

Drawn by Love

#0176

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—April 28, 1978

The text is John 12:32. Our precious Lord spoke these words just a short time before He went to the cross. He's speaking of that approaching death in the words of our text:

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" John 12:32.

Jesus is like a great magnet, and He's drawing, drawing, drawing. Especially when uplifted upon the cross, the love of His great heart was expressed, revealed, demonstrated, manifested, and as we look to that cross today, tonight, our hearts can be drawn, will be drawn. In John 6:44, we see that our coming to Jesus is entirely dependent on His drawing.

"No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him" John 6:44.

So, even the response which we bring to Christ is the result of His working upon our hearts. What a joy it is to acknowledge that, dear friends. In the plan of salvation, we do not originate anything. But thank God, He has given us the privilege of *responding* to that drawing. What do you say?

You see, in this we're different from the steel. The steel must always respond to the magnet. Take a magnet and run it through the dust, see the little iron filings that collect; they have no choice in the matter, they must respond. That's the law of their being. But while God draws us, and while He puts within our hearts the ability, the capacity to respond, He leaves it with each of us to make the choice as to whether we *will* respond or not. In other words, it is possible to feel the tug at our heart, and yet resist it.

What a shame to do that when God has been good enough to draw us and give us the ability to respond. What a shame to use that choice He's given us to say no to God. Isn't that too bad? Every soul who is eventually lost will see at the judgment that again and again, he resisted that drawing; he failed to respond to that magnetic pole.

In the book of Hosea 11:4, we see what this drawing power is. We've already alluded to it, but here he tells us:

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love..."
Hosea 11:4.

What are these cords or bands with which He draws us? Love. And what a drawing power love has. Stronger than any electric magnet; stronger than any pull in this universe, and yet there's something that can resist it if it chooses. That's selfish. Oh, I'm so glad that it's our privilege to turn from selfishness and respond to that love, those drawing influences of love. What do you say?

Romans 2:4, Paul is asking a question here:

“Or despises thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance”
Romans 2:4.

What does the goodness of God do? It leads or draws us to what? Repentance, and repentance is feeling sorry for sin, sorry enough to turn from it—that's what repentance is. This godly sorry for sin comes as we respond to the goodness of God. It's all His gift.

In the book *Steps to Christ*, we have a beautiful presentation of this I want to read at this time:

“Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own selfishness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts” *Steps to Christ*, page 26.

Every time I'm convicted of something wrong, that's the good Spirit. Every time I have in my heart the desire to do right, even if I'm not thinking about God, it's His Holy Spirit that's working with my soul. Jesus has said,

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me” John 12:32.

That was our text tonight, wasn't it?

“Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds, and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul” *Steps to Christ*, page 26.

So John tells us:

“...Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” John 1:29.

“It is true that men sometimes become shameful of their sinful ways, and give up some of their evil habits before they

are conscious that they are being drawn to Christ. But whenever they make an effort to reform, from a sincere desire to do right, it is the power of Christ that is drawing them" *Steps to Christ*, page 27.

Do people, for example, sometimes give up whiskey or tobacco without becoming religious? It happens occasionally. Can Christ draw men some times when they're unconscious of what it is that's drawing them? Oh, yes. Did you ever see a little experiment where a magnet is put under a piece of paper, it makes the little pieces of steel move around on top? You see the things move around on top, but underneath the paper that you don't see it what? The magnet.

So whenever in any human life there's genuine reform, it's because the Spirit of God is moving. Thank God, the soul is responding even though the man may not know that he's yielding to the Spirit of God at that point, he is.

"An influence of which they are unconscious works upon the soul, and the conscience is quickened, and the outward life is amended. And as Christ draws them to look upon His cross, to behold Him whom their sins have pierced, the commandment comes home to the conscience. The wickedness of their life, the deep-seated sin of the soul, is revealed to them. They begin to comprehend something of the righteousness of Christ, and exclaim, "What is sin, that it should require such a sacrifice for the redemption of its victim? Was all this love, all this suffering, all this humiliation, demanded, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life?" *Ibid.*

You see, it's a process. You know, even Saul who had that marvelous conversion on the way to Damascus, there was a preliminary, preparatory period during which his conscience was being worked upon by the Holy Spirit. Now watch:

"The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist, he will be drawn to Jesus..." *Ibid.*

Isn't that wonderful, friend? There is the assurance He's drawing me by His love. And if I just won't resist, I'll be drawn. Thank God.

The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist, he will be drawn to Jesus..." *Ibid.*

Oh, dear one, let us not resist. Let us respond to that drawing every time we sense it. Every time we experience that desire to get closer to Jesus let's respond, what do you say?

In the book *Selected Messages*, Book 1, page 365, I read:

"There is no salvation without repentance." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, pages 365.

Isn't everybody saved? God would like to save everybody. But salvation is from what? Sin. Sin is the transgression of the law, and repentance is being sorry for sin, and sorry enough to do what? Give it up, turn from it.

"There is no salvation without repentance. No impenitent sinner can believe with his heart unto righteousness" *Ibid.*

So whom God pardons He first makes penitent, doesn't He? Thank God, He does that, as we have seen, as we respond to the drawing appeals of His Holy Spirit.

The next page 366:

"No man can cover his soul with the garments of Christ's righteousness while practicing known sins, or neglecting known duties." *Ibid.*, page 366.

Someone says, "Do I have to show a life of obedience before I can be accepted?" No. I come with my sins, my weaknesses, my failures. I respond to that drawing of the Holy Spirit. But dear friends, when I surrender those sins to Christ, He takes them. That's part of responding to the drawing, isn't it?

"God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place..." *Ibid.*

"Why, isn't everybody justified?" No. Those who surrender to Jesus fully are justified through His precious life. His death, His atonement are all ours as we respond to the drawing power of His love.

"God requires the entire surrender of the heart, before justification can take place" ; and in order for man to retain justification, there must be continual obedience, through active, living faith that works by love and purifies the soul." *Ibid.*

What does retain mean? Keep, maintain, preserve. Can I have something today and lose it tomorrow? Any of you ever lose any money? If it amounted to very much, you looked for it, didn't you? Is it possible to have justification and then lose it? Apparently, yes. And in order to retain justification, there must be continual obedience. Not that obedience purchases justification; that's a free gift. But it's this matter of *responding* to the drawing influence of the Spirit of God.

It's pretty hard to go two ways at the same time. It's pretty hard to be moving north and south in the same operation. It's pretty hard for the elevator to take you up and down on the same trip, the same experience, at the same second. No, the elevator is either going up or it's going down. And so, thank God, you and I have the privilege of choosing which way we put the will. If we respond to these moving,

drawing influences of the Holy Spirit, then thank God, Christ will continue to work in us.

Now, let's turn to the book of Colossians 2:6. Will you read this verse with me, please?

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" Colossians 2:6.

What's that first word? As. And what's the little word after the comma in the verse? So, as so. In the same way you receive Jesus; in that same way keep walking in it. We keep Him the same way we get Him, by responding to the drawing power of His love, the drawing influence of His Holy Spirit. We can't originate anything. We're by nature sinful. Our hope is in Jesus. And as He keeps drawing us, we keep doing what? Responding.

It's a step-by-step experience. So *Volume 1*, page 187, says: "God leads His people on step by step." You notice that in your own experience. God brings you to some point; perhaps the first step you take is some test, and you give your heart to Jesus. He comes into your soul, and you rejoice as you continue studying the Bible and praying. He brings you to another test, and again your heart responds to His love, and He helps you to do that, and so on and on. Are there any more steps He wants us to take? What do you think? Does He? And as we keep responding, He will keep drawing us.

These steps may be of two kinds. They may be of things He wants us to put *into* our lives; they may have to do with things He wants to take *out* of our lives. Either way, the response of our hearts to His love says, "Yes Lord, whatever you want to take out, take out. Whatever you want to put in, put in."

Has He made any change in your life? Can you look back and see some things that you used to think a great deal of that He's taken out of your life, and you're so glad? How many can say, "yes"? Thank the Lord. And has He put some things into your life that didn't use to be there? Are you glad about that too? Well, now He has some more things to do.

Once again on this verse, all together:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" Colossians 2:6.

Step by step. And remember, the power which draws us is His, and the power in our lives that enables us to respond is His. The glory is His from start to finish. The work is His from start to finish. But He has chosen to make the operation of it dependent upon my what? My choice, my response. That's why He gave me this wonderful power of choice, this wonderful power, that my love for Him might be expressed in that way.

There's another thing that Jesus is calling us to, dear ones. It isn't just to have new good habits put into our lives and old bad habits taken out. Let's turn over

to Matthew 4; this is one of the most important appeals of the good Spirit of the Savior as He works with our hearts. The 18th verse pictures Jesus walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. He sees two brothers, Peter and Andrew; they're casting their net into the sea. Now the 19th verse, will you read it with me?

“And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” Matthew 4:19.

This wasn't the first time they had met Jesus. The Gospel of John, the first chapter, tells us about their visit with Jesus down by the banks of the Jordan, soon after Christ was baptized. But on this occasion, Christ invited them to leave their usual vocation and to do what? Follow Jesus, and unite with Him in soul-winning. Did they do it? The 20th verse says they straightway—that means immediately, right now—left their nets and followed Him. Wasn't that a wonderful response, friend?

If Jesus were to ask you to leave everything you're doing and enlist for some special work that He had for you to do, would you do it? Would you? Well, that's the way to be all the time on the altar for Jesus.

Now Christ has many things for people to do. Jesus didn't call all the fishermen on the Sea of Galilee to leave their nets and do this, but He called Peter and John and Andrew and James. Jesus Himself was a carpenter for many years, but the time came when He responded to the appeal of His Father and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He left Nazareth, went down to the Jordan, and was baptized and entered upon His ministry. So there's a time to carpenter, and there's a time to give the message. There's a time to catch fish, and there's a time to catch men. Who will decide for me which I should do? God's good Spirit will. He's drawing all the time. And when by His good Spirit, He brings me to the place where I see that it's time to devote more time to His work of soul-winning, if my heart has gotten in the attitude of responding to the appeals of His love, I'll do it.

Notice this book of Matthew 9:9. Here's another instance of the drawing, wooing, influence of Jesus to call men into His service:

“...as Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom”
Matthew 9:9.

What does that mean, “the receipt of custom”? He was a tax collector. Matthew was in government service. You might say today that he was with the IRS, the Internal Revenue Service, or some other branch of the tax-collecting work. What did Jesus say to him? Exactly what He said to the fishermen

“And He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him” Matthew 9:9.

So, Matthew made the same response that Peter and Andrew had made. They left their fishing nets; he left his government service and tax collecting. Both of them, all of them, went with Jesus to be His disciples and to unite with Him in soul-winning.

He said to Peter, "From now on, you're going to catch men instead of fish." Did he? Oh, yes. Peter must have remembered that later when on the occasion of the Day of Pentecost he gave that sermon, and God caused 3,000 souls to come in. Think of it—a fisherman no longer catching fish but catching men—3,000 in one net. How wonderful. But it all came through responding to the drawing influence of the love of Jesus. That's the thing I want you to notice. Christ was drawing, drawing, drawing.

Wherever you are in the Christian way tonight, if you haven't quite started, or if you have started and are partway along, or farther along, Christ is still drawing you. He's drawing you. If you've never made a public start, He's drawing you. If you have, but there's some new test that He's brought you to, He's drawing you. If He's calling you into His soul-winning work, He's drawing you. Thank God, love says, "Jesus, You gave everything for me; I give everything for You."

Turn to Luke 9:23. What does it mean to follow Jesus? Will you read this one with me?

"And he said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me"
Luke 9:23.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? What do we carry? Did He ever carry a cross? Oh, yes. And as we follow Him, we're to take the cross. This involves doing what to self? What does it say? What do you say when you deny something? When the baby wants something and the mother denies it, what does she say? "No, no. No, no." But mother, it's one thing to say no, no to the baby, and it's another thing to say it to yourself. Are there things that come to your mind and heart that if you're looking to Jesus, He will say impress you to say "no, no" to? Oh, yes. Every temptation to be irritated; every temptation to be foolish; every temptation to be gossipy, critical, faultfinding; every temptation to serve self instead of Christ. Thank God, the one who is responding to the drawing influence of the Holy Spirit denies those tendencies, those cravings, and says what? "No, no, I cannot do it. I'm on my way with Jesus. Not only that I may share eternal life with Him, but that I may share the blessings He has given me with others and still others."

Here's a little promise in the book *Welfare Ministry* that I think is a wonderful statement. See if you don't like it. There's somebody here tonight that this may be the most important thing they get all evening. Listen:

"If the teachers of His Word are willing, *Welfare Ministry*, page 101.

Are what? Willing. In other words, they are responding to this drawing influence of the Spirit.

"The Lord will lead them into close relation with the people. He will guide them into the homes of those who need and desire the truth, bringing them into the situations best suited to their talents" *Ibid.*

Isn't that wonderful? Is there anybody here that can successfully reach everybody? Not a soul. I happen to have in my pocket here some keys—and there is a key for my car. But it's a queer thing; you don't have one like it. And that's what makes this one valuable. Friends, you are like that key. There are only certain locks that you can fit. You can't reach everybody, but you can reach *somebody*. Who knows the ones that you can help? Jesus does. Those peculiar little nicks, the ups and downs, different in every key. Those are the things that make you an individual, and those are the things that enable *you* to reach some other soul. And if you will respond to the drawing of the Holy Spirit, He will guide you into touch with those that you can help better than anybody else in the world.

Oh, I pray that God may help you to understand that there's something you can do to help someone better than anybody else in all this world. If you just respond to the drawing influence of the Spirit, God will see to it that you're at the right place at the right time with the right word. I know He will.

Do you remember that wonderful experience recorded in Acts the eighth chapter? A man named Philip—Philip was a deacon. He was up in Samaria. God was blessing him as he gave the message, and many were accepting Christ. But one day, the Holy Spirit directed Philip to go way south on down on the road to Gaza through the desert. When he got down there, he only saw in that lonely desert one chariot coming along with a man in it. Philip ran to meet him, and that man was reading the book of Isaiah.

As they road along in the chariot over the desert sands, Philip, guided by the Holy Spirit, said, "Do you understand what you're reading?"

The man responded, "How could I unless some man should guide me?" He was right at Isaiah 53 as providence would have it, and Philip began right there where he was and preached Jesus to him. Before they got through that day, the man had fully accepted Christ and was baptized, and was on his way down to Ethiopia to tell others the wonderful news. And there're still Christians in Ethiopia as a result of that, 2,000 years ago; as the result of *one* man responding to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and being willing to be guided to where *he* would fit the need. Do you see?

Will God do that for you? Why, sure He will. You're not like Philip. You weren't meant to be. You're not like anybody else that ever lived. You're peculiar. You're unique. There are no duplicates, and there's no key factory where you can get a duplicate for you. Not a bit of it. Jesus has made you unique because there are peculiar needs that you can reach. Oh, why not do the thing you were born for, my friend?

How can you be sure of being led into that? Respond to the drawing influences with the Spirit. Shall I put it this way: Just make a bargain with God that you'll do what He opens the way for you to do; that you will respond to His drawing influence. If He points out something in your life that needs to come out, you'll give it up. If He points out something that He wants to add to your life, some new habit of grace, you'll say, "Jesus help me, and I will." If He appoints you a work to work for others, you'll say,

“Lord, I’ll do what You open the way for me to do. I can hear my Savior calling, and I’ll respond.” That makes Him happy.

“I, if I be lifted up from the earth will” do what? “Draw all men unto me.”

How many of us would like to send Him the word, tonight, that we *do* respond with all our hearts, may I see your hands? Thank God. May every soul be blessed; it makes our Master happy.

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