

Irresistible Grace

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The idea that the death of Christ assuredly will save those for whom Christ died, is not a popular idea in our day. Christ is presented as a beggar. He makes promises; He pleads; He threatens. But He appears powerless to accomplish that which apparently He longs very much to do. One might be inclined to ask, "Who is this Christ Who is compelled so to beg for the co-operation of the sinner?" Is He indeed the Son of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit? Did He truly pay for sin on the cross -- and if so, why all this begging and pleading? Yet this presentation is common and considered proper in order to save sinners.

Open up your heart?

There is a group of old gospel-hymns which present Christ as such a beggar. I would like to quote a few to show you how true this is. One song states, *"At the door of my heart long the Savior did stand; And He knocked many times with His nail-pierced hand; But at last I gave heed, and I opened it wide, and I asked Him to enter and with me abide. Behold, at your door He doth stand and knock; If any His voice will hear, and, heeding the call, will their door unlock, He'll enter and bless them there."* Or another song expresses it this way: *"Behold, a Stranger at the door! He gently knocks, has knocked before; Has waited long, is waiting still; You treat no other friend so ill. Rise, touched with gratitude divine; Turn out His enemy and thine -- that soul-destroying monster, sin; And let the heavenly Stranger in."* Or, to quote but one more, we hear, *"If you are tired of the load of your sin, Let Jesus come into your heart; If you desire a new life to begin, Let Jesus come into your heart. Just now, your doubtings give o'er; Just now, reject him no more; Just now, throw open the door; Let Jesus come into your heart."*

What must one say of such songs? Is this the Jesus Who died on Calvary Who so pleads? But such a Jesus is weak; He is ineffectual and lacking in power. He is completely dependent upon the willingness of the sinner to allow Him to enter into the heart.

In harmony with the above, one hears over the radio and in evangelistic crusades a constant begging and pleading by the preacher that the sinner accept Christ before it is too late. In order to put the sinner in the proper frame of mind, the organ plays softly, and the choir soothingly sings. And all this time the plea goes forth, "Open your hearts. Let Jesus come in now. Don't wait for tomorrow -- tomorrow may never come!"

Again a Christ is presented who is weak and helpless. His atonement can not accomplish what it was designed to do -- unless the sinner himself is willing. Does not such a presentation at times trouble you greatly? What sort of Savior is that Who can not accomplish what He so badly wants to do?

The Christ of the Scriptures

The fact is that Scripture does not present our Savior in this way. The Bible presents the powerful work of Christ on the cross as irresistible.

There are some passages in Scripture that seem, on the surface, to present a pleading Savior. [Revelation 3:20](#), "Behold I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." It is evidently upon the basis of this text that many songs speak of opening up one's heart's door. Evidently the picture of Jesus standing at the door of the sinner's heart is based upon this text. But is that what the text teaches? Read carefully that passage of [Revelation 3:14-22](#). Christ is addressing the church of Laodicea, located in Asia Minor. This church, according to the passage, was neither hot nor cold; it was lukewarm - so that Christ was to spew them from His mouth. It was an apostate church. This church boasted in its material wealth -- but it was spiritually poverty-stricken. Their situation, spiritually speaking, was hopeless. These would no longer be counted as church of Jesus Christ. However, there were in that church yet some who still feared God and loved Christ. Their number was very small. To them does Christ speak in verse 20. Christ knocks at the door of the church in Laodicea and assures His people remaining in there, that He can not have fellowship with them in this church. If they are to enjoy truly Christ's fellowship, they are called to leave that faithless church and thus enjoy once more Christ's blessings. This is the plea of Christ addressed to confessing believers who reside yet in the false church. And these do listen to Christ and come out at His command! But this is a far cry from the distorted presentation which is heard in our day.

There are many passages which show that the Savior is not a beggar, but rather the all-powerful God. He speaks in [Isaiah 65:1](#), "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not...." It is this truth which Jesus emphasizes in His own instruction to the disciples in the gospel accounts.

Jesus says in [John 6:37](#) and 39, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.... And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Notice that Jesus emphasizes strongly that the Father gives a specific people to the Son -- and those that are given *shall come*. Negatively, Jesus emphasizes that of those given, He *shall lose nothing*. That this point be not misunderstood, Jesus says again in verse 44, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." I ask you, where does one find here a *begging* Jesus? Where is the suggestion that salvation is dependent upon the willingness of the sinner to open his heart's door? Does not Christ emphasize exactly the contrary: that He will surely draw and save His own? He needs not to beg nor plead.

So also does Jesus teach in [John 10:16](#), "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and *they shall hear my voice*; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." The same truth Jesus declares in verses 27-29 of this chapter, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and *I give unto them eternal life*; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them to me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." Now, that is

very clear, is it not? Christ's sheep are given to Him; they hear His voice; they follow Christ; they shall never be lost. Such does indeed beautifully portray the power, the irresistible power, of the cross.

God Opens the Heart

Nor is this all. Scripture teaches that it is God Who opens the heart of the sinner. We read in [Acts 16:14](#), "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: *whose heart the Lord opened*, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Jesus did not knock at Lydia's heart, begging her to open to Him -- but the *Lord* opened that heart. The same truth is emphasized in [Philippians 1:6](#): "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ." So then, the beginning of the work of salvation is of God -- even as is its completion.

All these passages surely emphasize the truth that the cross of Christ is effective: it accomplishes that which God determined. Those for whom Christ died shall surely be saved. There can be no question about that.

This truth must be faithfully proclaimed in the world. It has been asked whether there will be any who come to Christ if they are not begged. The preacher and his church ought not to ask such a question. The calling of the church is to proclaim faithfully the whole Word of God. That Word must not be compromised. And God will surely accomplish His purpose through the preaching of His Word. Tell the sinner that Christ dies for the sins of His people -- and they shall surely be saved. Tell the sinner that Jesus preserves His sheep so that no man can ever snatch them from His hand. Tell the sinner that whosoever believes shall *surely* and *eternally* be saved.

"Come Unto Me...."

Christ Himself so tenderly declares in [Matthew 11:28](#), "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." He speaks to the laboring and heavy laden. These are deeply conscious of their burden of sin and guilt. God has worked in their hearts: God has opened their hearts, so that these believe the testimony of Scripture that by nature they are dead in sin. Wicked man refuses to recognize and confess the burden of sin. He goes about claiming that he has no burden; he is not laboring and heavy laden. But Christ calls powerfully those who are brought to a consciousness of their sin to come to Him for rest. These do surely come and obtain the rest they desire. Thus must the church speak to the laboring and heavy laden -- pointing them to Christ Who certainly and surely gives rest.

God's Word declares too in [Isaiah 55:1](#), "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." Here again, the thirsting one is addressed. Not all recognize their thirst; only he does whose heart God opens. But such an one confesses that he has no money to buy. He cannot merit or earn the blessings of salvation. But there is the wonder of grace: one without money can obtain it. Jesus surely provides these thirsty ones with His own life. They

consciously come to Him and are fully satisfied.

And what great comfort this Scriptural truth gives to the child of God! If my salvation depended in any way, or in the smallest degree, upon myself, I would surely be lost forevermore. There would be for me no hope. How discouraging it must be to one who thinks that he must persuade sinners to accept Christ. Those who are eloquent and forceful appear to have a measure of success -- those speak of the souls *they* saved. But others seem to save none. They appear to be failures. How hopeless one must feel when he is told that *he* must accept Christ -- when he begins to see that he is such a sinner that of himself he will never accept Christ. But the Word of God assures us that it is Christ Who is both the Author and Finisher of salvation. Christ saves sinners. Christ opens the hearts of sinners. Christ brings them on their knees in repentance and confession of their sins. Christ preserves them and directs them in a righteous walk. Christ finally brings them to everlasting glory and life. Christ does it all. He fully saves.

What assurance this truth gives to the child of God. He is in the protection of the hand of God. Many enemies there are who would destroy him. The devil, the world, and one's own flesh conspire to prevent the salvation of the sinner. With all of these forces against one, there could be no hope of salvation -- if that salvation depended upon the action of man. Forces of evil can threaten, mock, persecute, but no man can take these sheep out of Christ's hand. He holds them securely while they walk through this earth -- till finally they are glorified with Him.

Wonderful, is it not, to know by faith that those for whom Christ died shall assuredly enter into everlasting glory and life. That is the wonder of the power of the cross. Do you too enjoy this glorious assurance given to all those who love the Lord?