

Title: **FREE-WILL CRUSHED**
 FREE GRACE EXALTED!

Text: John 6:41-51

Subject: *Saving Faith, the Gift of God*

Date: Sunday Morning — May 17, 2009

Tape: John #49

Reading: *1 Samuel 5:1-15 & Revelation 13:1-18*

Introduction:

There is a hideously ugly monster, a beast that has risen up in the world, whose hide I want to nail to the wall. This beast has been around for a long, long time. We read about him in Revelation 13.¹

- He arose from the sea. — The Pagan, Idolatrous, Gentile World.
- He has many names; but his name is always “Blasphemy.” He always ascribes to man the work of God.
- He is found in every part of the world. — He has seven heads.
- He is very powerful. — He has ten horns.
- He is found in high places. — He has ten crowns.
- He is deceitful, like a leopard.
- He is destructive, walking through the forests of darkness with the feet of a bear.
- He is furious, devouring with the mouth of a lion. — Multitudes have perished by him.
- His number is 666. — Frustration! — Failure! — Defeat!

This beast must be slain. He will be slain — not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of God. He will be slain by the preaching of the gospel.

Though the Philistines propped him up again and again, Dagon their god fell on his face before the ark of God, with his hands broken off his arms and his head broken off his body, so free-will must fall before our Savior. As the ark of God was exalted as Dagon lay in the dirt before it, so when Christ is exalted free-will will be laid in the dirt before him. As Dagon and the ark of God could not abide in the same house, so free-will and free grace cannot abide together. One or the other must be pushed out of the house. In this place, we make it our business, regularly, to push free-will out of the house, to throw it in the dirt before our God, trample it beneath our feet, and cast it out.

IDOLATRY

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Nothing in all the world is more foolish, more debasing to humanity, more dishonoring to God, and more assuredly damning to the souls of men than idolatry. It is pathetic to see men and women worship gods that other men have made, dumb gods, made by the hands of ignorant men! Idolatry is hideously evil (Psalm 115:4-8).

(Psalm 115:4-8) “Their idols *are* silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. (5) They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: (6) They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: (7) They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. (8) They that make them are like unto them; *so is* every one that trusteth in them.”

Illustrations: *The Mayan Ruins*

Mexicans Worshipping the Virgin Mary.

But the most abominable form of idolatry in the world is that which Paul calls “*will worship*,” the worship of yourself (Colossians 2:23). **Those who attribute salvation in whole or in part to the will, work, or worth of man are the most abominably evil idolaters in the world, for they worship themselves.** Freewillism is the worship of self. Legalism is the worship self. **Free-will works religion makes man his own savior, for it makes the will, work, or worth of man the determining factor in salvation.**

Now hear me well. — **If your salvation, in whole or in part, is looked upon by you as something that is dependent upon or determined by your will or your works, you are a lost, Christless soul, an idolater.** You may talk about God and grace, Christ and redemption, the Holy Spirit and regeneration; but you really worship yourself.

- You trust in your own decision. Your confidence is in your personal goodness.
- Your peace is derived not from what Christ has done, but from what you have done. — Redemption is something accomplished for us, altogether outside ourselves. — Our hope is outside of us, not in our experience, but in God’s Son!

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- In your opinion the thing that separates you from the damned is not the will of God, the work of Christ and the call of the Spirit, but your own will, your own work and your own worth.

I want to go directly into the dark, idolatrous chambers of your heart and destroy your gods. The title of my message is **FREE-WILL CRUSHED** — **FREE GRACE EXALTED!** Turn to John 6, and hear the Word of God our Savior.

(John 6:41-51) “The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. (42) And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? (43) Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. (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. (46) Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. (47) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. (48) I am that bread of life. (49) Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. (50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Gospel truths of the greatest magnitude and importance follow each other in rapid succession in this chapter. I am sure that there is much more in the chapter than has yet been declared; but I want to call your attention to just five things in these verses.

A GIN TO ENTRAP

First, we see the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy in verses 41 and 42. Isaiah prophesied that the Lord Jesus, that one who would be born of a virgin, the Messiah, would be to many a gin and a snare, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence (Isaiah 8:14-15); and so it has come to pass (vv. 41-42). He

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who is our Savior, the Sanctuary in whom we take refuge and hide, is to others a gin and a snare, by which their souls are snared, entrapped and carried away to hell (Romans 9:30-10:4; 1 Peter 2:7-8).

(John 6:41-42) “The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven. (42) And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?”

Because he very simply and very plainly declared himself to them, because he said in no uncertain terms, “*I am the bread which came down from heaven,*” — That is because he said, “I am the Christ,” the Jews began to murmur. They stumbled at that which rejoices our hearts. They murmured against the very thing we find most delightful. Why? What is the difference between them and us?

- The Will of God
- Sovereign Election
- Distinguishing Love
- Saving Grace

(Isaiah 8:14-15) “And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. (15) And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.”

(Romans 9:30-33) “What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. (31) But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. (32) Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; (33) As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.”

(Romans 10:1-4) “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (2) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For

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they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

(1 Peter 2:7-8) "Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, (8) And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."

Our Lord's humiliation, the very fact that he made himself of no reputation, while he was upon earth, is a stumbling-block to many. Like these Jews, multitudes today say, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that he says, I came down from heaven?" Had our Lord come as a conquering king, with wealth and honors to bestow on his followers, and mighty armies in his train, they would have been willing enough to receive him. But a poor, and lowly, and suffering Messiah was an offence to them. Their pride refused to believe that such a one was sent from God.

That should not surprise us. It is human nature showing itself in its true colors. We see the same thing in the days of the Apostles. Christ crucified was "*to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness*" (1 Corinthians 1:23). The cross of Christ was an offence to many wherever the Gospel was preached in that day; and the same thing is true today. The offense of the cross has not ceased. There are multitudes of religious people around us who despise the distinctive doctrine of the Gospel, because the doctrine of the cross is humbling to man.

- Most everyone approves of Christ's exemplary service to others; but they despise the expiation of sin by his blood.
- They love to talk about what they call his "moral principles"; but they cannot tolerate blood atonement, penal substitution, and the satisfaction of justice by his sacrifice.
- His self-denial they admire; but his doctrine they despise.

Speak to the religionists of this world about Christ's blood — about Christ being made sin for us — about Christ's death being the corner-stone of our

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hope — about Christ’s poverty being our riches — about Christ’s obedience being our righteousness — about Christ’s death being our life, and you will discover that they hate these things with a deadly hatred; and they will show their hatred for you, if you dare assert them. Truly the offense of the cross is not yet ceased!

HUMAN INABILITY

Second, our Lord plainly declares in verse 44 the utter inability of man, man’s complete helplessness and inability to believe on him. — “*No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.*” Until the Father draws the heart of man by his grace, man will not believe.

It is too obvious to need comment that coming to Christ is merely another word for believing on Christ. It is not a physical, but a spiritual coming to Christ that is necessary and saving. But this coming is impossible to man. Our Savior says, “*No man can come unto me.*” That is to say, “No man has the ability to come unto me.” No man in his natural state can come to Christ — “*Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be*” (Romans 8:7).

Fallen man has neither the power nor the will to come to Christ.

- Man is dead in trespasses and in sins. — He has no power to give himself life.
- He is spiritually impotent.
- Blind, he sees no to come to Christ.
- Walking in darkness, he cannot know the way.
- Unregenerate, his heart is set on other things.

Men boast and brag about the will. Men everywhere, papists, pagans and Pentecostals, Buddhists, Brahmanists and Baptist, Methodists, Moravians and Mennonites all love to talk about man’s “free will.” All defend the doctrine of man’s “free will.” Even atheistic philosophers defend the blasphemous notion of “free will.”

But our Lord makes it plain that man’s problem is his will. What is man’s inability? It is not a physical inability that keeps sinners from Christ. It is not a moral inability that keeps you from coming to the Lord Jesus. It is the very will of man that keeps him from the Savior. It is your corrupt will that

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holds you in bondage. You cannot come because you will not come; and you will not come because you cannot come.

No man can come to Christ by nature because faith is the gift and operation of God the Holy Spirit.

- A new nature must be put in you, or you cannot come.
- A new heart must be put in you, or you cannot come.
- A new creation must be performed in your soul by God the Creator, or you cannot come.
- Unto you it must be given by God the Holy Spirit to believe on Jesus Christ, or you cannot come.

(Ephesians 2:8-9) “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: (9) Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

(Colossians 2:10-15) “And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: (11) In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: (12) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. (13) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; (14) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; (15) *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

Yet, your inability is no excuse for your unbelief. The fact is, you do not come to Christ because you do not want to come to him. You are responsible for your own soul. Your inability to come to Christ does not make any less responsible. If you are lost at last, it will be your own fault. If you go to hell, you will go to hell, as our Savior said, “*Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*” (John 5:40). Your blood will be on your own head.

DIVINE EFFICACY

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Third, our Lord sets before us the divine efficacy of God’s free, sovereign, saving grace in him. He shows us this great efficacy in three things:

- The Drawing of the Father (v. 44).
- The Teaching of the Father (v. 45).
- And the Revelation of the Father (v. 46).

If ever you are saved, if ever you come to Christ, you must be drawn to him by God’s sovereign, irresistible grace, drawn to him by the irresistible force of his grace (v. 44).

(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.”

Oh, what a blessed “*except!*” — “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him!*” And if the Father draws you to the Savior, you will come to him. We know that because he says, “*and I will raise him up at the last day!*”

The word “*draw*” suggests the idea of someone drawing water out of a well. No one begs and pleads for the water to get into the bucket! No, if you go to the well to get water, you reaches down and by an act of your own strength, you act upon the water, dipping the bucket in and pulling the water up to yourself. In the same way, sinners are drawn to Christ.

- God sends his Spirit to you.
- God performs a work on you and in you, called “regeneration,” or “the new birth.”
- And God graciously draws you to Christ.

This word “*draw*” is used in a few other places in the New Testament. Everywhere it is used, we see the same thing. It implies force and coercion. It never implies or suggests an invitation or even an urging.

- In Acts 16:19 those who were enriched by the demon-possessed girl “*caught Paul and Silas and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers.*”
- In Acts 21:30 the Jews “*took Paul, and drew him out of the temple...and...went about to kill him.*” — They weren’t begging and pleading with Paul. They drew him! — They forcibly drug him!

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- In James 2:6 we are warned to beware of rich men who draw believers before the judgment seats. — Again, the word does not suggest an invitation, but an irresistible force.

God the Holy Spirit effectively and successfully draws the chosen, redeemed sinner to Christ. There are no exceptions. The call of God is always irresistible, effectual and saving.

Look at verse 45. If you are saved, you must be taught of God; and all who are taught of God come to Christ and are saved by Christ.

(John 6:45) “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.”

Perhaps you are thinking, “Where is that written in the prophets?” I’m glad you asked. It is written in Isaiah 54:13, Jeremiah 31:34 and in Micah 4:2.

(Isaiah 54:13) “And all thy children *shall be* taught of the LORD; and great *shall be* the peace of thy children.”

(Isaiah 54:17) “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the LORD.”

(Micah 4:2) “And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”

“*They shall be all taught of God.*” — All who are ordained to eternal life, all who were given to Christ and are chosen in him, all for whom he died and obtained eternal redemption, all the children of God by special adoption and grace, sooner or later, shall be taught of God. Read on...

“*Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.*” — God’s teaching is always effectual. Our Lord did not say, “Every man that hath heard and learned of the preacher cometh unto

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me.” He said, “*Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto me.*” Everyone who hears the voice of the Father’s mercy, love and grace in the Gospel learns of him the way of life, and peace, and salvation by Christ. All who are taught of God, by the sweet force of his grace, come to Christ. Every sinner who is taught of God, hearing his declarations and promises of grace in Christ, ventures his soul on Christ, and commits it to him; trusting him, relying on his person, his blood, his righteousness and his sacrifice, for peace, pardon, justification, atonement, acceptance with God, righteousness, sanctification and eternal life.

If ever you come to Christ, it will be because he, as the God-man Mediator, has become the Revelation of God, the Word of God to you (v. 46).

(John 6:46) “Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.”

FAITH’S ASSURANCE

In verse 47, our blessed Savior gives a word of sweet assurance to faith. Here it is...

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

If you find yourself believing on the Lord Jesus, you already possess eternal life. Faith does not cause you to have it. Faith is the assurance that you have it, the assurance that you are...

- Chosen of God.
- Redeemed by Christ.
- Called by the Spirit.
- Taught of God.
- Born again.

(Hebrews 11:1) “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”

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(1 John 5:1) “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.”

This salvation is a present thing, a present possession that lasts forever and can never be taken away, lost, or destroyed. — “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.*”

Many seem to think that forgiveness and acceptance with God are things which we cannot attain in this life — that they are things which are to be earned by a long course of mourning and anguish — things we may receive at the bar of God at last, but must never hope to enjoy in this world! That is horribly wrong! Our Savior says, “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life!*” If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, your name is in the book of life, your sins are blotted out and you have a clear title to heaven. Neither Satan, nor hell, nor you can alter or overthrow the work of God!

(John 3:36) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”

BREAD FOR THE HUNGRY

Then, lastly, our blessed Savior, by the most simple picture imaginable declares himself to be the Bread of Life, Living Bread for hungry souls.

(John 6:48-51) “I am that bread of life. (49) Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. (50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

Salvation is to be had only by feeding on Christ, only by trusting his obedience unto death as our Substitute; and that is exactly how we must live upon him (Colossians 2:6).

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(Colossians 2:6) “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, *so walk ye in him.*”

As bread is the staff of life for the body, so Christ, the Bread of Heaven, is the life of the soul. And, as the body cannot subsist without daily food, so neither can the soul subsist without Christ, the Bread of Life. — “*Lord, evermore give us this Bread!*”

Amen.

¹ (Revelation 11:7) “And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.”

(Revelation 13:1-4) “And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. (2) And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. (3) And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. (4) And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who *is* like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?”

(Revelation 13:11-12) “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. (12) And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.”

(Revelation 13:14-15) “And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live. (15) And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.”

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(Revelation 13:17-18) “And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. (18) Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number *is* Six hundred threescore *and* six.”

(Revelation 14:9) “And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,”

(Revelation 14:11) “And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.”

(Revelation 15:2) “And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.”

(Revelation 16:2) “And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.”

(Revelation 16:10) “And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain,”

(Revelation 16:13) “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.”

(Revelation 17:3) “So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.”

(Revelation 17:7-8) “And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. (8) The beast that

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thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.”

(Revelation 17:11-13) “And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition. (12) And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. (13) These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.”

(Revelation 17:16-17) “And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. (17) For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.”

(Revelation 19:19-20) “And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. (20) And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

(Revelation 20:4) “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

(Revelation 20:10) “And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”