

WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY

JOHN 6:60-69

Text: John 6:67

John 6:67

⁶⁷ Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

Introduction:

Toward the close of John chapter 6, there is a sad and arresting verse. Verse 66 says,

John 6:66

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

The Lord turned to His disciples and asks them “Will Ye Also Go Away.”

By studying the events that transpire in this chapter, we learn why these people walked away from the Lord, and you will be able to see if you might be headed in the same deserting direction.

There are three questions I want to draw from this text and pose to each of you. How you answer these questions could mean the difference in whether or not

you will be a disciple or become a deserter. This first question is this:

1. IS THE LORD EXPERIMENTAL IN YOUR LIFE

John 6:66

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

In order to understand what led to this mass retreat, I think we need to identify who these “many...disciples” were, and what it was that initially drew them to follow Jesus.

Very often those abandon the faith in the end do so because they approached the faith in the beginning for all of the wrong reasons.

There are those who come to Jesus as an experiment. They are interested in Him to some degree, and they choose to pursue Him on a sort of “trial basis”, curious of what He might do for them.

I think we find an example of this in the chapter before us. Notice a couple of things about those who experiment with Jesus. Notice first of all, there are those who come to Christ who are:

A. Curious About His Power

The “many” in verse 66 can be traced back to the earlier parts of John 6. For instance, look back with me at verse 2.

John 6:2

² And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

The gospels reveal that Jesus was a wonder worker and a miracle maker, and for that reason, great crowds followed Him wherever He went, hoping to see one of His signs and wonders.

No doubt, some of those who deserted the Lord in verse 66 were first drawn to Him out of a curiosity about His power.

I am sure that there are some in the church today who appear to be followers of Christ, who are there simply to see if Jesus really has the power that has been attributed to Him.

These are the sign seekers. They want a little flash and bang to accompany their religion. As long as something interesting is going on, and they are entertained, then they will keep coming around.

Jesus confronted this type of experimental disciple in His day. In Luke 11:29:

Luke 11:29

²⁹ And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

Jesus is not a Vegas magician, and the Christian life is not about amusement. Therefore, if you are following Christ only because you are curious about His power, then your discipleship could be headed for desertion.

Notice not only that this experimental Christianity involves those that are curious about His power, but notice also we find in this chapter those that are:

B. Curious About His Provisions

As we move through chapter 6, we find the story of Jesus feeding the multitude with the small lunch of a little boy.

After this miracle, Jesus escaped from the crowds, only to be pursued by them again. Look with me in verse 26.

John 6:26

²⁶ Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

Here is another group following Jesus. This group was looking not so much for miracles, as for meals. They sought Jesus not so much for wonders, but for a sort of

religious welfare in which Jesus filled their stomach, and eased their hungers.

This group represents those who follow Jesus for purely selfish reasons. They try Him out to see what He can offer them. As long as their bellies are full, and they feel good, they will hang around.

However, it is likely that when Jesus begins to call them to a life of sacrifice and selflessness, they will turn their backs and walk away.

These types of experimental disciples want to follow a Jesus that only blesses, and never breaks, only delights, and never demands.

The problem with that kind of thinking is that Jesus is a Savior to be embraced, not a product to be tested. If Jesus is experimental in your life, you are likely headed for desertion.

Notice a second question I draw from this text.

2. IS JESUS ENJOYED IN YOUR LIFE

John chapter 6 is an unusually long chapter. Part of the reason for this is because it records a sermon that Jesus preached in the Synagogue at Capernaum.

The sermon deals with the fact that Jesus is bread of life sent down from heaven to save those who could not save themselves.

In the sermon, Jesus is very direct, and says in verse 53:

John 6:53

⁵³ Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

This message wasn't quite as popular as His miracles, and some did not enjoy the things that Jesus had said.

Those who walked away in verse 66, did so because Jesus had become difficult and demanding in their lives, and they no longer enjoyed His company.

What about you? Do you enjoy Jesus? Notice a couple of things that are involved in enjoying Jesus. First of all, to enjoy Jesus is to enjoy:

A. His Word

Look back at the text, and notice verse 60.

John 6:60

⁶⁰ Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

The word “hard” in verse 60 comes from a Greek word that describes something that is rough, harsh, and stern.

Notice in verse 61:

John 6:61

⁶¹ When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

The word translated “murmured” means to grumble and complain.

Jesus had proclaimed a rough, stern, and harsh truth, and many in the crowd grumbled and complained because they didn’t like what they heard.

What about you? Does the Word of God cheer you or chap you? When the Bible is preached, is it like a harp to your ears, or a hammer to your heart?

Psalm 119:140

¹⁴⁰ Thy word *is* very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it.

Is this how you feel about Christ’s Word to you?

To enjoy Jesus in your life is not only to enjoy His word to you, but also, it means that you enjoy:

B. His Work in You

John 6:63

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.

John 6:65

⁶⁵ And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.

Immediately following these statements, we read that many walked away, and stopped following after Jesus. After He explained His work in the lives of His people, many were less than enthused.

Jesus explained that what He does in the life of a person is a work of grace, and has nothing to do with the efforts of man. In other words, Jesus was saying that His work is to make His people more and more dependent upon Him.

As you follow Jesus, you will find that He will work in you to take from you anything you depend upon apart from Him.

Jesus works to take everything from us that keeps us from Him. This is never an easy work, but for some it is a work they appreciate because they know it is necessary in order to make them into the person God has called them to be.

Do you enjoy the work that Jesus tries to do in your heart? When He asks you to give up certain things, and when He kicks out your crutches and makes you dependent upon Him, are you grateful, or do you grumble?

Someone once said, “When you look at the word ‘JOY’ the “J” stands for Jesus, and the “Y” stands for you.” Someone then asked that the “O” stood for. He said, “Zero, nothing; because where there is nothing between Jesus and you, then there is joy.”

The work of Jesus in your life is to remove everything that comes between you and Him. For some people, that brings joy. For others, that is the very reason they walk away.

There is one more question I want to pose from this text.

3. IS JESUS ESSENTIAL IN YOUR LIFE

John 6:67

⁶⁷ Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?

In verse 67, Jesus looks sorrowfully at the backs of those who were walking away, and He turns to His disciples and asks, “*Will ye also go away?*”

To this Peter responds for the group. Usually, Peter sticks his foot in his mouth. However, on this occasion, Peter's words were right on target. Notice verses 68 and 69.

John 6:68-69

⁶⁸ Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

For Peter, and the other disciples that remained, walking away from Jesus was simply not an option. He was essential to their lives.

Is that the case with your life? If you didn't have a relationship with Christ, would your life change?

Notice a couple of things that make Jesus essential. First of all:

A. He Is the Only Source of Truth

For many in our day, truth is as flexible as silly putty, and about as useless. Absolutes are being replaced by what every man thinks is right in his own eyes.

Man's shifting views of what is true and what is right does not change the fact that Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."*

The difference in a disciple and a deserter is that the disciple believes that there is no truth apart from Christ! His Word is the final word for their lives.

Peter would not walk away from Jesus, because everything apart from Jesus was not the truth. His words were essential to Peter's life.

Notice not only that Jesus is essential because He is the only source of truth, but notice also further that Jesus is essential because:

B. He is the Only Saviour to Trust

John 6:69

⁶⁹ And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

For Peter and those that remained, walking away from Christ meant turning their backs on the Son of God, and the only hope for their salvation.

Those that walked away had been interested in Jesus to some degree. However, they walked away from Him because they felt like they could do without Him.

What about you? Could you live without Jesus? If you no longer followed Him, would it change anything about your life now, or your future?

The Word of God makes it clear that knowing and following Jesus are not optional, they are essential.

Peter said, “You are our only hope. You are essential to our lives both now and forever. We cannot walk away, no matter what you require of us.”

Illustration:

In 1970, as NASA’s Apollo 13 mission approached a critical decision, one that placed the lives of the crew in even more jeopardy, Gene Kranz, the lead flight director for mission control uttered a now famous statement to the ground crew in Houston. He said, “Failure is not an option.”

The difference in a disciple and a deserter lies in that very mindset. For the true disciple, walking away is simply not an option, because for the true disciple, Jesus is the only source of truth, and the only Savior to trust.

Close:

No doubt, all of us here this morning would like to think that 20 years from now, if we are not in heaven with the Lord, we will at least still be following Him here on earth.

However, chances are that some will at some point turn their back on their relationship with Christ. It is all but certain, that some among us will “go out from us”, as John put it.

How do you prevent desertion from happening in your life? The answer is simple, follow Jesus, not because of any peripheral or temporal thing, but simply because He is the only hope for your life and your soul.