

John 6:66-71

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[0 : 00] John chapter 6. Today we reach the last section in John and the last discussion of the discourse of the bread of life.

! Let's read together verses 66 through 71. After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.

So Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter answered, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. Jesus answered him, or them, did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.

He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

[1 : 21] Father, as we look at this passage today, we ask especially that you would illumine our hearts by the Holy Spirit you have given us.

Help us, Lord, to grasp what Jesus was communicating to his disciples and grow by that.

Father, we thank you for your loving, nourishing, strengthening care for us. And we ask that we would respond appropriately and fully with thanksgiving and praise and growth.

In Jesus' name. If anyone could have taken ordinary young men and prepared them to change the world, it would have been Jesus.

If anyone could take fishermen, a tax collector, a political nationalist, and possibly farmers or tradesmen, and prepare them to bring the gospel to places like Rome, Mesopotamia, Persia, India, Egypt, and Ethiopia, it would be Jesus.

[2 : 44] If anyone could take self-reliant, ambitious, insecure, and fearful men and prepare them to endure rejection, betrayal, and the eventual martyrdom that would crown their service, it would be Jesus.

And he did just that with those men that he had chose and sent out. And he did it by preparing them through strengthening their faith and establishing their knowledge of him.

I believe Jesus is preparing people in the same way today. We might not have the same ministry that the apostles had, but we face the same pain and temptation to self-pity that they did.

And though the Spirit is still strengthening faith by directing us to consider and look to him.

The passage we read this morning reveals Jesus' gracious care in helping his followers endure the widespread desertion and eventual betrayal of one of their own.

[4 : 13] He did this through a contrast of false and genuine faith, showing that true endurance begins with genuine faith and knowing him.

I believe this morning Jesus wants to strengthen you to endure, to remain, to abide, even if all others fall away, as you focus on him as the source of your life.

And so, we will look at this passage in three parts, highlighting these truths.

You must look to Jesus alone because, one, no one else can give you eternal life. Two, because he alone is the Holy One of God.

And three, because only grace produced faith in him endures. So, first of all, when others are unfaithful all around you, you must look to Jesus alone because, no one else can give you eternal life.

[5 : 37] Let's look at verses 67 and 68 again. So, Jesus said to the twelve, Do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Now, after many of Jesus' followers had turned away, he turned to the twelve that he had specifically chosen.

And he questioned them, Do you want to go away as well? Now, that question didn't arise from insecurity.

No, it was designed to test and strengthen their faith. In Greek, the negative particle in that sentence anticipates a no answer.

Literally is, You don't also want to go away, do you? Instead of correcting or rebuking them or challenging them, Jesus is inviting them to reaffirm their faith in him.

[6 : 52] Now, we don't know exactly how the twelve felt after hearing Jesus' hard sayings about eating his flesh and drinking his blood, but we can imagine their confusion.

Yet, even when they didn't understand, they stayed. And Peter, speaking for the group, gave one of the most beautiful confessions in Scripture.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. The disciples recognized here that there was no one else like him.

Moses couldn't save them. The prophets couldn't redeem them. The philosophers of the age could not give them life. Only Jesus could. Only Jesus could.

And that truth is echoed again and again in the New Testament. Later on in John, he writes, he writes the words of Christ when he said, I am the way and the truth and the life.

[8 : 02] No one comes to the Father except through me. In Acts, when Peter was arrested and faced the Sanhedrin because he was preaching Jesus resurrected from the dead, he declared to them, there is no salvation in anyone else.

For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. And then John, in his first epistle, in writing about the testimony that God had given about his son, he said it this way, and this is the testimony that God has given us eternal life.

And this life is in his son. Whoever has the son has life. Whoever does not have the son does not have life.

It's all focused in Christ. And that's what the disciples understood. Where, to who else would we go? And I think Jesus could be asking us the same question.

At moments when we're shaken by trials and temptations, you don't also want to go away, do you? At that moment, is your answer the same as Peter's?

[9 : 32] There have been surveys over the last few decades questioning Christians about their beliefs. And their conclusions are interesting.

And they found that a great number of those who claim Christ as their Savior also believe that there are other ways to God.

They also believe that there are other ways to receive eternal life. percentages that range they range from about a third to two thirds depending on how the questions are assembled and who's included in the term Christian.

But even at its lowest percentage this is tragic. This is not what the Bible says a Christian must understand.

Jesus Christ is the only way to life. When others fall away or look elsewhere Jesus wants you to have the same deep conviction that says to him you alone have words of eternal life.

[10 : 53] So first you must look to Jesus because he has the words of life. And second when all others are unfaithful all around you you must look to Jesus alone because he alone is the Holy One of God.

This really answers why. Peter continues in verse 69 the chiasmic center of the passage the one that the Apostle John wanted us to grasp.

He says and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. With this verse we reach the heart of Peter's response and it's the genuine disciples confession believing and knowing who Jesus is who he truly is.

the two verbs have believed and have come to know describe their experience. Together these words reveal something more than simple recitation of facts learned in a lesson.

One theologian called it a settled conviction about Jesus' identity. faith comes first and knowledge follows.

[12 : 28] You don't have to wait until you understand everything about Jesus to believe in him. You believe and he helps you understand.

Knowing who Jesus is comes through faith and it is essential to life. At this point in the journey in their journey with Christ the twelve don't fully understand who he is.

Their understanding is limited but it is true what they know what they have experienced was gripping to them.

They had a firm conviction you are the holy one of God. Now to call Jesus the holy one of God isn't entirely clear because it really wasn't that commonly expressed in the Bible.

Perhaps it was common in the day but we only have one other occurrence of it. But the word holy one in scripture is more prominent.

[13 : 43] It refers to God himself. It refers to the one who is set apart who is pure and sovereign. So a holy one of God referring to Jesus is an amazing title and it only appears in two other verses both describing the same situation where a demoniac cries in fear when seeing Jesus I know who you are the holy one of God even the demons recognized his identity although they didn't love or follow him Peter's confession is different the demon confessed in fear Peter confessed in faith the disciples still had much to learn especially about who Jesus was and the cross the very thing

Jesus was trying to communicate in the bread of life discourse but at this point they knew enough to trust him you are from God you are unlike anyone else and you alone have life your endurance in the Christian life depends on what you truly believe about Jesus your faith is based on emotions temporal interests popularity or comfort it will collapse when tested but if it's grounded in a settled conviction of who Jesus is it will stand firm so I encourage you today to anchor your perseverance not in how you feel about Christ but in what you know about him what God has revealed about him and what the spirit confirms in your heart about him daily remind yourself

Jesus is the holy one of God he is divine he is trustworthy he is unchanging when doubts whisper when circumstances overwhelm you confess the truth again faith begins by believing that's kind of an oxymoron faith begins by believing endurance endurance begins by believing and it matures through knowing keep learning Christ read his word worship deeply talk with him often the better you know him the more impossible it becomes to walk away from him!

Now in the last verses 70 and 71 Jesus reminds us something very important that not every follower of Christ is genuine only faith born of grace endures to the end so here's the third point when others are unfaithful all around you you must look to Jesus alone because only grace produced faith in Jesus endures look at verses 70 and 71 Jesus answered them did I not choose you the twelve and yet one of you is a devil he spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot for he one of the twelve was going to betray him now we might be a bit puzzled at

Jesus response to Peter's confession he seems to skip over it instead of affirming it or praising him as he appears to do six months later when Peter makes another amazing confession of Jesus identity he says here did I not choose you the twelve and yet one of you is a devil these disciples were likely already startled by the recent events the defections and now they hear Jesus say that one of them is a devil not the most encouraging response to Peter's answer and why might he have said that one reason is likely that he wanted them to know that Peter's confession was not entirely correct one of them did not believe at the moment the others had no clue who he was referring to but

[18 : 49] John much later writes that he spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot one of the twelve who was going to betray him this Judas walked with Jesus heard his teaching saw his miracles but he never truly believed he looked the part he talked the part he acted the part he even fooled the others but his heart was never changed in making this clarification of Peter's confession Jesus likely wanted to start preparing them for the betrayal he wanted them to know that the unbelief of Jesus did not mean the failure on his part he had chosen the twelve knowing fully knowing that one of them would betray him but the statement also assures us and them that

God's purposes were still being fulfilled in spite of that Jesus said earlier that all whom the father had given him would come to him and he would lose none of them Judas' unbelief did not undermine the plan of God it fulfilled it ultimately Judas' unbelief and betrayal would serve God's gracious purpose though Jesus willingly laid down his life to satisfy the demands of justice against us he did it by submitting to the envy the unbelief and the betrayal of his own people God used Judas' unbelief and betrayal to bring life to the world but he had no benefit from it

Jesus said later at the last supper the son of man goes as it is written of him but woe to that man by whom the son of man is betrayed it would have been better for him if he had not been born Jesus was preparing his disciples to endure the heartbreak of betrayal he wanted them to understand that real faith genuine faith faith produced by grace would endure even when others fall away I believe Jesus wants us to know that false disciples exist he doesn't want us to go looking around and trying to figure out who they are in fact he told a parable about wheat and tares saying that this is just a fact and at the end of the age

God would sort them out being near him and serving him are not the same as knowing him there is a time when those unbelievers will be exposed but it's always the time for us to come to faith in Christ to examine our hearts in fact the Bible tells us to do that very thing in 2 Corinthians 13:5 it says examine yourselves see whether you're in the faith test yourselves or do you not realize this about yourselves that Christ or Jesus Christ is in you unless indeed you fail to meet the test for the believer there is comfort here as well your endurance is not proof of your own strength it is proof of God's grace Peter stayed Judas left the only difference was grace so thank God for the faith that holds you if you are following Christ today it's because his grace has kept you if you struggle with doubt look again to him for assurance his grace produces and preserves true faith a good reflection might be to ask yourselves are you following Jesus for who he is or for what he gives true discipleship flows from love not convenience if your faith is born of grace it will continue so I'd like to conclude by asking what is the

[24 : 06] Lord saying to us through this passage Jesus' question challenges us do you don't also want to go away do you it's a question for every believer every church every generation and the right answer has never changed Lord to whom shall we go you have the words of eternal life we have believed and have come to know that you are the holy one of God now at that moment that was a true understanding of Christ for the disciples but looking back now we have a bigger picture of Christ don't we John even wrote his gospel to give a greater picture of who Christ is John says in chapter one that he's the divine son and revealer of

God he's the giver of life he's the great I am he's the Messiah and son of God he's the lamb of God and savior through the cross these are things that the gospel of John emphasizes about who Christ is so when your faith is tested when others turn and drift away when life hurts and you don't understand remember you must look to Jesus alone because no one else can give you life he alone is the holy one of God and only grace produced faith in him endures so this morning reaffirm your allegiance to Christ if others turn away keep your eyes fixed on him the giver and sustainer of life say with

Peter and with confidence Lord to whom shall we go you have the words of eternal life and we have believed and come to know that you are the holy one of God let's pray