up through the testimony of Lazarus' resurrection it was so unmistakable that here at the beginning of chapter 12 we see that there are plans to put Lazarus to death to death because too many people were believing in the sign verse 11 of chapter 12 backing up to verse 10 so the chief priest made plans to put Lazarus to death because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus they had unmistakable testimony of God showing up in

Christ and yet they did not believe what will it take this morning for you to believe in Christ what will it take this morning for you to bend to the irresistible grace the work of God in your life what will it take this morning to see the glory of Christ and to bow in worship to him they rejected Christ but not just in the face of his miracles they rejected Christ in the face of his message we find that next verse 38 says so that the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled Lord who has believed what he has heard from us and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed here in this famous passage taken from

Isaiah chapter 53 talks about the suffering servant that will come the suffering servant that will come to bring salvation as we find in Isaiah chapter 52!

His testimony in coming will be with words and Jesus throughout his final week of ministry we find him teaching he is actively teaching the people so that in Mark chapter 11 we find that the chief priests and scribes heard that what Jesus had done in cleansing the temple they were seeking a way to destroy him for they feared him because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching and when evening came Jesus and his disciples went out of the city we find the same testimony in Luke Luke's account in Luke chapter 19 it says and he was teaching in the temple day by day and people were hanging on his every word in Luke chapter 20 one day Jesus was teaching in the temple and preaching the gospel and he's challenged by the chief priests and the scribes who say by what authority are you doing these things and in

Luke chapter 21 37 every day he was teaching in the temple but at night he went out and lodged on the Mount of Olives and early in the morning all the people came to him in the temple to hear him this is the passion week Jesus committing himself to teaching these people before his death Jesus his teaching was riveting it was electrifying the crowds were astonished they were amazed at his teaching but even the teaching of the most skilled and gifted communicator could not accomplish the work of salvation in their life they still did not believe in spite of all the miracles all the parables that he taught in spite of his ability to deal with the scribes and the Pharisees who came to confront him with questions impossible to get out of Jesus working through his wisdom and answering what seemed to be impossible questions fired at him but even through these testimonies the people did not believe

[31 : 57] Isaiah hundreds of years before said so much would take place the long waited day would arrive when the Messiah would show up who would believe his report he would flex his muscles and he would bring salvation who would run after that suffering servant answer he was despised and rejected by men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief as one from whom men hid their faces he was despised and we esteemed him not he has borne our graves and carried our sorrows yet we esteemed him stricken smitten by God and afflicted the humble chosen glorious Christ was despised why it says because they could not believe they could not believe why for you

Israel could not believe so the Gentiles could come in Jesus would not have gone to the cross without rejection without being despised without being opposed without being reviled salvation would not have come to you outside of the context of rejection that Jesus experienced he came to bring salvation to men and we experience the grace of God because of rejection that is why rejection had to come as Paul says in 2nd Corinthians he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him Israel rejected the miracles they rejected his message and in this last few verses they rejected his majesty they rejected his majesty we'll look at this more next week we'll spend more time digging into this passage as it flows into verses 42 to 50 at the end of the day they saw the glory of

God show up and they wanted nothing to do with it they saw God on display and they hated it I think it's C.S.

Lewis who says we are idol factories we love ourselves and when anyone competes with love for self it gets in the way and we reject it because we hate what that compels us to do what it demands for us to do and that is to obliterate self and look to Christ and we want none of that that's why they reject it another reason when people get a glimpse of Jesus majesty as Isaiah did in chapter 6 he sees the cherubim and the seraphim he sees the praises that God gives his people he sees the glory that is due him and the question goes out who will go for me who will send the message whom shall

I send to share the message of my glory and Isaiah says me me pick me God turns around and says okay go and say to this people keep on hearing but do not understand keep on seeing but do not perceive!

[36 : 18] Make the heart of this people dull and their ears heavy and blind blind their eyes lest they see and hear with the ears and understand with their hearts and turn and be healed our time is done I wonder if maybe a helpful illustration to wrap this up might be for those of you parents who play hide and seek with your kids when they're younger you ever do that okay where does a toddler tend to hide I mean in plain sight right okay I mean they'll cover their face perhaps they'll hide underneath a table but it's like 95% of their body is exposed and there they are there's no question about it right but you as a parent what do you do you look anyway don't you just you poke around here you know they're not there you you poke around over here and it takes it takes 15 minutes to find them in the most obvious spot your toddler believes that this is the best game on the planet and they believe that they're the most experienced at playing the game so when they go to a friend's house they say let's play hide and seek

I love that game and within seconds they're caught now whose fault is that is that their fault for the ignorance or is that your fault in terms of helping to feed that ignorance there is a mutual culpability right we are rebels at heart we are rebels to the core and it says in Romans chapter one that God gives us up to our rebellion he lets us go he says you want your rebellion you can have it you can have it we'll talk about this more next week but my guess is this morning that there are some what is the response and I want to try to bring this to a close quickly so we can bring the praise team up what should be our response how do we respond to

God's irresistible grace for those of you who have experienced God's irresistible grace there should be abounding joy that you are part of the family that God has set his affection on you of his own hallelujah for those who are hurting because of family members and loved ones who have rejected the gospel there should be comfort and stability and peace in your heart to know they can't escape the hand of God his irresistible grace if he intends to save them he will draw them back you don't have to fret or fear trust in the Lord to do the work and if you are here this morning and you personally have rejected the grace of

God in your life parting words to this message come from the parting words of Christ who says in 12 38 12 35 the walk walk while you have the light lest the darkness overtake you the one who walks in darkness does not know where he is going while you have the light believe in the light that you may become sons of light God is calling your name this morning don't resist any longer let's pray God we praise you for your irresistible grace oh it reminds us of where we stand humbled before you as the sovereign

God the one who demands worship the one who deserves worship the one who offers salvation so Lord this morning if there are any this morning who are believers and yet have lost the joy of their salvation I pray that you would as you did with David restore to them the joy abounding joy of their salvation as they remember the wonder of your grace and if there's any this morning who need to submit their life to you oh God do a work in their heart to draw them this moment before they leave we pray in Jesus name amen let's stand