

Title: Christ Answer to FreeWiller's
Text: John 5: 24; 6: 47
Date: April 30, 2017
Place: SGBC, New Jersey

I received a question, "How does one become a Christian?"

My answer, "A spiritually dead sinner becomes a Christian by God's grace alone, by God doing everything to bring him to rest in Christ, from all his works, through God-given faith. But a spiritually dead man does nothing. The Bible says God alone makes a sinner a Christian, by putting a new spirit within, making him willing to rest in Christ in the day of Christ's power exercised upon him."

He responded, "So, I don't need to believe in Jesus?" I do not know how he got that from me writing, "A spiritually dead sinner becomes a Christian by God...bringing him to rest in Christ...through God-given faith."

He wrote, "So, if one has a new spirit but is not willing to rest in Christ then they would be a born again but not a Christian?"

This his response to me quoting Psalm 110. Read Psalm 110: 1: The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. 2: The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. 3: Thy people *shall be* willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.

He asked other questions in defense of his will. Finally, he wrote, "It seems very clear to me that you reject free will and embrace the philosophy of determinism. I am chosen but free to seek, and hear. I don't believe that God saves anyone without allowing each person to have a free will. Listening to a sermon would be a waste of time."

Then he asked, "What do you do with John 5:24 and 6:47 which is very clear that everlasting life is obtained by hearing the words of Jesus and believing in God through having confidence in His salvific work?"

I have preached from John 6:47 and referenced it many times so I am not going to preach from it today. There Christ Jesus said,

John 6: 47: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

If I were preaching our Lord's words, I would not isolate this verse and spend 30 minutes telling you God has done all he can, now it is up to you to exercise your freewill. I would declare the context and preach what Christ preached.

Interestingly, Christ is preaching to those who trusted in their, so-called, free will. They thought salvation was by their will and their works. After shutting their mouths concerning their works, Christ shut their mouths from boasting in their will. He said,

John 6: 37: All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out...

He told them Christ is the Bread of Life and except they ate his flesh and drank his blood—except they believed on him—they had no life in them. They murmured, calling this a "Hard saying." But the Lord Jesus told them do not murmur. In response to their murmuring he again said,

John 6: 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. 45: It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me...64: But there are some of you that believe not...65: And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

So when you look at the context of John 6, the fact Christ was speaking to an audience who trusted in their will and works, it seems an odd scripture for a man to quote who is trying to defend the false doctrine of salvation by man's will and works.

Now turn to John 5. Again, this is "Christ's Answer to FreeWillers." Let's be sure to get the context.

Christ had healed a man on the sabbath who was unable to walk. The way Christ healed the man was by speaking. He commanded the man to "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." "And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath."

So the will-working Pharisee's were offended. They could not rejoice that Christ healed a man by commanding him to be made whole. They could not rejoice that a man unable to walk was not made whole. All they could do was reject Christ because they accused Christ of failing to observe the sabbath day.

Christ answered by telling them the works he did were the same works as God his Father. When he said that they became even more offended because he said God was his Father, making himself equal with God. So Christ told them that he is equal with God, the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity.

John 5: 19: Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. 20: For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. 21: For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth *them*; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. 22: For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23: That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. 26: For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;

In order to understand verse 24 in context, we must read the previous verses along with verse 25. He is declaring a work whereby Christ is declared to be the Son of God equal with God the Father. Verse 25 explains verse 24. Let's take verse 25 phrase by phrase. This is how we see what Christ is truly saying in verse 24.

Christ is declaring that he and God the Father are one God. When he said he would do "greater works than these", he meant greater than raising a man physically. What are those works? They are works which declare Christ is one with God his Father. He declares that like the Father, Christ quickens the dead to life. The Lord Jesus is declaring that proof that he and God the Father are one is because just as God the Father performs the miracle of grace in regenerating dead sinners to life and faith in Christ, so does Christ also.

Proposition: Greater than Christ's work of raising a lame man is Christ's work of quickening dead sinners to faith in Christ and everlasting life.

ORIGINAL CONDITION

John 5: 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God:...

While the will-worker isolates verse 24 in an attempt to show that sinners have ability to hear the word of Christ and believe on him of their own will, we take the verse in context. It would not declare Christ equal with God to say it is of man's will that hear and believe on Christ. So in verse 25, Christ declares the original condition of the sinner who shall hear is spiritual death—**John 5: 25...the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall....**

This is the condition of every sinner by our first birth—dead. We come into this world conceived of Adam's corrupt seed, spiritually dead in trespasses and in sins. We are only quickened by our Lord Jesus Christ!

Ephesians 2: 1: And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)...8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, [not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth] lest any man should boast. 10: For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we [shall] walk in them.

Grace is not an invitation or an offer dependent upon sinners exercising their will. By grace ye are saved! That means God did not choose us because he foresaw we would believe. But God chose us and *ordained before the world was made* that each of his elect shall believe by his gift of life and faith in Christ by his free and sovereign grace!

When Adam died, his soul was cut off from the life of God. We come into this world the same way. Just as physical death is separation of the soul from the body, spiritual death is the separation of the soul from the life of God. Until Christ gives life, we are spiritually dead, "*alienated from the life of God.*" (Eph 4: 18).

While dead, a sinner may think he is seeking God but he is only seeking the god of his depraved imagination. Proof is, his natural will is to reject the message that gives Christ all the glory. Instead, his natural will is to defend his own will so that he may give himself glory in his coming to Christ.

FROM DEATH TO LIFE

John 5: 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Verse 24 says the believer "*is passed from death to life.*" The will works preacher deceitfully isolates verse 24, exalting man's will to believe on Christ as being the ultimate difference in the sinner being dead or alive.

But Christ's preacher takes verse 24 in context. Christ is declaring he is one with the Father by declaring that his power is equal with God the Father. He shows in verse 25 how the sinner passes from death to life. Christ says the dead shall pass from death to life, "*when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live...*"

Our Lord declares, "*The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God*" which shall make them alive spiritually. How do the dead pass from death to life? Christ gives the command by his Voice!

The dead sinner does not do anything, he is dead. Nor does the preacher or the parents or the choir do anything make the sinner pass from death to life. Christ said in John 6,

John 6: 63: It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

Christ's Word comes as the command to live. Grace is not an invitation nor an offer. What did God teach Ezekiel in the valley of dry bones?

Ezekiel 37: 3: And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord GOD, thou knowest. 4: Again he said unto me, Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. 5: Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: 6: And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD.... 10: So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. 11: Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. 12: Therefore prophecy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. 13: And ye shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, 14: And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD.

This is what Christ declares in John 5. Just as God the Father has power to quicken the dead sinner to spiritual life and faith in Christ, so Christ has the same power. Christ declares, "I open your graves." Not only the grave in the general resurrection but Christ opens the grave making us arise in the first resurrection, the new birth. A sinner will only give God all the glory and give his own will no credit when Christ has performed the operation of quickening him to spiritual life. He said, "Ye shall know that I am the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you and ye shall live...then shall ye know that I the LORD have spoken *it*, and performed *it*, saith the LORD."

So the sinner begins in his original state of spiritual death. It is Christ speaking his word by his voice within the sinner that the sinner is quickened and passes from death to life.

THE IRRESISTABLE VOICE

John 5: 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. 25: Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

Notice toward the end of verse 25, he says when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, "*they that hear shall live.*" He does not say that they might. Christ says they "*shall live.*"

Christ is declaring he is God so that when he speaks the dead sinner hear his voice and there is no possibility they will perish in unbelief but they shall live! Christ's grace is irresistible because Christ's voice is irresistible.

Christ is the Righteousness of those for whom he died. In the same manner that justice demanded Christ bear the wrath of God when he bore the sins of his people, now, having satisfied justice, that same righteousness demands his people must be quickened to faith in Christ and given everlasting life! He prayed to the Father,

John 17:2: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he [shall] give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Christ is the Resurrection and the Life. Therefore, Christ receives the glory for raising us to life in the new birth. There is no possibility that those who Christ raises and in whom Christ is the Life shall resist Christ's will by their own will and refuse to believe on Christ.

The false doctrine of free will says that once God quickens the sinner to life, once he is born-again the sinner has the ability to either accept or reject the gospel by his own will.

When Christ commanded dead Lazarus to come forth, Lazarus came forth! Lazarus did not exercise his will and decide not to come out of the grave. Lazarus was made alive by Christ's Voice. Therefore, Lazarus came forth at Christ's command to come forth.

When Christ spoke to Saul of Tarsus, Saul did not stop and exercise his will as to whether or not he would bow. Immediately, Saul hit the dust when Christ spoke. When Christ sent Ananias to speak to Saul, as soon as Ananias spoke Christ spoke into Paul's heart and "*immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.*" (Acts 9: 18)

Christ is the Word! He communicates Life by his Word "*which liveth and abideth forever.*" Therefore, when Christ speaks his Word into us, he gives us everlasting life by his Word. The sinner cannot resist and perish because the Word that *liveth and abideth forever* abides within him. We are made willing to believe by Christ's power. The fruit of life that the Son of God gives is conviction (Jn 16:8-11), faith (Jn 3:36) and repentance (1 Thes 1:4-10). It is called "*being filled with fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ!*" (Php 1:11)

Why is a sinner so foolish as to exalt his will over God's?

Friday night lightning struck a big oak tree at the end of our street. The top massive part of that oak looks like someone twisted it right off! All the bark is peeled off down to the ground. Splinters are almost to my driveway a good 70 yards away. That was done by the Voice of God,

Jeremiah 51: 15: He hath made the earth by his power,...16: When he uttereth *his* voice, *there is* a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapours to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.

Job 37:5: God thundereth marvellously with his voice; great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend.

It is that same Voice by which dead sinners are made alive and our old fleshly will is subdued and we are made willing the day of Christ's power.

Psalm 46:6: The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted.

Psalm 68: 33: To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, *which were* of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, *and that* a mighty voice. 34: Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency *is* over Israel, and his strength [*higher than*] the clouds. 35:..the God of Israel *is* he that giveth strength and power unto *his* people. Blessed *be* God.

John 10:3...the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

When I was looking at that tree, I noticed a little grasshopper. Imagine that grasshopper beneath that mangled oak, saying, "God I will not obey your voice? The big oak could not resist your voice but I will resist this lightning!" It would be as absurd as a sinner doing the same. Christ is declared to be Jehovah, the Shepherd of God's elect sheep in Isaiah 40: 10-11.

Isaiah 40: 10: Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong *hand*, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward *is* with him, and his work before him. 11: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry *them* in his bosom, *and* shall gently lead those that are with young.

To hear the will-worker's false doctrine there is no way that passage could speak with such certainty. After all, the sinner might not be willing for Christ to do these things?

But how can Christ be so glorified as to declare with all certainty, without a doubt, that "he *shall* feed his flock like a shepherd," that "he *shall* gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom", that he "*shall* gently lead those that are with young?" It is because a few verses later, Jehovah Lord Jesus is declared to be "*he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.*" (Is 40: 22)

Sinner, have you heard Christ's Voice in this message? If you have then you shall be willing and shall believe on Christ. That is a certainty because Christ said, "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" by hearing his word. He is saying that when they hear his word they shall believe on him that sent Christ. And Christ said, "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death to life." That is why we who have been made alive and willing by Christ's word, know that Christ did this work and that is why we give him all the glory rather than that helpless thing called our depraved will!

Amen!