



First Baptist Church Selmer

A JOURNEY THROUGH JOHN • "OFFENDED" • JOHN 6:60-66 • 2/6/2022

MAIN POINT

Jesus is not afraid to share difficult truths that may offend people who profess to be His disciples.

INTRODUCTION

Use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Are you one that likes to hear the good news or the bad news first?

Has there ever been a time that you dreaded telling someone bad news? What about feeling excited to tell someone good news?

Would you rather someone be honest with you despite the bad news or "sugar coat" it?

You will likely hear very few people say that they would like someone to sugarcoat bad news for them. Now, in saying that, there are also those that state they are just being honest but they are just outright mean. There is a difference. Most often, people just want to be told the truth. Good or bad or in between, the truth may hurt but it is still the truth.

Jesus always told the truth. Sometimes, it was exactly what the person wanted to hear. Other times, it caused people to turn and walk away. Today's lesson will look at just that. The Bible says, "So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32)

UNDERSTANDING

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:60-61.

What did Jesus say that was "a hard saying"? (Look back in verses 53-58)

Why do you think the Jews had trouble with this statement?

Do you think Jesus was concerned that some of the disciples were grumbling or had taken offense to this truth?

As we studied last week, Jesus' statement that His body must be eaten and His blood must be drunk to experience eternal life was a pretty strange statement. Even today as we participate in the Lord's Supper, a clear understanding is needed to understand the symbolic role that the bread and juice play. This statement was hard to not only understand but to swallow (no pun intended). The Messiah they were searching for was to redeem the independence of a nation, was to set up his kingship and reign forever. Now, Jesus, the one claiming to be the Messiah, was going to die? And those who wanted to follow Him into eternity had to eat His flesh and drink His blood?

But Jesus didn't mince His words. They, of course, were pointing towards something else. As the Jews thought only in fleshly terms, Jesus was speaking in spiritual ones. The life, burial, and resurrection of Jesus are not for the faint of heart. The salvation that it brought is for everyone but not all would choose to receive it.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:62-65

What other proof did Jesus mention that would possibly convince the Jews of who Jesus was?

What do you think Jesus meant in verse 65, "No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father"?

Jesus here first mentions His upcoming ascension back into heaven. The Old Testament had pointed towards a Messiah for thousands of years and now He had arrived. The only problem, no one recognized Him despite everything they knew pointing to Him. Now He mentions another miraculous sign that would prove His deity, His ascension.

Verse 65 is a very important verse in understanding salvation. It is a truth that is also hard to grasp at times but one also that is essential. It is a continued thought from John 6:44 as Jesus speaks about this same drawing, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him..."

This idea comes from the understanding that mankind is unable to produce anything good in and of themselves. If we are to be saved, the drawing, saving, and keeping all belong to the

Father through the work of the Holy Spirit. Our role is to simply receive it in faith.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 6:66

Why do you think John specifically wrote the response of those in attendance?

Look at the description of the number of people it speaks about in verses 66 & 67. Do you think a majority continued to follow Jesus or turned back and walked away?

Jesus knew this statement would not be a crowd favorite but many that followed Jesus at this point were not genuine disciples. He could have spoken these words in a way that didn't offend anyone and the majority would have likely continued to follow Him. But He elected to tell the truth, the hard truth. In doing so, a vast majority turned back and likely never returned. Although hard at times, the truth must remain the truth despite the reaction of those listening.

APPLICATION

Believers are called to speak truth to those around them but also balance it with Christlike love. Warren Wiersbe once stated, "Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy." Truth and love must work in conjunction with one another and seek to bring honor and glory to Jesus' Name.

Have you ever caught yourself manipulating the truth in order to not offend anyone?

What could have been the danger if Jesus had not told the truth?

How can you seek to speak truth even if it is not the most popular thing to do?

PRAYER

God, help us to be truth speakers. Help us to be humble, compassionate, and loving but also truthful and resolute when it comes to our walk with You.

COMMENTARY

| JOHN 6:60-66

6:60–63. All so-called followers of Jesus are not true disciples. Many who are called “disciples” cannot tolerate what they consider to be the teaching of cannibalism. Jesus tried to help them

understand that a wooden, literal interpretation of his words about flesh and blood would not lead them to the truth. It is the Holy Spirit who explains the spiritual meaning of his words.

We have already learned that faith is mental assent and spiritual appropriation. Now Jesus added the component of personal commitment. And personal commitment comes through spiritual truth. In verse 41 we read that “the Jews began to grumble,” and now in verse 61 we read that his disciples were grumbling. This was not the Twelve who got special treatment at the beginning of verse 67, but many who had attached themselves to Jesus and called themselves “disciples.” According to Carson, “At the most elementary level, a disciple is someone who is at that point following Jesus, either literally by joining the group that pursued him from place to place, or metaphorically in regarding him as the authoritative teacher. Such a ‘disciple’ is not necessarily a ‘Christian,’ someone who has savingly trusted Jesus and sworn allegiance to him, given by the Father to the Son, drawn by the Father and born again by the Spirit” (Carson, p. 300).

This parallels closely 2:23–25 where all “believers” are not believers. The issue in biblical Christianity is regeneration—heart change produced by the Holy Spirit—not labels, not affiliations, not personal claims, not religious acts or pilgrimages, and certainly not the keeping of religious laws. And let us not miss in verse 60 that the teaching is hard to accept.

Jesus did not skip a theological beat over this grumbling. In rapid-fire verses he talked about the ascension and the Holy Spirit. Only those willing to allow God’s Spirit to illumine their understanding of God’s Word can find in it the very substance of life. As we shall see, John had more to say about the Holy Spirit than the other three Gospels put together. John clearly recorded Jesus’ intentional link of resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit (7:37–39).

But we still struggle with the phrase the flesh counts for nothing, especially in view of Jesus’ repeated insistence that they eat his flesh. Morris explains, “A woodenly literal, flesh-dominated manner of looking at Jesus’ words will not yield the correct interpretation. That is granted only to the spiritual man, the Spirit-dominated man. Such words cannot be comprehended by the fleshly, whose horizon is bounded by this earth and its outlook. Only as the life-giving Spirit informs him may a man understand these words” (Morris, p. 385).

Perhaps the mention of the ascension in verse 62 switches the thought from eating the flesh of Jesus (spiritual appropriation of the cross) to depending on the flesh of humanity (trusting one’s own strength for eternal salvation). We are reminded here of 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul’s contrast between the spirit and the letter.

6:64–66. Some of these disciples did not believe, and Jesus knew their hearts. This may be a specific reference to Judas’s betrayal. Serious hard teaching about the cross and substitutionary atonement is no more palatable to the modern mind than it was to the first-century mind. Personal commitment comes through spiritual truth and heavenly enabling.

We are almost astonished to find Jesus turning again to the subject we have called “election” as an explanation for the unbelief and departure of false disciples. How does one participate in this heavenly bread? How does one come to the Bread of Life in order to receive eternal life? Only because the Father makes it possible.

Gangel, K. O. (2000). John (Vol. 4, pp. 130–131). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.