

## **“Will Ye Also Go Away?”—A Question of Commitment**

John 6:48-72

Jesus asks several questions in our text (vs. 61, 62, 67, 70). In this message we will focus on the questions in verses 61, 67.

➡ Compare 6:2 with 6:66. This is the same crowd. Only one day separates verse 2 from verse 66. What happened between these two verses?

Most preachers would appreciate having the large crowds that came to hear Jesus. What attracted these big following? Jesus healed them (v. 2) and fed them (vs. 11-12). These were people who were looking at Christ as a free meal ticket and free health care provider (cf. v. 15, 26-27).

➡ The word “*disciples*” (vs. 60, 66) simply means “followers.” Two kinds of disciples:

(1) **The outer circle**—Those on the “fringe.” They followed Jesus for what they could get out of it (v. 26).

(2) **The inner circle**—The Twelve who were totally “sold out” to following Christ (vs. 67-69).

Jesus did something most preachers would never do—He thinned out the crowd. He sifted the “saints from the ain’ts”—From those who wanted the blessings of following Jesus without being fully committed to Him.

Christ’s called to follow Him is not a call to a picnic, but a call to deny yourself daily, take up your cross, and follow Him.

### **I. The aggrieved DISSENSION** (vs. 52-65).

➡ In verse 14 the people profess Christ is “*that prophet,*” but back off in verse 42.

➡ Three times we find “*murmuring*” and striving among the crowd over something Jesus said (vs. 41, 52, 61).

#### A. The CLAIMS of Christ.

1. He professed to be better than Moses and greater than Solomon.

2. He proclaimed He was of **divine origin**—“*The Bread*” come down from heaven (vs. 38, 51). Implied His pre-existence in heaven. The people rejected Christ’s origin (vs. 41-42).
  3. He predicted His body would be broken and His blood shed, that men might eat and live forever (vs. 48-58).
    - The crowd was thinking only in terms of physical (v. 52). Jesus was speaking spiritually (v. 63). Nicodemus had the same problem when Jesus spoke of being “*born again.*”
    - The figure of “eating” refers to assimilation. When literal bread is eaten it becomes a part of one’s person. When we totally trust Christ, He is assimilated into our life (v. 56).
  4. He prophesied He would ascend back to heaven where He was before (v. 62).
- B. The CONFUSION of the crowd (vs. 60-62).
1. The casual follower is easily offended (v. 61).
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- NOTE: They murmured among themselves (v. 61). They did not come and ask Jesus to explain what He meant. Why? Because they really did not want to know. Instead they sulk in the background and cause dissension... like many do today.
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- Sometimes the truth is offensive, but when you love God’s Word, you cannot be offended (Ps. 119:165).
2. To the casual follower, Christ’s claims was “*a hard saying*” (v. 60). The word “*hard*” does not mean hard to understand, but hard to accept... hard to take. It was too much to “swallow.” They could not “stomach” it! They couldn’t handle it. His words were too demanding.
    - The truth is: Following Jesus can be “*hard*” at times.
- C. The CHALLENGE to the crowd (v. 62).
- If talk of eating Christ’s flesh and drinking His blood was a problem for the crowd, how could they accept Him ascending back to heaven?

## II. The abrupt DEFECTION (vs. 66-67).

- Even Jesus suffered a huge “church split” (v. 66).
  - They left because realized Jesus wasn’t going to be their free meal ticket and health care provider.
  - They left because His **words** were hard and offensive—Christ's teachings are contrary to human nature (v. 53).

➤ Jesus asks, “*Will ye also go away?*”

A. It was a **POINTED question**.

1. No middle ground when it comes to following Jesus. Being “lukewarm” is not an option when it comes to Christ. Jesus always only offered a choice between two things: Two gates... Two ways... Two sons... Two masters... Two servants... Two destinations.
2. There can be no straddling the fence regarding Jesus. You either accept Him or reject Him. You either follow Him regardless of the circumstances, or you don’t follow Him at all.

B. It was a **PERSONAL question**. Jesus asks the Twelve, “*Will YE also go away?*” “Are *YOU* also going to bail out on Me?”

- I thank God for people like the Turks, the Jensens, the Minards, the Abings, and several others who have stuck at BBC through the rough times, while others jumped ship for smoother sailing. I remember during one particular hard time when several families left, Brother Turk came to me and said, “Preacher, don’t worry. We ain’t goin’ anywhere!”

C. It was a **PLAIN question**. Nothing complicated about it. Jesus doesn’t ask this question for His benefit. **The question was a test, a challenge**. Would the disciples follow the popular crowd, or would they remain and follow the way that was unpopular?

**III. The assertive DECLARATION** (vs. 68-69).

- The question was asked of the Twelve, but true to Peter’s character, he doesn’t wait for anyone else to answer. He speaks up first!

A. Declaration of **COMMITMENT**. (v. 68a—*“Lord, to whom shall we go?”*—GOOD QUESTION). We have no “plan B.” There is no turning back! What’s there to go back to? I’m committed.

- *“To whom shall we go?”* To Buddha, Krishna, Mohammend, Plato, Darwin? Freud? Stephen Hawking? the Pope?
- 1. *“To whom shall we go...”* for guidance?
- 2. *“To whom shall we go...”* for answers to life’s questions? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?
- 3. *“To whom shall we go...”* for forgiveness of sin? Where do I go with my guilt? Religion? Confessional booth” Drugs? Booze?
- 4. *“To whom shall we go...”* with my burdens? Psalms 55:22, “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee...”
- 5. *“To whom shall we go...”* with my sorrows?
- 6. *“To whom shall we go...”* at death?
  - Psalm 73:25, *“Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee.”* If I turn from Jesus, what do I turn to? What am I left with without Jesus?
  - SONG: ***“WHERE COULD I GO BUT TO THE LORD?”*** (#348)

B. Declaration of **CERTAINTY** (v. 69 cf. Acts 4:12). Notice Peter’s statement concerning *“the WORDS...”* (cf. v. 63). Peter was paying attention this time!

- Peter was not following Jesus because of Jesus’ miracles. He didn’t say, “Jesus, You are the greatest Healer I’ve ever seen. Jesus, I’m so impressed by how You could feed 5,000 people with just a couple of fish and loaves of bread!” No, Peter was sticking with Jesus for TWO REASONS:
  1. Because of WHAT Jesus HAS—*“Thou hast the words of eternal life...”*
  2. Because of WHO Jesus IS— *“Thou are that Christ, the Son of the living God.”*

- If these two reasons are not enough for you to be totally committed to Christ, you will not follow Jesus for very long... or for very far. You will quit eventually.

**SUMMATION:** Our text gives two different responses to following Christ.

1. Some will respond as Peter—Totally committed and absolutely certain.
2. Some will follow on the fringe. As long as they get what they want, and it doesn't get too hard, they will follow Christ. But if they get offended, they quit.
  - They have a wet noodle for a backbone... they are about as stable as water... they have invertebrate theology... and rubber-band convictions.

### WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE?

***“Will ye also go away?”*** This is one of the most important questions a Christian can be asked.

- When your friends stop following the Lord? ***“Will ye also go away?”***
- When your family stops living for God, will you also stop living for God?
- When life gets “hard” or someone offends you, ***“Will ye also go away?”***

How you answer that question will reveal your circle of commitment—Outer circle or inner circle. Are you following Christ hear the truth, even if it offends and rubs you the wrong way? Or, are you following Jesus just for what you can get out of it?

Jesus is looking for disciples who will stay with Him no matter if anyone else does or not! **Will you be that kind of disciple?**