

Drawn To Christ By The Father

“No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him,” Jesus explained to some who desired sensory evidence to produce their faith. There have always been those who follow subjective feelings more than understanding. They put trust in emotional experiences and mysterious sensations in which they claim to see visions, hear voices, or receive revelations. Are those the means by which God draws one to Christ?

After Jesus had fed 5000 people (John 6), he told them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek me, not because you saw a sign, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.” They inquired, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see, and believe you?” They were not grasping the meaning of his personification of himself as the bread which came down from heaven. Was God using food to draw them to Jesus? Or, was it miracles? Or, still, was it some mysterious drawing power through the Spirit?

Jesus is clear on the subject. He declared, “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 is written in the prophets, ‘**And THEY SHALL ALL BE TAUGHT BY GOD.**’ Everyone who has **HEARD** and **LEARNED** from the Father **COMES TO ME**” (v. 44-45).

The “eating” of him as the bread of life is explained to be the “believing” in him through the message given. “It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the **WORDS** that I have spoken to you are **SPIRIT AND LIFE**. But here are some of you that do not believe.” .. “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.” Faith was being granted through the message. Peter recognized this truth and declared, “You have the **WORDS** of **ETERNAL LIFE**, and we have **BELIEVED**, and have come to **KNOW**, that you are the Holy One of God.”

Jesus’ Great Invitation was, “**COME** to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and **LEARN** from me” (Matt. 11:28-20). Is the sinner to come willingly as a result of inducement, or is he drawn by irresistible force exerted by the Father?

If it is by exertion of the Father rather than by teaching, then our evangelistic efforts are vain and misguided. Rather than trying to induce the sinner by the gospel message, we would need to wait for God to give faith to draw the one to Christ before we try to teach him. But there is no record of ever having found a believer in Christ who had not been taught first. Since God gave the message of his gospel to inform and persuade sinners, one is deceived who thinks he draws sinners by some other method.

Again, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Rom. 8:14). Has anyone ever found a child of God who had never heard the gospel -- the words that are “spirit and life”? Paul told the Corinthians, “God is faithful, by whom you were CALLED into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor. 1:9). How did God call people? Paul told the Thessalonians that God chose them to be the first converts there to be saved “through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. To this he CALLED you through our GOSPEL...” (2 Thes 2:14). Was the leading of the Spirit through some mystical means? Or did the Spirit not lead through the GOSPEL which they LEARNED?

Three thousand persons heard, believed, and responded to his CALL through the gospel on Pentecost and received both the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. To that audience Peter concluded, “For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, every one whom the Lord our God CALLS to him” (Acts 2:39). This is of universal application.

Why complicate and mystify God’s drawing and calling? We have assurance through understanding rather than through subjective feelings.

(Cecil Hook; February 2002) []