

Sunday School Lesson Notes – 2/17/08 – John 6:60–71

Go through the verses giving commentary, then talk about the 3 kinds of disciples shown.

Read verses 53–59

John 6 {60} Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, “This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?” {61} But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, “Does this cause you to stumble?”

John refers to some of these as disciples of Christ. Does that mean they were *true* believers? Did they resist the irresistible grace?

Disciples [maqhatāz, mā-th•-t•’s] – a learner, pupil. Generally someone who attaches themselves to a teacher as a student. There is no implication about devotion or sincerity. John the Baptist, the Pharisees, Moses, and Paul all had disciples.

“What this man says is unpleasant and crass. Who can swallow this; who can digest it (keeping with the eating theme)? This is offensive and objectionable.

They were offended by Jesus’ words. He asks a rhetorical question (posed for effect) to set up His explanation.

John 6 {62} “What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before? {63} It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

As we have discussed, many times in the Gospel of John, people fail to grasp what Jesus means because they put too much emphasis on the symbol: Ch. 2 – “temple”; Ch. 3 – “born again”; Ch. 4 – “living water”. The simple “Rosetta stone” for these verses about eating flesh and drinking blood is here in verses 62 and 63.

“Are you offended by what I said about eating my flesh and drinking my blood? What if you see the Son of man ascending to where He was before, will you realize then that I am not talking about my literal flesh and blood, that I am speaking figuratively? My flesh and blood won’t even be found among you. It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is of no avail here. I am talking to you about the things flesh and blood symbolize. I am talking to you about spiritual things that give life.”

“the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.”

Is what Jesus says here the Word of God?

Read the following verses and the power and effect of the Word of God:

Heb 4 {12} For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

James 1 {18} In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures.

James 1 {21} Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.

1 Peter 1 {23} for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.

Ephesians 1 {13} In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

Romans 1 {16} For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 10 {17} So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Luke 8 {11} “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. ... {15} “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance. ... {21} But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.” ... Luke 11 {28} But He said, “On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it.”

How do Jesus’ words strike you after reading these verses?

John 6 {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 it was that would betray Him. {65} And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”

Again, it is not lack of evidence or information, but a lack of being divinely called, drawn, taught, and given. Read vv.37, 39, 44, 45, 65.

And again we see the omniscience of Jesus: He knew who grumbled, He knew from the beginning who did not believe and who would betray him.

John 6 {66} As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

Jesus drew huge crowds. **Many** left Him. “What did Jesus do?” He seems to run people off regularly. Isn’t it remarkable how little emphasis God puts on large numbers in the Bible: Gideon’s story comes to mind – 30k down to 300. Seems He wants quality and not quantity. God is always sending people away.

How should Jesus’ actions affect what your approach to sharing the gospel?

Many disciples withdrew or left and walked no more with Him. Did they lose or reject their salvation?

John 6 {67} So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?”

Don’t know exactly when this happens, right away or later.

“The Twelve”. John almost never used this term – here and in 70,71 and later in 20:24. It is commonly used in the synoptic gospels.

Any speculation as to why he doesn’t use it much?

If Jesus know the believers and unbelievers, why did He ask this question of the twelve? See also Matt 16:15.

What a great chance He gave them to express and confirm their deep beliefs. It’s good for us to voice our beliefs.

John 6 {68} Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. {69} “We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

Peter the unofficial spokesman speaks up for the group. Sometimes I read this as “Sad Sack”, but other times I read it with zeal.

How do you read it?

What a beautiful statement of faith! See also Matt 16:16. The believed and they came to Him. See v.35.

What other real options do we have? Why/why not?

Worship in Spirit and Truth – Believe (by the Spirit) and have come to know the truth!

John 6 {70} Jesus answered them, “Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?” {71} Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

Jesus quickly corrects Peter that not all of them truly believed. One of them was a devil – accuser/slanderer. It must have shocked them to think that one of their own was a traitor. This “choosing” Jesus is talking about was referring to apostleship not election and salvation. In John 15:16, it is a bit different; Judas has already departed.

Judas Iscariot, son of Simon Iscariot. Iscariot means man of Kerioth a Judean village (Josh 15:20–25, also mentioned as a town of Moab).

What do you think about Judas? Do you think he knew he was the one to betray Jesus?

Branded as a traitor above all traitors. Of all traitorous names of history, Benedict Arnold, Brutus, Quisling (Norwegian army officer who collaborated with the Germans – common word in Europe meaning traitor) (know any others?) Judas is at the top of the list: outwardly a disciple, yet inwardly (at least at the end) a devil.

The 3 kinds of disciples we see in these verses and their characterizations.

After looking at these verses and reading some commentaries, it occurred to me that we see a similar reaction here as we do in Jesus’ parable of the sower. I was going to try and make this match with the 4 kinds of ground discussed there, but there seems to be a more natural fit.

What different kinds of “disciples” do we see in these passages?

1. Those that scoff and outright reject Jesus; they will not stay with Him.
 - a. These vehemently reject the message and the messenger: Pharisees, scribes, atheists, etc. The message of Christ is very offensive to them.
2. Those that cannot leave. They respond in faith; they come and believe.
 - a. This is the beautiful mark of a true believer, an excellent test for yourself. No matter what, failures, trials, weaknesses, whatever, they cannot quit believing and coming to Jesus. I absolutely have to be with believers. I have to be at church. I have to worship God. I have to work for the Lord. God the Holy Spirit is an excellent teacher and reminder. If you find yourself saying those things, good chance...
3. Those that never really believe but will not leave.
 - a. But there are those, even among us maybe, who want to stay with Jesus for their own purposes. They want to appear to be Christians for their own gain. They are out for themselves only; they use God. They will betray Jesus when the time is right. Some of them are curiosity seekers who abandon Jesus when demands are made on them. They cannot let go of the world – nor deny themselves:

1 John 2 {19} They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.

We should examine ourselves carefully...