

John 6:60-71

Many of his disciples said, “This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?”

⁶¹ Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, “Does this offend you? ⁶² Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? ⁶³ The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴ But some of you do not believe me.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn’t believe, and he knew who would betray him.) ⁶⁵ Then he said, “That is why I said that people can’t come to me unless the Father gives them to me.”

⁶⁶ At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. ⁶⁷ Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”

⁶⁸ Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹ We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.”

⁷⁰ Then Jesus said, “I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil.” ⁷¹ He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

Background

The “disciples” mentioned in verses 60 and 66 are not the Twelve whom the Lord selected. They were other followers who hoped Jesus would be a political Messiah leading a rebellion against Rome. He wasn’t living up to their expectations, and they couldn’t accept His difficult teaching about “eating His flesh and drinking His blood” (meant spiritually, not literally), so they turned away. They also wrestled with the fact that salvation is by faith alone, not by works, and that only God can draw people to Himself. Confused and offended by these truths, many abandoned Jesus and no longer followed Him.

Teaching Points

1. Not every disciple is a true believer.

Many followers left Jesus after the Bread of Life discourse. However, some persevered and became part of the early Christian community. True disciples are marked by perseverance, continuing in Jesus’ teaching despite difficulties (John 8:30-31). The word disciple means “learner,” but not all learners are true believers. Some follow out of curiosity or interest but fall away. The key question remains: Are you merely a disciple, or are you a true believer?

2. Not every doctrine is easy to handle.

In verse 60, many disciples said Jesus' teaching was hard to understand and accept because it required deep self-renunciation and faith. This difficulty remains today with challenging doctrines like God's foreknowledge and election, highlighted in verses 64-65 and 70-71. These teachings show that while everyone is responsible to come to Christ, no one can come unless it is granted by the Father. Scripture teaches both predestination and personal responsibility for our choices. It's a concept that's hard to grasp, but not every doctrine is easy to understand or accept.

Application

1. Will you turn away because of difficult doctrine?

Many of Jesus' followers left because they couldn't handle His difficult teachings. Doctrines like predestination and free will, eternal judgment, or even God's design for roles in the church can be challenging and hard to accept. Will you turn away when faced with difficult truths?

2. Let's follow the logic of Peter.

In verse 67, Jesus asked the Twelve if they also wanted to leave. Peter replied, *"Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life."* Peter's logic is clear: despite difficult teachings, turning away from the source of salvation makes no sense. Jesus essentially warned that rejecting Him now would be regretted when His coming resurrection and ascension would validate His truth (v62). So let's choose to trust God, even when His truths are hard to grasp. In time, understanding will follow.