

John, Pt 25: Offended Disciples

John 6:63 ESV “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. **64** But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) **65** And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”

66 After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. **67** So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” **68** Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, **69** and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God.” **70** Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” **71** He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

- I. We are continuing to examine the book of John and today will be concluding chapter 6, the longest chapter in John’s Gospel, and one that primarily deals with the revelation of Christ’s true identity and the purpose of his ministry. This purpose was stated succinctly by the Apostle Paul: **1 Timothy 1:15b ESV** **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...** Let’s look at how that applies for a moment.
 - A. Previously in John chapter 6, Jesus identified the core problem of humanity as one of ***hunger***.
 1. I don’t mean starvation in the sense related to famine, etc. I mean that human beings are irresistibly driven to satisfy inner cravings. And yet, a sense of satisfaction for our hunger ***never*** comes as a result of our natural efforts (“the flesh is no help at all”).
 2. Though we crave and consume success, addictions, sex, reputations, material things, etc.; ironically, none of these will make us full! After gorging ourselves on these offerings, we walk away with the same gnawing hunger.
 - B. It is in the defilement of our sin that we are starving; not because nothing has been offered to us, but because of our own unbelief. In God’s anthropology, there are only two types of human beings: believers and unbelievers.
 1. Nobody is by default a believer. If we were all divided into camps of “good guys” and “bad guys”, there would be no good guys!
 2. **Psalm 14:1 ESV** The fool says in his heart, “There is no God.” They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; ***there is none who does good.*** **2** The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of man, ***to see if there are any*** who understand, who seek after God. **3** They have ***all turned aside;*** together they have become corrupt; ***there is none who does good, not even one.***
 - C. All of humankind of every gender, race and time have been fools, living defiantly as if there were no God. This has been our perpetual state since that day that Adam and Eve sold their souls for a bite of fruit, taken in disobedience, deceived into believing that it would elevate them to God-like status.

1. Make no mistake: **all of us** have chosen unbelief, having failed to embrace everything that can be known of God, and has been “clearly perceived” about him as Paul says in Romans 1. We have become comfortable calling God a liar, insufficient and unsatisfactory; denying him his due worship.
 2. **John 3:18 ESV** Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but **whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**
 - a) Christ is saying that the choice not to believe in God is a self-condemning act.
 - b) It is also important to note that to believe in biblical terms has nothing to do with simple agreement with a set of facts (“I believe the sky is blue” and “Rocky Road Ice Cream is good”), rather belief is always connected with the heart and motivates our actions.
 - c) To believe in Christ is not to merely believe he exists, but to trust in, cling to, and rely on him.
- D. Because of this, it is a mistake to think that people perish without God primarily because they have not had the message explained well enough, but rather because they have rejected the Heavenly Messenger! The human race is not a victim of spiritual helplessness and ignorance, but rather a victim of it’s own arrogant and rebellious posture towards a living, holy and just God.
- II. So into our hardscrabble lives of constantly searching for something new to consume in order to assuage our intense hunger, born in each of us because of unbelief, Jesus Christ steps in and says, **John 6:27a ESV** “Do not work for the food that perishes, but **for the food that endures to eternal life...**”
- A. The question of John 6 is “Where does one find that food that endures?” Against a backdrop of the world’s endless false advertising, seducing us into believing that the answer is more freedom to follow our own destructive impulses, Jesus’ voice rings out in opposition to the culture, saying, **John 6:35b ESV** “**I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.**”
 - B. Though he has been denied worship, and though his claims have been rejected and his fellowship spurned, he comes to us, the filthy orphans digging for scraps in the garbage heap, and tenderly, like a loving Father or Mother, arms opened wide, offers to us grace upon grace to feast upon!
 1. But a problem still exists. Though a meal of fresh, hot, delicious unmerited favored is offered to us straight from the ovens of Heaven, sin convinces us that there’s something better. that “out there” there is some sexual delight, or some measure of respectability, or some material achievement that will satisfy us, though we’ve tried many such meals and remain unfulfilled.
 2. Furthermore, religion tells us that though the Bread of Life has been offered, you can’t just walk right up to Christ with your filthy, unwashed, sinful hands and take it! No! Nothing is free. If you want it, you must earn it!
 - C. So if sin is telling me to continue eating that which will not satisfy, and religion (which is just as inherent to me as sin) is telling me to work for that which Jesus has promised to give me, how am I to ever come to the knowledge of the truth

of God's salvation? Christ gave the answer...**John 6:44a ESV** No one can come to me **unless** the Father who sent me draws him.

D. In spite of the way our flesh conspires with the world and the devil to try and convince us to continue eating at their greasy spoon called "The Unbelief Cafe"; the Father has special way of enticing us with his goodness and mercy, letting the aroma of grace draw us to Christ like the scent of a freshly prepared Thanksgiving feast with all of the trimmings.

1. **Ephesians 1:5 ESV** "...he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will."

2. God wanted us so bad that long ago, he planned (or predestined) to adopt us! He was drawing us long before we ever wanted anything to do with him! In 1John it says that, "We love (him) because he first loved us"(4:19).

E. But is God able to draw us regardless of our desire to make a religious, works-based, response to him?

1. Remember the story of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15? When that young man had squandered all of his inheritance on whores and booze, he was **literally** eating garbage!

a) But wallowing in the pig manure, fighting with swine for his dinner, he remembered the scent of fresh bread that filled his Father's house. He made a decision that he would go back and offer himself as a slave in order to work for a morsel of he what once took whenever he wanted.

b) So he heads home, rehearsing his speech the whole way. But as he approaches the house, a knot forming in his stomach, fearful of what awaited him, he looks up and notices that his Father is running **toward** him! He shouting back to his household servants, tears streaming down his face, "My son is back! Quick bring a robe and a ring! Someone prepare a feast! He was dead, but now he's alive!" And the Father proceeds, in his unspeakable joy, to drag (or draw) his son into the house!

2. God will not take time to hear your well-rehearsed speeches. He will not let you "work off" all that you've squandered, he just wants to pull you into the house so the party can start! **John 6:27 ESV** Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, **which the Son of Man will give to you.**

III. But for some of us, the idea of coming into the Father's house to feast upon the Bread of Life is so foreign that we fold our arms in unbelief. It's just too good to be true, so we call the whole idea that there even is a "Bread of Life" a fairy tale. Or perhaps get offended that someone would suggest that everything else that this world offers us to eat isn't equally as good as this so-called "Bread of Life"! Or we get concerned that if we start telling everyone that the Bread of Life is free for the taking that all the riffraff will start making their way to the house, muddy feet and all! Or perhaps we believe that we aren't good enough or loved enough to be allowed to feast upon the Bread of Life. And we burrow our way into the depths of unbelief.

A. This is where many who had listened to Jesus in John 6 found themselves. He had told them that their "food" wasn't good enough, that they were chasing the

wrong kind of food, that God wasn't at all interested in their contribution, and that in order to have life they must feast on his flesh and imbibe his blood.

1. The result? ***They were deeply, horribly offended.*** And something absolutely astonishing happened. **John 6:66 ESV** *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*
 - a) One day earlier, Christ had fed an enthusiastic crowd of perhaps 20,000 people by miraculously multiplying a few pieces of bread and a couple of fish. They were ecstatic, and nearly forced him to become their king in amazement. When he slipped away, they crossed a lake to locate him.
 - b) And now, a mere 24 hours later, the crowds have been scandalized and one by one have made their exit. If this were to happen to the pastor of a 20,000 member megachurch today, it would make the national news.
 2. The end of chapter 6 is dripping with awkwardness and maybe even a little embarrassment, as the 12, Christ's closest followers stand there, jaws on the ground. Their hopes of notoriety, and book deals, and appearances on TMZ and Entertainment Tonight as part of Jesus' entourage are fast disappearing. "What has he done?", they must have wondered. "Everything was going so well, and Jesus just blew it!". They were offended.
- B. I said last week that I would find it hard to conclude that a person who has never been offended by the message of Jesus Christ has ever really heard or embraced it. The Gospel is far too unnatural to the way we think and feel about life, others, and especially God. Because of this, the most natural response to the message of Jesus for fallen human creatures is offense.
1. For one thing, the New Testament, the writers portray the message of the cross, not as something that should reform us, but that should kill what is natural to us, as well as what is unnatural to God. Jesus said "take up your cross and follow me." Paul said that we should put to death everything that is earthly in us. James and John said that the one who loves God by default makes himself the enemy of the world.
 2. It is exactly these kinds of statements that cause us to be offended.
 - a) We don't want to die with Jesus; we want him to give us more free lunch, more healings, turn more water into wine! Be our savior, not our Lord!
 - b) We don't want to put earthly things to death, at least not all of them! Why sell all that we have and give to the poor, if we can just be morally good (or at least gooder than the next guy!) like the rich young ruler of Mark 10.
 - c) We don't want to be regarded as the enemy of the world! What if at some point we want it to satisfy a craving? we don't want to burn a bridge!
- C. So at many points in the life of even a true Christ follower, we will stand there, with the 12 original disciples, having just watched Christ send a wrecking ball through all that we cherished and put our hopes in, completely offended. If you think that you won't; if you think that you can't; and if you think that you aren't, I wonder if you have truly met him. What he offers is free, yet costs everything.
- IV. So what do you imagine that Christ did in the face of this sudden demographic change in the make-up of his audience?

- A. Do you think he turned to the 12 and said, “Whoa! I did not see that coming! I am so sorry guys! I’ll revise my sermon, softening it up a bit. Perhaps I’ll call it, “Your Best Loaf Now”, and we can go somewhere and try and rebuild!”?
- B. Do you think he went chasing after the 20,000 shouting, “Wait! Come back! I didn’t *really* mean eat my flesh and drink my blood! I misspoke!”
- C. On the contrary, He turns to his stunned, offended Disciples with the same unshaken authority in which he spoke to the crowds **John 6:67 ESV So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”**
1. He does not comfort them. He does not apologize to them. He asks the m to make a choice. Where they are is not an accident. The way they feel is by design. The events of the day have been sovereignly predestined by the Father so that they might be forced to decide.
 2. **Joel 3:14 ESV Multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.**
- D. “The Day of the Lord” has come for these 12 men in a sense. A decision must be made that will determine everything for them going forward. “Do you want to go away as well?” is the fundamental question of belief and judgement.
1. Remember that Christ said in John 3, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” Judgement and belief are linked together in the choice to be made by us.
 2. **Psalm 78:21 ESV Therefore, when the Lord heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob; his anger rose against Israel, 22 because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power.**
- E. As is so often the case among the dumbfounded disciples, Simon Peter is the first to speak up. His answer is brief and logical. “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life...” He has weighed all of the options. in giving Christ his answer, he remembers life before Christ found him.
1. He remembers the vanity, futility, and despair of his days as a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. He remembers how his life was spent in exhausting labor, fishing all night once with nothing to show for it.
 2. But he remembers how that when he obeyed the command of Jesus, his boat was suddenly filled with a miraculous catch of fish that almost sank his boat!
 3. But it wasn’t just his boat that was sunk! He remembered how tears filled his eyes that day as he knelt before perfect goodness and begged Christ to leave, “Go away!”, he said, “I’m a sinful man!”. He recalled how Christ lovingly lifted his chin and said, “Don’t worry Peter! From now on you’ll be catching men!” And for three years he had followed the man who called him.
- F. It wasn’t that those years hadn’t had their share of hardship, pain and even offense!. On the contrary, Peter in particular had a habit of saying or doing just the wrong thing at just the right moment, and often had to be lovingly corrected by Jesus. Christ even once rebuked him, referring to him as “Satan” (Matt 16)!

1. But how his soul thrived on the Words of Life! So there was nowhere else for him to go. His mind was made up. "...we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."
 2. Peter was definitely one of those who had been drawn to Christ by the Father. His answer here is similar to the one given by him in Matt 16.
 - a) Christ had asked the Twelve, "Who do you say that I am?" and Peter replied, "You are the Christ; the Son of the Living God!"
 - b) **Matthew 16:17 ESV** And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah (Peter)! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, **but my Father who is in heaven.** The Father was drawing Peter! Belief, though imperfect and faltering, had saved Peter from condemnation.
- G. But Christ knew that there was another among the 12. **John 6:70 ESV** Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil."
1. There was an impostor. One who, though hand selected by Jesus, was not there because he was drawn by Jesus, but was there to fulfill the ancient scriptures, proving the righteousness and justice of God. One who was already sold over to the gall of bitterness, offense and unbelief.
 2. **John 6:71 ESV** He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.
- H. Hanging out among believers wouldn't save Judas, and it won't save you either. Though Judas had heard the same words from the holy lips of Jesus that Peter had heard, without repentance, without belief that translated into action, it wasn't enough. The same holds true for you. **Luke 13:5 ESV** "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."
1. No one wants to be compared to history's greatest villain. We rebuff the accusation and say, "I would never betray the Lord! I'm a good person."
 2. But may I suggest that if you are willfully walking in unbelief, you are already in the act of betraying the Lord? Who are you to say to the one who created you, "I don't accept the plan you have for my life!" Who are you to say to the one who spent all of Heaven's wealth (Jesus) to save you, "I have no need of you" or "Maybe I'll respond later" or "I'll follow you, but I have conditions you must meet." By God's mercy, may you not be condemned in your unbelief!
- I. Two disciples. Two responses. Has Jesus offended you? How you respond is the proof or whether you have been drawn by the Father, or in bondage to pride, bitterness, and offense. It shows a true believer from a unbeliever, dead in sin.
- V. Oh God! Have mercy upon us! Draw us, O Lord that we might live and not die! Let us hear with the gift of spiritual ears the sweet words of life from your mouth O Lord! Grant us the gift of repentance. Help us to know the seriousness of unbelief, Help us to know the joy of belief, as Peter did! Wake us from our comfortable unbelieving slumber this morning, O Lord! Let us not believe in words alone but in our deeds. Convict us that we might trust in, cling to and rely on you.