

The Spiritual Battle of Evangelism

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

No long ago, an overseas missionary wrote an update letter to all of his supporting churches, including our home church, and addressed an important question which his people had. It's a similar question that we are going to address in this study. His people asked, "Why did John get saved, or become a Christian, while Charlie did not get saved, when the Gospel was preached to him tonight?" This was a good question that the missionary needed to answer from a Biblical perspective – not a Calvinistic perspective. Both John and Charlie heard the missionary preach the Gospel and yet only one of them was saved and the other one was not saved. How should we answer this question in light of the Biblical truth of God's sovereignty and the salvation of souls?

While attempting to answer this question, we will need to understand the spiritual battle that takes place when the Gospel is presented to unsaved people. So let's pose another question. What is the spiritual battle that occurs when we witness or evangelize to a lost person? What is taking place in the mind and heart of unsaved people as we witness to them about Jesus Christ?

When sitting down with others and talking to them about the Gospel and their need for salvation, we can receive a positive or negative response. In some cases, the unsaved are receptive to the Gospel message and place their faith in Christ, while at other times, they seem to tune us out and possess a deaf ear regarding the message of eternal life. In fact, when presenting the Gospel to others, you can sometimes sense that a huge spiritual wall is erected that cannot be penetrated. Why? It's because of the sovereignty of God, Satan, and the spiritual battle that is occurring in relationship to that person's soul. There is a spiritual, unseen battle taking place behind the scenes which we cannot afford to forget, as we evangelize.

So what is the spiritual battle that occurs when we witness or evangelize to a lost person and why do some people get saved while others do not? The answer lies in the truth regarding God's calling, sovereignty, and human choice.

There is a three-fold battle that occurs when evangelizing.

- The Holy Spirit is blowing (John 3:8; 16:8) = conviction
- The devil is blinding (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Matt. 13:19) = craftiness
- The human will is battling (John 3:18; 5:40) = contrition

More often than not, all three of these spiritual battles are occurring at the same time, while we are witnessing to the lost. It's no wonder evangelism is a spiritual battleground for the lost souls of humanity. Satan is not going to give up his territory very easily. The ongoing war of the ages is occurring as we witness to others and share Christ with others. Are you involved in the war? Have you been sharing Christ with others? What have you been doing in the area of evangelism?

I. The Holy Spirit is blowing (John 3:8; 16:8) = conviction

John gives several verses in his gospel account that speaks of the sovereign movement of God upon the human soul through the inner conviction and compelling of the Holy Spirit. Why do some people get saved while others do not get saved? The answer is found in the truth regarding God's sovereign work upon the human soul.

John 3:8

"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

Strict Calvinism teaches that the Holy Spirit, like the wind, blows where it wants to, and this becomes a matter of God's selection and election. In other words, God elects some people to Heaven, and makes sure they are saved, while He leaves the rest in their sins, so they will eventually wind up in hell. However, this is reading more into this text and God's Word than is being taught. This Bible verse is merely teaching the manner in which people are saved. It has nothing to do with God electing some people to Heaven and others to hell. God's sovereignty does not deal with electing people to hell; it revolves around saving souls and preparing them for Heaven.

In John 3:8, Jesus uses the wind illustration of the Spirit's work to teach that God does the work in the hearts of lost people to regenerate them. In

short, the new birth is the result of God's power and not man's work. This has always been true.

John 1:13

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The new birth is a matter of God's mysterious timing and work. John 3:8 is speaking of God's work upon the human soul, which brings about new life. We must let God's Spirit work in the human heart since only He can bring new life into the inner spirits of lost people.

In John 3:8, Jesus uses the wind to illustrate how the Spirit regenerates or bring new life into a person's Spirit. The work of the Spirit (pneuma) is invisible and mysterious like the blowing of the wind (pneuma). Man controls neither the movement of the wind nor the movement of God upon the human soul.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth (purposes), and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."

Have you ever gone outside on a windy day and listened to the wind? Maybe you were outside trying to rake leaves while at the same time the wind was blowing away the leaves! You could hear the wind howl and sense that it was constantly swirling around and changing its course and direction at will. I can also recall visiting in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado and listening to the wind blow throughout the mountains. You could not get a grasp on the movement of the wind as it whipped through the mountains and changed its course. I also remember standing on Pike's Peak and hearing the rushing wind while we were at the top of the world!

John's point is this; no one can figure out the direction that the wind is going to blow and no one tells the wind what to do. In a similar way, we can't fully understand the timing and work of the Holy Spirit upon the human souls of unsaved people. We can't predict how and when God will decide to move upon the human spirit, regenerate it, or implant new life within that human spirit.

Like the mysterious wind, which moves about at will and with great complexity, so is the new birth, or God's movement upon a person's spirit,

in order to bring new life into that spirit. The Spirit's work to bring new life into a person's spirit cannot be timed or fully understood by us. We simply must accept the fact that God works according to His own time table and in His own ways, when it comes to the salvation of sinners. We have nothing to do with the wind and we certainly have nothing to do with God's saving and regenerating work upon the human spirit.

The Spirit's work is comparable to the wind. This is seen in at least three ways.

A. God's work in regeneration is unpredictable.

The blowing of the wind is unpredictable. In a similar way, the sweeping wind of God's work upon the human spirit is both a marvel and mysterious work. You cannot explain or predict the movements of the wind ("and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth") and in the same manner you cannot predict and explain the timing, movement, and work of the Holy Spirit upon the human heart. The action and work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of the sinner is a remarkable work of God. It is a work that cannot be fully explained in human terms. Like the wind, it is a mysterious and unpredictable work that seeks to bring light into the mind of a sinner and a work that begins to compel the heart of the lost sinner to the Savior.

Its unpredictability is seen in the fact that we cannot state when and where it will take place. We would like to think that God is going to immediately move in the heart and spirit of everyone that we witness to. But this surely is not the case. The movement of God's Spirit upon the person's spirit, to bring new life into that spirit, is like the wind, which mysteriously blows in its unpredictable patterns. As the wind swirls about unpredictably and incomprehensibly, so God moves miraculously and in His own timing when regenerating the lost spirits of people.

I have witnessed to people over the years and was convinced that they might never get saved. They were the most foul-mouthed and bottom-of-the-barrel type of people you would ever meet. But then one day, when I least expected it, I would receive a phone call, and they say, "Pastor, I just wanted to tell, that I was saved today." Someone else had led them to Christ or they read one of those "chick tracts" and were saved. I can't explain it. Do you know why I can't explain it? It's because I can't

understand the timing of God's work upon the human spirit. I don't know when God chooses to move upon a person's heart and regenerate them. I can't determine when God wants to blow His life-giving grace into the dead spirit of a poor lost sinner. Don't try and figure it out, just witness to the lost and let God's wind blow upon them!

I was once witnessing to a hardened man who was stooped in evolutionary myth, humanism, and unbelief. However, in time, I could sense some softening of his heart toward the Gospel. I shared with him John 3:8 and his need to be born again. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Afterward, I said to him, I think I can see your hair blowing! The movement of God upon the lost sinner is a mysterious and yet remarkable work. No one can explain the wind and no person can explain the timing and movement of God upon the sinner's soul.

B. God's work in regeneration is invisible.

The wind is invisible. In a similar way, God's work of regeneration is also invisible. This means that God does this work on the inside of the human heart. We can't see air or wind. It's invisible. In a similar way, God does an invisible or unseen work upon the human spirit, in the inner man, to bring about regeneration or new life. God moves within a person's inner being to produce conviction, change, and new life.

Philippians 2:13

"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

God's work takes place on the inside of people. This is true in relationship to the Christian life (a sanctifying work), but it was also true in relationship to the new life (a saving work), when God begins to convict us and ultimately implant His life within the realm of our human spirit. God's work is an invisible mysterious work much like the wind. Of course, God's work on the human spirit is an invisible work; however, it eventually becomes visible in its outward effects, as the thought patterns and lives of people are changed. The wind is invisible; however, its effects are clearly visible, and the same will be true in the lives of every person who is born again (2 Cor. 5:17). God's regenerating life will be evidenced in the outward change of

living and conduct of His saints (1 John 3:9).

C. God's work in regeneration is powerful.

There is great power and strength in wind. However, the blowing of the wind has nothing to do with man's ability and power. In a similar way, the new birth has nothing to do with man's power; instead, it has everything to do with the working of God's power. Mankind wants to be able to control the hurricanes that come across the oceans and threaten the islands and eastern portions of the United States. However, he has no control over the movements of these massive and mysterious systems of wind and rain. Man can't control the wind and neither can He control the new birth. The placement of new life in the human spirit is both God-directed and God-empowered; it's not a power that man possesses innately. God alone can bring a person to salvation and new life. The wind of the Spirit must blow into the human spirit to bring a person to the place of new birth and life. The obvious point is this; God is the One who supernaturally works in the hearts of people to bring them to the place of new life or birth. It's God's power and movement upon the human spirit that results in the implantation of new life and the impartation of the new nature.

What does it take to be born again? It takes the supernatural act of God upon the human heart. The wind of the Holy Spirit must blow upon our soul and spirit to bring us to the place of salvation and new birth. Without the influence of God's Spirit, we would be hopelessly lost and condemned forever to hell. I cannot explain when, where, and why the Holy Spirit works, but I do know that it takes the rush of the Spirit's conviction to open the eyes of the sinner and bring new life into his spirit. The corn cannot move without wind, in a similar way, the sinner cannot be moved and stirred to place faith in Christ, without the Spirit's assistance. It takes the wind or the movement of the Holy Spirit to bring life to the lost.

It's God, through the Holy Spirit, who works in the human heart, and it's God who freely, without man's legalistic works, implants new life into his human spirit.

John 1:13 declares:

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Of course, Calvinism once again concludes that salvation is all “of God,” in the sense that He chooses who will be saved, and then places elective faith in their hearts, and only the elect can and will believe, due to the work of God, the rest will be damned to hell, either selectively (hyper Calvinism), or by the process of bypassing certain sinners (moderate Calvinism). However, the context itself destroys the Calvinistic spin or interpretation of this verse. The previous verse clearly declares, “But as many as receive him” and “to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12), which connotes that a person’s response to God’s offer brings salvation into their lives, so they can “become the sons of God” (John 1:12). The expressions in John 1:13 do not speak of God’s arbitrary selection of one sinner over another; instead, they speak of God’s power in bringing about the new birth, without human involvement or human achievement. God is the initiator and supplier of the new birth. This is the main teaching of this verse. It’s not talking about His arbitrary selection of sinners but His power in converting and bringing new life into the spirits of sinners.

John is referring to human conception and birth and gives three details about physical or human birth. Human birth involves three matters.

- Human descent (“blood”). This speaks of family ancestry (person’s bloodline).
- Human determination (“the will of the flesh”). This speaks of family planning (planning to have a child through physical relations).
- Human decision (“the will of man”). This speaks of a family decision to bring forth child.

All these expressions refer to physical conception and birth and how people can plan to have a child. In this verse, John is making a contrast (“not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man”), and is teaching that spiritual birth is nothing like human conception and birth. Although people plan to bring forth children, no person can independently, or without God’s aid and power, plan to be born again. Spiritual birth is opposite of physical birth since man has nothing to do with his spiritual rebirth.

This does not imply that man has no freedom of choice (John 1:12; 5:40). It simply means that man does not initiate the new birth, nor can he merit or earn this new birth by human achievement, intellect, and sheer determination. It takes the work of God upon the human heart to bring new

life into a person's spirit. God is the source by which the new birth is given (John 1:13) but free will is the means by which it is received (John 1:12).

Let's examine these statements and contrast the physical expressions of human birth to the realm of the spiritual birth.

To state is simply, we are going to look at the contrasts between physical and spiritual births.

1. Human descent

The words "not of blood" (John 1:13) speak of human descent. Unlike human birth, the new birth does not come about through physical ancestry (lineage). Our family history does not result in the new birth. The new birth has nothing to do with a person's blood line or family history.

Someone said:

"God has no grandchildren!"

The Bible says we are the children of God through faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26). We are never termed God's grandchildren. This means that people are not born again simply because they have parents or other ancestors who were born again.

John 8:33

"They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?"

The obvious point is this; spiritual birth does not happen in the same way as physical birth. Some people will tell you, "Well, my parents were good Christian people. They went to church, tried to do what is right, and also took me to church." However, earthly blood ties do not bring salvation or new birth into our lives. We need to be individually born again.

John 3:7

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

There is a personal responsibility that we must all face. Each one of us individually must be born again through faith in Christ.

2. Human determination

The words “nor of the will of the flesh” (John 1:13) speaks of human determination, or the planning of a couple to have a baby, through physical union. It involves the determination of a couple to have sexual relations in order to bring about a new child. Unlike the natural planning of human birth, our new birth does not come about by the personal efforts or attainments of the flesh (legalism). Our human planning and works do not result in the new birth. The human determination to obtain new life through legalistic effort has nothing to do with salvation.

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.”

Here is a verse that every Catholic should read. Christ had just been talking about eating his flesh and drinking His blood (John 6:53-57). However, in John 6:63, Jesus clearly indicates that He was speaking in a figurative or metaphorical way, since He concludes that the words He spoke were “spirit” (should be understood as communicating a spiritual message) and “life” (a message that could bring spiritual life into a person’s human spirit). Christ’s words had nothing to do with literally eating His flesh and drinking His blood. They portrayed the spiritual message of possessing faith or belief in Christ’s death in order to have His salvation and life applied to one’s life. In short, it takes the work of the Holy Spirit to bring forth spiritual life in the realm of a person’s soul. Eating Christ’s flesh has nothing to do with being born again. If this were the case, one would have to be born again, and again, and again at every Catholic Mass. By way of application, nothing that man can do, can produce the new birth, whether it’s eating Christ’s flesh, or attempting to earn or merit the new birth.

Titus 3:5 proclaims the same truth:

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Notice in this verse:

a. The way of regeneration

The “washing of regeneration” speaks of the way of regeneration (the way we are born again). In order for a man to be born again, He must be cleansed from sin. In the act of regeneration, God washes away a person’s sinful account before His presence (clearing his human spirit of sin and his sin debt before God), and then gives to this same person His very own life. God must first get rid of our sins, so He can regenerate (make alive) our human spirit.

b. The agent of regeneration

The “renewing of the Holy Spirit” speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit which transfer one’s spirit from the realm of spiritual death to spiritual life (John 5:24; 6:6). The Bible teaches that unsaved people are lost within the realm of their human spirits. In some unknown way, people have been born with the record of sin transferred upon their human spirit. Therefore, they need to be renewed in the realm of their human spirit. This work of renewing or renovation describes the impartation and implantation of God’s life in the person by the Holy Spirit’s work. At the same time the Holy Spirit restores our lost relationship with God which was the relationship that Adam lost in Garden.

The “renewing of the Holy Ghost” reminds us that the new life comes to us by a work of grace. Man cannot obtain salvation and new life by human effort. In other words, spiritual birth does not take place in the same manner as physical birth, where parents determine and plan to bear children through physical relations. Personal determination or effort does not bring forth a spiritual birth. God must trigger the need for new birth in the heart of man and introduce the life in the realm of a person’s spirit.

3. Human decision

The words “nor of the will of man” (John 1:13) speaks of human decision. In the world of natural birth, parents can decide to have children; however, this is not the case in relationship to spiritual birth and life. The new birth does not come about through mere human decision or choice. A couple can decide to have children without God’s help and assistance. However, no person can decide to be born again and receive new life without God’s aid and assistance. This simply means God is the initiator and source of a man’s faith or choice for salvation. In other words, our independent human choice, without God’s aid or involvement, does not result in the new birth.

Calvinists set up a straw man argument by this statement and conclude that man has no choice in his eternal destiny. However, this is not the case, and destroys the clearly stated fact of the previous text (John 1:12). John is simply recording the truth that it's ultimately God's will and purpose, which brings new life into a person's human spirit. The new birth is "of God" (John 1:13) and this is demonstrated through God being the initiating source and cause of an individual's new birth, through His intervention and power. In other words, God must get credit for the new birth – not man. Without God's assistance or aid, man could never be saved, nor would he ever want to be saved ("there is none that seeketh after God" - Rom. 3:11). Left to himself, man would never choose to be born again! However, John is not excluding man's final choice regarding his destiny (John 1:12 – "But as many as received him").

Let's break down what we have already studied. First, people without God's aid or assistance, cannot determine the time they will be saved (John 3:8). God determines the time of a person's new birth by working in the hearts of unsaved people by His Spirit. God chooses the time when He wants to bring the new birth into the lives of lost people. Second, God must do a pre-salvation work in a person's heart before an individual can respond favorably to the Gospel invitation. The will of man is bound only to unbelief and sin. Therefore, God must move upon a person's heart and will, soften it, and bring it to the place of response. God brings a person to threshold of salvation and then allows them to make a valid choice regarding their eternal destiny. God moves first and opens a person's eyes, so that person can respond to His offer of salvation (Rev. 22:17).

It is true; the new birth is "not by the will of man" (John 1:13). You can determine to have a baby through physical relations but no person can determine to be born again independent of God's assistance, through human ability, power, and sheer determination. This is because the new birth comes about through the work of God upon the human heart.

God must make the first move to initiate and call a person unto Himself and to new life. No person can make a move toward God until God first makes a move toward them.

Luke 19:10

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

When the Bible says that the new birth is “not by the will of man” (John 1:13) it simply means that man has nothing to do with his spiritual birth, in the sense that he cannot *merit* the new birth, *initiate* the new birth, or *produce* the new birth in his own spirit. Independent of God’s help and enablement, man would not come to the place of salvation and new life. God is the initiator and source of the new birth – not man (“not by the will of man” – John 1:13); however, man is the responder and embracer of God’s work (“But as many as received him” – John 1:12). God does the supernatural work in the heart (John 1:13) and man responds to God’s work either in unbelief (John 1:11) or belief (John 1:12).

We read those bumper stickers that say, “Try Jesus.” People say, “I think I will try Jesus today.” These people imply or suggest that they have the ability, in and of themselves, to be born again. They feel that they can convert to Christianity at any moment, just change their life around, and become a Christian in their own way of thinking and manner of living. However, people cannot attempt to make themselves a Christian without the working and movement of the Spirit of God in their hearts and lives. People also say, “I have found the Savior.” Actually, the Savior really found them! God is responsible for bringing us to the place of faith and salvation, through His divine assistance upon your soul.

Again, this conclusion does not undermine the doctrine of free will (John 3:16; 5:40; Rev. 22:12); it simply puts free will in proper perspective, and concludes that man without God’s help or aid is hopelessly lost and without life (Rom. 3:11). No one can save us but God! God gets all the glory in salvation.

I recall traveling in Hidalgo Illinois many years ago. It was at night and I was driving my friends, Plymouth Horizon. There were warnings about Tornadoes. I remember how the wind was blowing that little car across the road and I could hardly keep it on the road. I’m always amazed at the power of the wind. In a similar way, we should be amazed at the power of the Holy Spirit, which is comparable to the mighty wind.

John 3:8

“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

The convicting and mighty wind of the Holy Spirit must touch the sinner's soul if that sinner is going to be saved. One reason why people do not come to Christ is because of the sovereign timing of the Holy Spirit's conviction upon their lives. As we are about to see, the Holy Spirit moves about convicting the entire world of mankind, as the Gospel message is presented to a lost human race; however, we do not know the Spirit's timing in bringing sinner's to salvation and when His sovereign purpose should come to pass regarding a sinner's salvation. The one thing we do know is that the Holy Spirit is comparable to the rushing wind that brings life to the sinner through His inner conviction and His implantation of new life. John illustrates this once again, later in his gospel record.

John 16:7-8

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”

The Comforter (parakletos) refers to the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell Christ's Church at Pentecost (John 14:16; 26; 15:26). The word means that the Holy Spirit is person within the Godhead who is called alongside to help console and aid us in life.

“O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found,
Wherever human hearts and human woes abound;
Let ev'ry Christian tongue proclaim the joyful sound:
The Comforter has come!

The Comforter has come, the Comforter has come!
The Holy Ghost from Heav'n, the Father's promise giv'n;
O spread the tidings 'round, wherever man is found—
The Comforter has come!
Comforter has come!”

Beloved, I need the Spirit's aid, assistance, and consolation in my life. The Spirit's work in our lives should be very real, as He reveals Christ to us and empowers us for living and service. However, the Holy Spirit is also the One who comes along to convict and compel men to be saved. The word “reprove” speaks of conviction upon the lost sinner, to bring a verdict of guilty upon his conscience, and convince the sinner to be saved. This

includes the guilt and heaviness that comes from being a sinner in God's presence. People need to be convicted in their hearts before they will get saved. They might know about the truth but not be convicted and ready to be saved. The ministry of the Holy Spirit is a convicting and convincing ministry. Believers are the witnesses but the Holy Spirit is the prosecuting attorney! He brings the heavy conviction and burden of sin upon the hearts of lost humanity.

The promise of John 16:8-10 is wonderful. As the disciples went abroad preaching the Gospel, the Holy Spirit would convict sinners of their sin, their need to be made right in God's presence, and of coming judgment. The Holy Spirit does not work in a vacuum. Today He works through the Church who obeys the Great Commission and bears witness to the Gospel message (Matt. 28:19). One thing is certain; people must experience the Spirit's inner conviction and respond to the Spirit's wooing upon their hearts, regarding salvation through Jesus Christ, if they are ever going to be saved.

The Holy Spirit convicts lost sinners about three different areas?

a. The nature of sin.

John 16:9 says, "Of sin, because they believe not on me." The following statement "because they believe not on me" can indicate either the cause or subject of a person's conviction over sin. Actually both could be true. First, the unsaved are convicted of sin (fundamental sin nature and man's sinfulness before God) because they have chosen to not believe on Christ as their Savior (cause of their conviction – sinfulness before God). Second, and more likely, their unbelief in Christ is an illustration of their sin (the subject of their conviction). The singular ("sin") may indicate that a specific sin is in view, which is the sin of not believing in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior. Therefore, a specific sin may be in John's thinking at this point. Although the Holy Spirit convicts of separate individual acts of sin (Acts 2:37), He also convicts lost people of one primary sin, which is failure to believe in Christ for the salvation of one's soul. The exact nature, illustration, or subject matter of one's damning sin is that of unbelief in Christ.

In short, people are convicted about one primary matter; they have not believed on Jesus Christ to be their Savior. Therefore, the prosecuting sin

that John is referring to may very well be the sin of not believing in Christ. There is only one sin, ultimately, that damns people to hell, and it is the sin of not believing in Jesus Christ's person and work for the salvation of one's soul (John 3:15-16; 6:47; 8:24). What ultimately damns people to hell is their unwillingness to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. This is the great damning sin!

John 3:18

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Tenney observed:

"A court can convict a man of murder, but only the Spirit can convict him of unbelief."

The primary work of the Holy Spirit is to convict mankind of failing to believe on Christ. The nature of the primary sin that infects all of humanity is unbelief in Jesus Christ. There is after all, only one sin that unpardonable, and that is failure to believe in Jesus Christ for the salvation of your soul.

b. The need for righteousness.

John 16:10, "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." This speaks of the sinner's realization of his own faulty righteousness (Rom. 10:3; Phil. 3:6-9; Titus 3:5) and his need to be made right before the presence of God, through accepting the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which alone can give him acceptance before God. Isaiah compared self-righteousness to a mentruous cloth (Isa. 64:5). After Jesus would leave the earth, the Spirit would begin to convict the world of lost mankind about the inadequacy of its righteousness and move the unsaved to seek the true righteousness that can only be found through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:22).

The Spirit would need to convict the world of lost mankind of its own lack of righteousness and need for a different type of righteousness to be accepted in the Father's presence, since Jesus was going back to the Father. During His earthly ministry, Jesus proclaimed of the inadequacy of one's own righteousness (Matt. 5:20) and a person's need to be clothed in

God's righteousness, but this source of conviction was about to depart, when Jesus ascended back to the Father. Therefore, there was the need for the Holy Spirit to continue this ministry when Jesus left the earth and went back to the Father.

God convicts sinners at different times, in different ways, and for different sins. Let God be God! I remember talking to one man who was spouting off about all the righteous and good things which he had done. After he was all finished, I said five words. "Have you ever done wrong?" He immediately hung his head low and confessed that he had sold some cars that he shouldn't have sold. You see, the Holy Spirit convicted this man of his own sin and his flawed righteousness before God's holy presence in Heaven.

c. The nearness of judgment.

John 16:11, "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." While Jesus was on earth, He reminded everyone that Satan, the prince of the world, would be judged at the cross, and sentenced for the Lake of Fire (John 12:31). The point of the Spirit's conviction is this. If Satan was judged and sentenced to hell (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:7-15), then what chance is there for any person to escape judgment, if God's grace is refused? Satan is a loser and those who reject Christ's offer of salvation and righteousness will be doomed with Satan in hell or the Lake of Fire. The devil is a loser and those who unite with him through sin and unbelief will be lost as well. The Holy Spirit convicts sinners of the coming judgment that is looming over their heads. He convicts them of their terrible fate of judgment at the hands of God's wrath.

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."

It's made very clear that the wind of the Holy Spirit's conviction must sweep upon the soul of the unsaved, if they are ever going to be saved. Without the Spirit's aid and help sinners would be left to themselves and wind up in an everlasting hell. However, as the Gospel is preached, the ministry and movement of the Holy Spirit can be experienced in the lives of lost sinners. But God must move in the hearts of people in order for them to be saved. In the end, we must let God do His inner work of grace in the hearts of lost

people, whenever He wants to do it, wherever He wants to do it, and with whomsoever He wants to do it.

The truth of God's saving purpose cannot be overlooked.

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."

John 12:32

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

These are saving statements – not selective statements dealing with arbitrary election and double predestination. This is Christ's conclusion – not a Calvinistic conclusion. Don't take Christ's statements and create a cult around them! Election is not closed or fatalistic. It involves an open and growing body of believers who are coming to faith in Christ (1 Pet. 2:9). The point is this; the way God saves sinners is to draw them out of their sinful state and show them the wonders of His grace and mercy. He does this through the inner working of His Spirit upon the hearts of lost humanity. We stand saved, accepted in God's presence, and on our way to Heaven all because of God's wonderful drawing work in our hearts.

Martin Luther said:

"The drawing is not like that of the executioner, who draws the thief up the ladder to the gallows; but it is the gracious allurements, such as that of a man whom everybody loves, and to whom everybody willingly goes."

The working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is comparable to a child following and ice-cream truck waiting to receive of the sweet taste that awaits him.

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."

"He drew me and I followed on
Charmed to confess the Voice divine."

Yes, the Holy Spirit is blowing or moving! He is working in the hearts of unsaved humanity. Without Him, how lost we would be! We must remember, as we witness and work for Christ, that God is Lord of the harvest (Luke 10:2).

We must let God be God. We must allow God to work in the hearts of humanity, in His way, and in His time. We are not in charge of the salvation of souls. We are only commanded to evangelize the lost. It takes God to open the hearts of people through the Spirit's work and God can work in the hearts of people at any given time, place, or particular way He chooses. The timing of the Spirit's conviction and call upon the sinner can't be fully understood like the wind. However, we do know that God is the One who does the saving.

Jonah 2:9

“Salvation is of the Lord.”

Carl Laney has well said:

“In our personal witness, it is often best simply to present the gospel and then wait while the Spirit begins to work.”

Beloved, we want God's converts - not man's converts. When we believe that people can be saved through clever techniques in evangelism, pressure evangelism, pragmatic evangelism, easy prayerism, we are only fooling ourselves. Sadly, we can misguide others and give them a false sense of salvation that they don't possess.

Matthew 23:15

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

Although we should direct people to express faith in Christ (Acts 8:37), we must not become discouraged, or lose heart, when they don't immediately come to faith in Christ. We must leave the matter of the saving of the soul in God's hand and timing.

I remember walking outside on one of those Sunday nights, when church was cancelled, due to a crippling blizzard. I think it was Super Bowl Sunday! Anyway, no cars were on the roads and there was about two feet

of snow covering the ground. Drifts were everywhere since the wind was blowing significantly. As I walked down the middle of the street, I could hear the wind whipping through the snowy night and see the effects of it, as the snow was being blown in every direction. It was a powerful and awesome sound. As I walked up the street, I was reminded of the Spirit's ministry of moving upon the human soul and bringing life into the sinner's spirit.

John 3:8

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

We now return to our main question before going on to our next major point. Two people are sitting in a church pew. One person gets saved at the end of the service by receiving Christ as Savior while the other person does not. Why does one person get saved and the other is not saved? The answer to this question does not revolve around election and double predestination, as the Calvinist assumes. Calvinism will tell you that God chooses some people to salvation and others to spend eternity in hell. This choice to damn certain people to hell is made either directly (hyper Calvinism) or indirectly (moderate Calvinism) by bypassing certain people and not giving them the aid and opportunity to be saved. Of course, the Bible does not speak of God choosing to damn some people to hell or even bypassing them (2 Pet. 3:9). Instead, it speaks of God loving all people and offering them eternal life (John 3:16). The reason one person gets saved at the end of an evangelistic service and another person does not is because of the spiritual battle of evangelism.

II. The devil is blinding (2 Cor. 4:3-4; Matt. 13:19) = craftiness

2 Corinthians 4:3-4

“But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Satan is busy blinding people in his battle for the souls of mankind. The Spirit is blowing conviction upon lost sinners regarding their sin and seeking to open their hearts and minds to the truth of the Gospel, but the

devil is blinding them, trying to keep them from coming to faith and salvation in Christ.

This Bible verse answers three questions related to evangelism.

a. Who are the people that can't understand the Gospel message?

The Bible says that the Gospel we share with others during evangelism “is hid to them that are lost.” The word “hid” means “veiled” and reminds us that “the god of this world,” who is Satan (John 12:31; 16:11; Eph. 2:2) has blinded the minds of the unsaved or those who are “lost” and going to hell. Lost people are blinded by Satan. The word “lost” means that the human spirit of unsaved people is without God’s life and is condemned or sentenced to hell’s judgment.

John 3:18

“He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Beloved, think what it means to be lost forever! When we contemplate lost souls in an eternal hell, it should stir our hearts and rejuvenate us to be better witness for Christ. It’s the lost people of this world whose minds have been blinded by Satan. The devil is busy blinding unsaved people of their lost estate before God and their need to place faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. Even when people know that they need to be saved, the devil continues to work on their human will, attempting to delay their decision for Christ and distract them from their most pressing need, which is faith in Christ for the salvation of their soul.

b. Why can't people understand the Gospel message?

There are two reasons why people don't understand and respond in faith to the Gospel.

1. Because of satanic blindness.

The Bible reveals that the great masses of people are lost because Satan has “blinded the minds” of these lost people. This is one of devil’s primary works in his ongoing battle against mankind. He brings spiritual blindness

or darkness to the minds of the unsaved so they can't see their lost estate before God and need to be saved through Jesus Christ alone.

Lost people need to have the veil of satanic blindness lifted before they will be saved.

Acts 26:18

“To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.”

Paul recognized that the blinded eyes of people need to be opened to the spiritual realities of their sinfulness before God and their need to be saved through the Gospel message. Without a revelation from God upon the human soul, no person would be delivered from the devil's spiritual blindness. Lost mankind is in a terrible spiritual plight. Our hearts should go out to those who are lost and in need of light and salvation.

We have all witnessed the spiritual blindness that people possess when we share the Gospel with them. We can talk to the unsaved about their lost condition before God and need to be saved but they end up telling you about the good things they do and that they are trying hard. We can tell them that faith in Christ is what brings salvation into our lives and they will tell you that they are baptized. We can present to them the clear and simple message of the Gospel but they can't seem to understand it and how it can be relevant to their lives today.

Ephesians 4:17-18 teaches the reality of satanic blindness:

“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.”

I was witnessing to a man one day about his need to be saved and he said that he was already saved when God spared him from a vicious attack from a dog. Another man told me that he was saved because he made a vow to God that he would never strike his wife again. Satan blinds the minds of unsaved people to the clear message of salvation through grace alone in Christ alone. There is a block or veil in the minds of lost people, which Satan has put there, as he battles for their soul. He blinds the minds of lost

people from their own sinfulness before God and the simple Gospel message that Christ died for their sins and rose again to give them eternal life. Satan is in the blinding business. He is a master at his trade. He knows how to deceive and manipulate the thinking of lost people to keep them in the realm of darkness, sin, and unbelief.

2. Because of willful rejection

The Bible goes on to say that Satan continues to blind the minds of unsaved people “which believe not” (2 Cor. 4:4). This could simply mean that Satan blinds people by keeping them in the realm of unbelief. In other words, those who don’t believe in Christ have been blinded by Satan. In other words, their blindness is the result of Satan’s activity. However, its equally truth that Satan blinds people, when they choose not to believe, or when they openly reject the light of the Gospel message, which is seeking to penetrate and gain access into their thinking. There is a personal reason for spiritual blindness (“then which believe not”). Although Satan blinds people to keep them in the realm of spiritual blindness, each individual person also choose to remain in blindness and unbelief.

God may be opening the mind of a lost person to his need of salvation, but if he rejects the light of God’s revelation upon his soul, the devil will surely keep him in blindness. Many people remain in spiritual blindness today, not because God has never illuminated their darkened minds and eyes, but because of their own willful rejection of the light of revelation that is given to them. There is a personal responsibility placed upon individuals for their own spiritual blindness. If they choose to openly reject the revelation or light that they have been given, Satan will keep them in the realm of unbelief and blindness.

Here is the problem. When the revelation of God’s Gospel light penetrates the minds of the unsaved, Satan is also there ready to deceive them and keep them in blindness. A great spiritual battle is occurring when we are witnessing to the lost. However, as the light shines upon their blinded mind and illuminates them to their lost estate and need for salvation through the Gospel, people can choose to receive the light or reject the light.

John 12:35-36

“Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in

darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.”

There is a human element related to spiritual blindness. The light of revelation does not last forever; therefore, people must choose to respond to the light of revelation and be saved, lest they go back into their darkness and remain blinded by Satan. Light and darkness battle for the souls of lost mankind, but if unsaved people continue to reject the light that they have, their mind returns to the darkness.

Isaiah 55:6

“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.”

There is always a human element involved in spiritual blindness. People can choose to turn off the light of revelation that God is giving to them and go in their blindness and unbelief.

c. How can people gain spiritual sight?

People have their blind eyes opened when the Holy Spirit uses the Gospel message to penetrate through their hardened minds and hearts. Even the devil knows that it's through the light of revelation shining upon the human heart, which results in the salvation of the lost sinner (“lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” – 2 Cor. 4:4). The evangelistic tool of the Holy Spirit is the Gospel. The Holy Spirit uses the Gospel message to penetrate the blind minds of unsaved people. This is why we need to spread the Gospel of Christ's death and resurrection as the only way of salvation. We can talk to people about getting their life changed around and how wonderful it is to be a Christian, but it's the Gospel message that penetrates the mind and brings the light or illumination, which is needed to save the soul. This is why our message must be pure Gospel and not some kind of watered down, synthetic Gospel message of pop-psychology, which centers upon man's self esteem or ego.

Jesus gave an illustration of soil to teach about the hardness of human hearts and the attempt of the devil to keep people in the realm of their spiritual blindness. He called it wayside soil. During the inter-advent age between Christ's first and Second Coming to establish His earthly Millennial

Kingdom, there would be a period of time called the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 13:11). It would be a long period of time, prior to Christ’s Second Advent, when the Gospel message would be sown throughout the earth, how people would respond to this message, and what the world conditions would be like before Jesus returns in His Second Coming. This period of time was called the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” because the Old Testament did not reveal any truth about this seed sowing time that would occur before the King returns to establish heaven’s rule over the earth.

During this time period Jesus taught that truth would fall on different types of hearts, which are represented by differently types of soil. One of the hearts is likened to wayside soil.

Matthew 13:4

“And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up.”

Our Lord then gives interpretation is then given of this soil and the fowls of the air.

Matthew 13:19

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

There are two important lessons that Jesus is teaching us.

A. The stubbornness of the human heart.

In Palestine there was soil that was trodden down and hardened due to heavy traffic. In our Lord’s day Palestine was literally crisscrossed with fields. The fields were usually separated by long narrow strips or paths. The paths between the fields were narrow – about three feet wide. They were used by the farmer to get to whatever fields he wanted to reach. They were also used by the travelers who were going from one part of the country to another. In Matthew 12:1 we read about the Lord Jesus and disciples walking through the fields of grain. No doubt they were walking on these little paths called the wayside soil.

There were no fenced walls around the fields, just those narrow little paths for travelers and for the farmer to get around in his area. The dirt in these paths was packed down, uncultivated, and never loosened. The continual pounding of the dirt by men's feet and the dryness of this part of the world would compact the dirt to the point that it was like a road. It became hard as pavement. As a result, if the farmer threw some seed and it went beyond the furrow on to the hard surface, it would not have the opportunity to penetrate the ground, germinate, and grow due to the hardness of the soil. Furthermore, the birds would take the opportunity to immediately devour the seed, which was lying on the exposed surface. As the farmer was sowing the seeds there would be birds hovering above him, waiting for the opportunity to eat any seed that landed on the hard path. The birds were always ready to devour the seed on the wayside or hardened soil.

The wayside soil is comparable to the human heart that is hardened or insensitive to the truth of the Gospel. It refers to a person that has rejected the light of reason and revelation and a heart that remains hardened, unresponsive, or insensitive to the message of truth. A hardened heart that is unbelieving and Christ-rejecting does not allow the seed of the Gospel to penetrate and have any spiritual or saving impact upon one's life. The hardened heart corresponds to what Jesus had just said about the masses of unbelieving Israel who hears but refuses to see and accept the truth.

Matthew 13:13-15

"Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

The Bible teaches that people develop hard hearts when they refuse to accept truth and close their eyes to light or revelation. Satan does not create the hardness; they create their own hardness. The Bible says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15) before God confirmed him in his choice (Ex. 10:1).

The hardened soil represents hardened hearts which reject the light of reason and revelation. Jesus was in the midst of the Jewish people presenting Himself as their Messiah and Savior but they chose to reject the light of His revelation (John 1:12).

In Matthew 13:19 Jesus says the person represented by the wayside soil hears the truth but “understandeth it not.” Why don’t people understand truth? In this case, it’s because they don’t want to! Again, there is a human element involved in spiritual blindness. Although God is seeking to illuminate the unsaved masses, they can refuse to hear the truth and turn a deaf ear to the Gospel message being presented to them because of their own stubbornness (“hearing they hear not”; neither do they understand” - Matt. 13:13 and “dull of hearing”; “their eyes they have closed” - Matt. 13:15). These expressions tell us that people, by their own choice, develop a hardened or insensitive response toward the Gospel message. It’s not that these people can’t understand, as the light of revelation comes into their heart; they have chosen to reject the revelation and not understand. Therefore, they go back in blindness and develop a hardened or insensitive heart toward the Gospel.

The soil of their heart is insensitive due to their stubborn and repeated rejection of light. The sad reality is this; when a person refuses to hear truth, they can develop a hard or insensitive heart and eventually become desensitized to truth. This results in no longer understanding the truth (“understandeth it not” – Matt. 13:19). People can remain blind to the truth through willful rejection of it. The idea is not that they could not understand, but that they refused to understand, due to their own wicked heart and preconceived ideas. As a result, their heart had become like wayside soil that is beaten down, uncultivated, and which has little chance of germinating seed.

Of course, there are varying degrees of hardness and we must remember that God can break through hardened ground. Let’s consider this briefly.

1. There are hardened hearts which can’t be reached.

Sometimes we discover, while witnessing to certain people, that they are extremely antagonistic toward the Gospel and no longer want anything to do with truth. This was especially true of the leaders of Israel in our Lord’s day.

Acts 7:51

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

The hardened hearts of the Jewish leaders had repeatedly rejected His word and because of this Satan had taken the Word out of their hearts keeping them in blindness. What was true in Israel’s day, while our Lord was upon earth, is true today in this later mystery period. How often have we witnessed to someone and the Word of God made no impression upon their soul? Witnessing to them was like witnessing to a cow standing in a meadow! Truth seems to make no impact upon them whatsoever because of their hardened condition. This is the wayside hearer. The truth goes in one ear and out the other (“hearing they hear not” – Matt. 13:13). Because of the hardness of people’s hearts the Gospel seed does not germinate. The hard and unconcerned heart of people today is a common barrier to evangelism.

We sometimes wonder how people can sit in church and listen to the magnificent facts of the Gospel over and over again and continually get up and walk away. Their hearts have become hardened and insensitive to truth. They sometimes are very arrogant in their rejection to your witness when they say, “I don’t believe this fairytale teaching. I don’t agree with what you say and I never heard such nonsense.” People can in time become “past feeling” (Eph. 4:19). They can cross a line of no return. However, we can’t tell when and where this takes place.

The Pharisees were hard-soil hearers and many today have followed in their train. We have our humanists, atheists, and liberals who simply do not want to consider the truth and validity of the Gospel message and say, “Leave me alone.” But let us also remember that a man does not necessarily have to reject the claims of Christ in order to be a wayside hearer. He may simply repeatedly reject the Gospel invitation over a period of time and develop hardness of heart. The Sunday church-going individual may actually develop a wayside heart after years of rejecting the Gospel message. Truth rejected eventually becomes truth that is lost.

Romans 1:26 says:

“For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.”

God gives up on people, and confirms them in their own choice, only when people give up on Him. Their persistent rejection of light or truth, along with their love for personal sins, creates a calloused heart toward truth. This can be one way to explain the wayside soil. It portrays a hardened and insensitive heart that cannot be penetrated any longer with the Gospel message. It describes a person that has crossed over God's line of illumination, mercy, and grace.

“There is a time, we know not when;
There is a place, we know not where
That seals the destiny of men
For glory or despair.”

2. There are hardened hearts that can be reached.

When thinking about the wayside soul, we must remember that people possess varying degrees of hardness or insensitivity toward the truth. Not everyone has crossed a line of no return. Sharing the Gospel with the unsaved reveals that hardness and callousness, or insensitivity to truth, and it can vary from person to person. However, it's wonderful to realize that God can penetrate through the hardness of human hearts.

Matthew 13:15

“For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”

What Jesus taught (“lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them”) sounds similar to what Paul taught (“lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” - 2 Cor. 4:4). The fact remains that Jesus Christ can germinate the seed in the soil of a man's soul by softening the soil with inner light, conviction, and help the sinner to see his lost estate and need for salvation. God can penetrate blinded minds, break up hardened hearts, and make them soft or responsive to the Gospel message.

Ezekiel 36:26 declares:

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

God knows how to take a stony heart and make it soft. God knows how to take hard soil and make it soft. God knows how to change the heart. God knows how to give a person a new heart! Praise the Lord; He can make a brand new heart!

Matthew 13:19

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

B. The satanic delusion of the human heart.

Matthew 13:19

“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.”

The “word of the kingdom” in Jesus’ day referred to Israel’s need to repent and receive Jesus as their Messiah and Savior in light of His coming Kingdom on the earth. Today we share the word of the Gospel (His death and resurrection) since God’s kingdom program is postponed. In any event, we discover once again that a tremendous spiritual battle occurs when witnessing to the unsaved for we know that evil and sinister spiritual forces are at work to keep the Gospel seed from germinating in the hearts of the lost (“lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” - 2 Cor. 4:4). In other words, Satan knows he must steal or catch away the seed sown in the hearts of lost humanity or else the light of the Gospel will be seen, the seed will germinate, and bring forth spiritual life.

The Sower (Jesus Christ) is busy trying to sow the seed of light and truth in the heart of lost people (“that which is sown in the heart”). There is a battle taking place over the hearts of lost humanity. Jesus is explaining what happens when the light of reason and revelation enter the human heart. He says, “then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart” (Matt. 13:19).

What do the birds or fowls represent in this parable? They represent the devil. Luke clearly reveals this to us. Luke 8:12, “Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.” Mark calls the fowls by another name – Satan. Mark 4:15, “And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.” In our passage before us Matthew refers to the birds as “the wicked one” (Matt. 13:19). All these names describe the archenemy of mankind who seeks to destroy lost people in their sins. In these parables we discover that the devil is constantly at work performing his evil agenda throughout the ages (Matt. 13:39).

The point Jesus was making is that when truth falls on the wayside soil (hardened hearts), it seeks to penetrate the human heart and germinate life. It must find a crack or crevice that it can penetrate in order to bring forth life. However, the devil is always ready and waiting to steal away the seed and keep it from germinating in the soil of the human heart and keeping a soul from being saved (2 Cor. 4:4). Actually, the hard and unconcerned heart is easy prey for Satan. He makes a bad situation worse by stealing any seed of truth that falls upon the hardened heart, and in doing so, keeps people in their spiritual blindness, so they do not see the true saving value of the Gospel.

It’s interesting to contemplate that the devil cannot prevent the Word from being sown in the heart by the Sower (Jesus Christ) but he can take it away from the heart. This is an important point. The Word of God will always do its work and can never return unto God void (Isa. 55:11). God’s Word always accomplishes its purpose, which in this case is to fall upon the hardened soil of the heart. However, the devil tries to stop the seed of truth from eventually taking root by immediately interfering with the message and intercepting the message. He does this in many ways.

Two questions need to be answered.

1. How does the devil steal the Gospel seed?

How does the devil “catch away” the seed of the Gospel in the hardened hearts of humanity and keep them blind? He does this today through false teachers (2 Pet. 2:1-2 - “many shall follow their pernicious ways”). He also

steals the seed of truth from the hearts of people by causing them to fear. When contemplating salvation, many people fear losing their reputation, being rejected by their friends, or being considered a religious fanatic (Prov. 29:25). Sometimes Satan uses pride (Prov. 16:18). There are people who simply don't want to admit that they need help or that there are some things they don't know. Satan will also use doubt, prejudice, stubbornness, a person's love for sin (John 3:19), procrastination, or a combination of these ways to snatch away the Gospel seed from the hearts of people. He will use whatever way he can, or whatever combination he can, to make a person forget that he ever heard the Gospel message.

Generally speaking, Satan snatches away the Gospel seed by distraction. This is his favorite way to keep people from responding to the light. As the truth comes rushing into the human heart of a person, he may be challenged for a moment to think about God, life, and salvation. And for a moment, he wonders, "Maybe there is something to this." He receives a passing impression. But it's then that the devil immediately comes to snatch away the thought from his heart, so it does not find root, or return. What does the old devilish bird do? He sometimes distracts people with a healthy dose of real life in order to get their attention away from spiritual realities.

Ray Stedman said this concerning those who are distracted by real life: "They have settled for a world bounded on the north by their work, on the south by their family, on the east by taxes, and on the west by death. That is the whole of life to them. They have been described in the little jingle that goes like this:

"Into this world to eat and to sleep,
And to know no reason why he was born
Save to consume the corn,
Devour the cattle, flock, and fish,
And leave behind an empty dish."

When the truth falls on the heart, it might cause a momentary impression, awaking them to the possibility that an entire world exists, which they have never thought of before. But it does not last long. This is because the devil comes along and takes the seed away by selling the idea that a person is comfortable where they are at in life, content to let the world go by, and too busy in real life to consider about spiritual things, which can't possibly make

any sense in real living. The message is dismissed from their minds as soon as they hear a joke, a piece of gossip, the latest football score, or a crying baby. So the wayside heart shrugs it off and man goes on brainwashed in his persistent hardness and blindness.

2. Why does the devil steal the seed?

Why does the devil “catch away” the seed? The simple answer to this question is because the devil does not want the seed to germinate. You may think that germinating the Gospel seed is impossible, when it comes to hardened soil, but this is not always the case.

The previous owner of my home had covered several areas of ground surface with black plastic and then put stones over top of the plastic preventing any light or growth. When I pulled up the plastic some twenty years later the ground was compact, hard, and I thought nothing could ever grow on such a surface as this. But in time, after several rains, I began to notice that weeds and other signs of life were germinating and starting to push up through the once hardened soil, which had now softened and allowed life to begin growing. May I suggest that the devil knows more about the seed than we do? The Evil One knows that when the seed of God’s truth is left in the soil of the human heart long enough, it can once again become softened and sensitive truth (“lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them” – Matt. 13:15).

God’s seed has a way of penetrating even the hardest of soils or hearts so that “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ” can “shine” or illuminate the human mind to eternal truth and salvation (2 Cor. 4:4). Thank the Lord that He has “commanded the light to shine out of darkness” and we can say one day the light “shined in our heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

“Come to the light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the light has dawned upon me.
Once I was blind, but now I can see:
The Light of the world is Jesus!”

When the seed of God's truth is sown in the heart the light of illumination is turned on, and it's only then, that the hardness and spiritual veil of the heart can be removed. "Nevertheless when it (the heart) shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away" (2 Cor. 3:16). Dear friend, when the human heart is worked over or plowed by the conviction of the Spirit of God, then, at "any time" (Matt. 13:15), the human heart can be softened and respond to the Gospel message. So the message still stands true today. "Who hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 13:9).

Yes, spiritually dead people can hear ("lest at any time ... they should hear with their ears" – Matt. 13:15). This is not the teaching of Reformed Theology but it is the teaching of the Bible. When the Sower plants the seed of conviction upon the human heart, the spiritually dead man can understand the Gospel and respond to the message of truth, in order to be converted ("and should be converted"). Jesus verified that spiritually dead people can hear the message of truth and respond to this message (John 5:24). Deaf ears can become hearing ears. Blind eyes can become seeing eyes. Hardened hearts can become softened once again. But it takes the work of the Sower upon the human heart.

Luke 8:12 once again reads, "Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." John Bunyan was a blasphemer and the most godless man in his village. He was regarded as so hardhearted and committed to godlessness that no Christian had any hope for him at all. But one day he heard the story of the sower, and these very words seized upon his heart, "then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." And Bunyan said to himself, "Even the devil knows that if a man believes the Word he'll be saved!" So he believed it and he was saved. He became the author of Pilgrim's Progress and a tremendous testimony for God in his age.

God's seed can germinate in any soil, even hard soil, over a period of time. This is why the devil immediately comes to catch away the seed from the human heart. The devil knows all too well that the divine Sower can break through the hardest of hearts with the truth of His Word (Rom. 10:17).

Herbert Lockyer said:

"When once the Word is understood and received in faith, it is beyond Satan's reach."

How wonderful this is! What a joy to know that the seed can do its work in the hearts of lost people, even those who we think have no hope to be saved. There is illuminating power in the seed of God's Word and for this reason the devil must go to work immediately in the heart when the seed is sown.

So what are the lessons of the wayside soil? First, we have learned that Satan strongly opposes the sowing of God's Word. There will always be satanic opposition to spreading the Gospel. Second, it takes the Sower (Jesus Christ) to do the work in a person's heart. Third, the devil cannot prevent the Word from being sown in the heart by the Sower but he can take it away from the heart, through his clever tricks and distractions of life. Fourth, people need the Lord. There is a world that is lost and going to hell and the wicked one is trying to keep people on their spiritual course of destruction. May each one of us develop a new heart for lost people so that we might allow the Sower to work through us in spreading the Gospel to a world in desperate need of salvation.

Once again, as we approach the elections in November, we can see or witness the political battle that is occurring for a change in the house and senate. There are all kinds of adds demonstrating the right and wrong of candidates. There are slurs and quite frankly, a lot of trickery going on in relationship to politics. It's a battle. However, the battle that we are talking about today is not a political battle, but a spiritual battle. There is a spiritual and unseen battle taking place behind the scenes which we cannot afford to forget, as we evangelize the lost.

III. The human will is battling (John 5:40) = contrition

In the fifth century, a British monk named Pelagius falsely proclaimed that man, like Adam, had the capacity to do what was right on his own. He claimed that man was born innocent and unstained by sin, and that man could by his own effort (good works), without any divine aid or help from God, live a holy and pleasing life before God and be saved.

One popular Church leader, Augustine, argued against this position saying that we were born sinners (all inherit sin through Adam) and that we lack the power to do good. From this point onward huge debates began to surface on the subject of human freedom or the human will.

When Pelagius began teaching this error Augustine threw the baby out with the bathwater. He reacted to the views of Pelagius and reverted to an extreme position on salvation and man's freedom of choice. Augustine began to teach that the human will is bound to sin and that it can never make a valid choice regarding salvation and Heaven. In short, man will only choose to sin and therefore has no freedom of choice in the matter of salvation, since man's will was totally depraved by the Fall.

Augustine taught that a man's own will or response to God is a form of works. Augustine also began to teach that certain people in the human race were already predestined to heaven and others to hell, without any human involvement, to further illustrate that salvation was all of God and that man had nothing to do with his salvation experience. Augustine sought in every possible way to keep man out of the picture of salvation. In doing so, a philosophical approach to salvation and man's freedom was created.

Before his opposition with Pelagius, Augustine, the originator of the theory that man does not possess true freedom or neutral choice, originally held the Biblical view that man can choose his fate. Augustine wrote: "Free will, naturally assigned by the creator to our rational souls, is such a neutral power, as can either incline toward faith, or turn toward unbelief (On the Spirit and the Letter, 58).

Augustine lived a thousand years before the Reformation began. However, his writings were read by the Reformers and they adopted his extreme position on the human will. The Reformers like Calvin and Luther followed the Augustinian philosophy that man was so depraved he could never decide his eternal destiny.

Luther wrote "The Bondage of the Will" (1525) explaining the depraved situation of the human will and the inability of the human will to respond in any way to God without God's complete and total initiative. Erasmus reacted to this book speaking about man's free will or freedom of choice. Erasmus wrote the document called "Freedom of the Will" to answer Martin Luther who stated that the will was in bondage to sin.

Later writers, such as the American theologian Jonathan Edwards, also embraced the Reformed view of Calvin and Luther. It's important to realize that God has greatly used these men at important phases of church history. However, this does mean everything they said is in complete agreement

and harmony with the Scripture for they embraced an extreme view on the subject of human freedom or man's will.

It's interesting that with the exception of the later writings of Augustine virtually all of the great thinkers up to the Reformation affirmed that human beings possessed the power of free choice to toward God's initiatives, even in a fallen state. The early church fathers such as Justin, Irenaeus, Clement, Origin, Tertullian, Gregory, Hilary, Ambrose, and others all embraced the truth about free will.

Today, Reformed Theology, which stems from Augustine and the days of the Reformation, follows the thinking that man does not possess a free will to choose the destiny of his salvation. Man's will is only bound to sin and unbelief and can never choose salvation and eternal life. In fact, if someone claims that a person can make a valid choice regarding the salvation of his soul, they are labeled as following Pelagianism or Semi-Pelagianism. Throwing these kinds of terms around is like throwing names around during a political election (middle-of-the-roader, left-winger, right-winger). Terms are designed to scare people. However, the Bible believer must get passed Augustine, Calvin, Luther, and Reformed Theology and come to the Scriptures to find answers regarding the matter of human choice and freedom. The view of Augustine and the Reformers on freedom of choice is a philosophy. However, we don't follow philosophy; we follow Scripture! "What saith the Scripture" (Rom. 4:3).

It is self-evident that without the God-given power of choice, no one could be held morally accountable for anything and the very terms "right" or "wrong" could be meaningless. However, man is already given a sense of right and wrong through a God-given conscience and makes decisions based upon it (Rom 2:11-15; Gen. 3:22) It's equally true that man does have a choice regarding the destiny of his soul, as God convicts his heart, and this choice is part of the battle of evangelism.

1. Man's Choice

Reformed Theology and Augustine-Calvinism essentially teaches that man is passive and does not have any choice in the matter of his salvation. God creates faith in a person's heart without any response or interaction with a man's volition or will. However, the Bible repeatedly says that it is man's own personal faith, or belief directed toward the Savior, that brings

salvation into his life (“whosoever believeth” – John 3:15-16; “he that believeth” – John 3:18; “And many more believed” – John 4:41; “he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me” - John 5:25; “He that believeth on me” - John 6:47; “believe in the light – John 12:36; “many believed on him” – John 12:42; “whosoever believeth on me” – John 12:46). The list could go on and on.

Someone said:

“The only thing a person can do without doing anything is believe.”

If we take off our Calvinistic bifocals we will see that man does have a valid choice in his eternal destiny. The Bible assumes everywhere that anyone who wills to be saved can exercise saving faith – “his faith” (Rom. 4:5), “your faith” (1 Cor. 2:5; 1 Pet. 1:9), and “thy faith has saved thee” (Luke 7:50). This is why Scriptures call upon man to believe. It’s because he can express faith in Christ for salvation. God would not call a person to do something that was impossible for him to do! God requires a person to express his faith in Christ or else die in his sins (John 8:24 – “ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he”). God wants people to make a volitional choice or decision. He wants them to move their own will and express faith in His saving plan (Acts 16:31).

The Scriptural conclusion is this. Individual faith is a response of the human will (“whosoever will” – Rev. 22:17) that is made possible by the work of God upon the human heart (Acts 16:14 – “whose heart the Lord opened”). Faith does involve personal choice. The work of God upon the human heart does not irresistibly draw people to salvation as Calvinism teaches. Nor does God does not selectively, electively, or arbitrarily put faith in the heart of people. God brings people to the threshold of salvation seeking to inspire faith in their hearts. However, it’s a person’s own responsibility, and act of their human will, interacting with God’s movement upon their heart, which brings them to the place of faith. A person’s faith is an act of the human will made possible by the work of God on the human heart. This is the Biblical truth taught in Scripture. God allows faith to be possible while man makes it actual.

2. God’s Work

Man can make some choices without God’s help and others he can only make with God’s help or assistance. When it comes to salvation He needs

the grace of God's assistance upon his heart to respond to the glorious plan of salvation (Acts 16:14). This aid comes through the "Spirit of grace" (Heb. 10:29) or the Spirit's saving and sanctifying ministry upon the hearts and lives of the lost (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:2 – "sanctification of the Spirit"). In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 both God's sovereignty ("sanctification of the Spirit") and human freedom or choice ("belief of the truth") is seen working together. This is because God's sovereignty and human choice ("free will") are friends. However, we must always remember that it's the Spirit's work upon our hardened hearts that brings the sinner to the place where he can believe in the truth and be saved. The initiative in salvation comes from God - not man. This means that God uses the Holy Spirit to bring about salvation in our lives. It's the Spirit that sanctifies an elect, open, and growing body of believers.

Paul is talking about the Holy Spirit's pre-conversion (salvation) work. The Holy Spirit sets individuals apart ("sanctification") for God and His salvation, through convicting them of their sin and pointing them to Christ. The setting apart of God's elect for salvation is called "the sanctification of the Spirit." The sanctification here refers to the Spirit's work in leading the unbeliever to faith in Christ. Though I did not realize it at the time, as I look back, I can see how the Spirit led in bringing me to faith in Christ; and this is the experience of every believer. Without the Spirit's work we would be hopelessly lost.

Someone has well said:

"If it had not been for Christ, there would have been no *feast*; if it had not been for the Holy Spirit, there would have been no *guests!*"

"In tenderness He sought me,
Weary, and sick with sin,
And on His shoulders brought me
Back to His fold again;
While angels in His presence sang
Until the courts of heaven rang.

Oh, the love that sought me!
Oh, the blood that bought me!
Oh, the grace that brought me to the fold.
Wondrous grace that brought me to the fold."

There is a *preparatory* or *pre-salvation* work of God upon the human heart allows spiritually dead men (John 5:25) and blind men (2 Cor. 4:4) to see their utter depravity (Luke 18:13 – “God be merciful to me a sinner”) and the good news of salvation for lost sinners through Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 2:2), so that they can believe in Jesus Christ, or commit their faith only to Him for salvation (“that which I have committed unto him” – 2 Tim. 1:12). The drawing grace of God, which works on a man’s heart, and enables him to respond to God’s offer of salvation, is a gracious work of God, which can be summed up in the words of Jeremiah 31:3: “The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, *saying*, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee.” God’s sovereignty over the human will cannot be missed. God initiates the need for salvation in the mind and heart of the sinner. God moves in us before we can move toward Him. It’s God who prompts, pursues, and persuades a person to come to salvation. The means or instruments that God used to bring people to salvation are the Gospel of God (Rom. 1:16), the Spirit of God (John 16:8), the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), the goodness of God (Rom. 2:4), and the drawing of God (John 6:44).

“He drew me and I followed on
Charmed to confess the voice divine.”

In short, God brings a person to the threshold of salvation by supplying him with light (John 12:35) and allows every person to make a valid choice regarding his eternal destiny (“While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light” – John 12:36). God does not override the human will and man’s power of decision or choice, as He moves upon the human will, to inspire salvational faith.

The Holy Spirit directs the sinner’s attention to the Word of God and to the Son of God. He enables the unbeliever to see the glories of the Savior. He removes the obstacles, deals with the sinner’s objections, and seeks to bring him to Christ through initiating personal belief in a man’s heart.

“When I saw the cleansing fountain
Open wide for all my sin,
I obeyed the Spirit’s wooing,
When He said, Wilt thou be clean?”

The work of the Spirit upon the human heart of man (John 16:8) brings a man to the place where he can respond favorably to God and express his own personal faith in Christ. This *preparatory* work of the Spirit upon the heart of man allows him to exercise his volitional nature and remain autonomous (independent or free) in the matter of his choices.

God bestows sufficient and needed grace upon men, so they can believe, if they will. God allows man to retain the opportunity to express freedom in his choices as He makes His revelation known to mankind. Autonomy (freedom of choice) allows man to respond favorably to God's revelation and use his own volitional choice that God has placed within man from creation.

Joshua 24:15 says, "choose you this day whom ye will serve." God wants to keep man autonomous (independent and free) in the matter of his choices, even if he needs assistance in relationship to his choice, regarding the salvation of his soul. The human will does not function independently without the influence of the sin nature or God's assistance. The sin nature effects man's decisions in relationship to *sinful things* (Rom. 7:17-24; James 1:14-15); however, God's Spirit working upon the human heart, effects man's decisions in relationship to *spiritual things* and his eternal destiny (John 16:8).

Robert Gromacki said:

"He (God) has graciously worked in and through the human will to gain the assent of that will without violating human responsibility."

The point is this. God does not overtake the human will, but aids the will and decision of man, so he can express faith in Jesus Christ. God's work upon the human heart does not rule out the personal choice and responsibility of mankind regarding his acts of sin (John 3:19) and eternal destiny (John 5:40).

To conclude that the human will is only subject to the sin nature, and has no freedom to exercise itself otherwise, even with God's aid and help, goes beyond the teaching of Scripture. Free will simply means a man can choose to accept God's overtures (proposals) upon His heart and express faith in Christ (Acts 17:33 – "certain men ...believed") or choose *contrary* to faith (Acts 17:32 – "some mocked"). This is the true understanding and definition of freedom of will.

3. Human Stubbornness

John 5:40

“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”

Jesus did not say that these people “could not come” but that they personally chose to “not come” to Him for salvation and eternal life. They stubbornly resisted Christ’s call upon their lives. The destiny of man ultimately lies in a person’s decision.

Matthew 23:37

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

Again, it’s not that the Jews “could not” respond favorably to Christ’s initiatives, but they “would not” respond to His gracious offer to them. The Jewish people stubbornly resisted and rejected Christ call to place faith in Him as their Messiah and Savior.

Even C. H. Spurgeon, a Calvinist, once said:

“To me it is especially appalling that a man should perish through willfully rejecting the Divine salvation. A drowning man throwing away the lifebelt, a poisoned man pouring the antidote upon the floor, a wounded man tearing open his wounds—any of these is a sad sight. But what shall we say of a soul refusing its Savior and choosing its own destruction?”

There is no hint anywhere in the Bible that mankind cannot respond to God’s initiative – “he that cometh” (John 6:35); “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (John 6:37); “And the Spirit and the bride say come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” – Rev. 22:17; “He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day” – 2 Tim. 2:12). Man can respond to the working of grace upon his soul. He is responsible for exercising faith in God’s plan of salvation, if he is to be saved (Romans 10:17). Faith honors God and God honors faith for it pleases God “to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

Acts 7:51

“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”

Calvinism says that these unsaved people were only resisting general grace but not drawing grace. Of course, these distinctions are created in order to support a philosophy – not Bible truth. These religious people were stubborn. They would not respond to the inner conviction of the Spirit.

Dr. Lehman Strauss said:

“While it is true that no man repents until the Holy Spirit moves upon his heart, there can be no repentance where there is unwillingness to turn to God.”

Man, being free, has chosen to sin. Nobody denies this (Rom. 3:10-20). However, this does not mean that man’s will is bound sin forever, since through inner conviction, God enables man’s will to respond favorably to salvation. Man still retains the freedom to choose contrary to God’s initiating grace upon the heart, or choose to comply with God’s proposals for his salvation.

Why does man refuse to respond to God’s initiatives upon his heart? The answer is obvious. Man does not want not repent or change his mind, heart, attitude, and lifestyle regarding the issue of sin.

Luke 13:3

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Jesus also said in Luke 24:47,

“And that repentance and remission (forgiveness) of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

Acts 17:30

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”

Repentance speaks of a reversal of a person’s attitudes and convictions. Repentance essentially means that you must change your mind and heart,

think differently, or possess a different opinion and attitude about God, Jesus Christ, and your life of sin. Repentance involves a change of mind or thinking about whatever is keeping a person from coming to faith in Christ.

Repentance is also a radical change of mind about the entire direction and course of one's life. In other words, when a person repents, he will also make the decision to change his course of life. He will face contrition or remorse over his sins and desire to break away from them.

2 Corinthians 7:10

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

When a person repents he will experience remorse over his sins. A failure to repent and experience remorse over one's sins keeps that individual from coming to faith in Christ.

John 3:19

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

Man's love for sin, instead of contrition or remorse over his sins, keeps him from repenting, or changing his mind, and attitude about his sins, which also involves the attitude of wanting to break away from sin and sever his life from known sin.

As we close this study, we must remember that the battle of evangelism also involves a battle for the human will. It brings human responsibility into the picture and the need for a person to repent over his sins. The human volition or will of a person is involved in the battle for a man's soul.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Alfred Smith wrote this about God:

“I set the boundaries of the ocean vast
Carved out the mountains from the distant past

Molded a man from the miry clay
Breathed in him life but he went astray.

I hold the waters in My mighty hand
Spread out the heavens with a single span
Make all creation tremble at my voice
But My own sons come to Me by choice.

I own the cattle on a thousand hills
I write the music for the whippoorwills
Control the planets with their rocks and rills
But give you freedom to use your own will.

And if you want me to I'll make you whole
I'll only do it tho if you say so
I'll never force you for I love you so
I give you freedom is it yes or no."