



## TALKS FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS TRANSCRIPT

### John 6:60-71: The Final Section of the Bread of Life Discourse

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*"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"*

*61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? 63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."*

*66 From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"*

*68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."<sup>[a]</sup>*

*70 Jesus answered them, "Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"*

*71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."*

#### Background Notes

In verse 60 we read, *"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it?"* Then in verse 66 we read, *"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."* Who were these "disciples" who "went back"? Are these the Twelve Disciples whom Jesus selected and called? No! We see clearly from verse 67 that the Twelve Disciples were in a different category -- they didn't turn away.

In verse 67, *"Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"* The disciples who had turned away from the Lord were many of those people from Galilee who had followed the Lord in his travels. They had listened to His teaching. They had seen His miracles, including the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand -- but now they turned away. *"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more"*(v66). Many of them had expected that the Lord would become the political leader that they were looking for, to head up a rebellion against the Roman occupation. Now they realized that Jesus was not the political leader they had hoped for. Their popular enthusiasm for Jesus as a political Messiah was over.

Furthermore, they could not handle the difficult teaching of the Lord about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. They were offended by this teaching! We have belabored the fact that this teaching doesn't have anything to do with the Lord's Supper, or taking Communion. The events here are a year before the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the Lord certainly didn't mean that people should literally eat His flesh and

drink his blood. In fact, notice in this section the Lord said: *"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life"*(v63). In other words, the words that He had spoken to them were not to be taken literally – they were to be taken in a spiritual way. The Holy Spirit gives life, and the means by which He gives life is by the words of the Lord. It's a spiritual work of God all the way. Nothing we do physically -- including eating and drinking -- is involved. In fact, the flesh profits nothing.

Many of the people who had once followed the Lord could not handle this teaching. This talk was offensive and scandalous. They could not stomach the fact that you must accept Christ as if you were "eating His body" and "drinking His blood"! They could not handle the fact that there was nothing a person can do to "make points" with God. Your own merits or good works don't count. And the fact that you can't even come to God unless you are first drawn by God was too much for them to take. Look again at verses 65-66: *"And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.' From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more."*

## **Doctrinal / Teaching Points**

### **1. Not every disciple is a true believer.**

We have seen in this last section of the Bread of Life discourse that many of Christ's disciples left Him. Notice, they were not just random people who had seen a few miracles. No, they were "disciples" – but they no longer followed Him. This proved that they were not true believers.

Look at what the Lord said in verse 64, addressing the disciples, namely those who had followed and wanted to learn: *"But there are some of you who do not believe."* The good news here is that everyone didn't leave Him. *"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?'"*(v60). Many, but not all! And *"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more"*(v66). Many, but not all! Now in verse 64, *"there are **some** of you who do not believe."* For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him." That is the good news – there were some who stayed, and continued to follow. Not just the Twelve, but others as well. They certainly became part of the early Christian community.

The mark of a true disciple is perseverance. John 8:30-31: *"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.'"* The mark of a true disciple is perseverance. Not every disciple is a true believer. The true disciple perseveres! The word disciple means "learner." Many followers of the Lord were learners. They were not only interested in the miracles of Christ; they were actually interested in Christ's teaching. They wanted to learn -- but they were not true believers. What about you? Are you more than a disciple? Are you a true believer?

When I was working in secular employment, a technician who worked for me became a "disciple" of Jesus Christ – but unfortunately, he was not a true believer. He began to attend church and Bible studies in our home. He completed a number of Bible courses. This went on for close to a year -- and then he turned away! He had been a disciple. He was not just a random follower, or someone who had little interest. No, he had been a disciple -- but not a true believer. What about you? Remember – not every

disciple is a true believer.

## **2. Not every doctrine is easy to handle.**

Look again at verse 60: *"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?'"* Those who turned away said this was hard saying, or a difficult statement. The fact that they had to renounce themselves - and appropriate Christ as if eating His body and drinking His blood - they could not handle this teaching! It was too difficult for them. The same is true today. Not every doctrine is easy to handle.

For example, take the doctrine of the foreknowledge of God, and the doctrine of election. These doctrines are not easy to handle. Notice, by the way, how these doctrines are contained in this passage, in verses 64-65: *"But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."* Notice also verses 70-71: *"Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?'" 71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."* Putting this doctrine together is not easy - for anyone, including the would-be disciples, and Judas, and us today. It's not easy to understand and handle the fact that everyone is responsible to come to Christ, and yet no one can come unless it is granted to him by the Father. *"And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father'"(v65).* You are predestined, and yet you're responsible for your destiny! This is not an easy doctrine to handle. Not every doctrine is easy to handle.

### **Practical applications**

#### **1. Will you turn away because of difficult doctrine?**

Many of Jesus' followers turned away because they could not handle this difficult teaching. Harmonizing the doctrines of predestination and election with the doctrine of free will is difficult. The doctrine of an eternal hell with eternal punishment is not easy to handle. It's not only unpleasant, it is not easy to handle. The doctrine of the distinctive roles of men and women in the church is difficult for many believers to understand or handle. Will you turn away because of a difficult doctrine?

#### **2. Let's follow the logic of Peter!**

In verse 67 the Lord said to the Twelve, *"Do you also want to go away?"* Notice what Peter replied: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."* Now that is great logic -- it really is! Peter essentially said, *"Lord, even if we wanted to turn away because of this difficult teaching, where would we turn? We're sticking with You, because You have the words of eternal life!"* Peter went on to make that great statement: *Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* Right on, Peter!

Let's follow the logic of Peter. There may be difficult doctrines in the Bible, but is it logical to turn away from the source of salvation just because you can't understand or don't like some difficult doctrines? That would be crazy! Don't risk it! Why risk ending

up in hell because you couldn't understand or handle some difficult doctrine? Set it to the side! Receive Christ, and wrestle with the difficult doctrine later!

I think that is essentially what the Lord was saying to those would-be disciples: *"What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?"*(v62). To paraphrase the words of Jesus: "You're turning away because you can't handle this teaching, but what are you going to do when the resurrection and the ascension happen - -events which will certainly validate all of My teaching? What are you going to do then? You will realize then that, even though the teaching was difficult, you were wrong to turn away! You should have at least accepted what I was saying."

Let's trust God. Let's believe that He knows what He is saying and doing, even though we may not understand or appreciate difficult doctrine. Someday we will understand more. Let's follow the logic of Peter: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life... we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*