

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **Where Will We Go? John 6:60-71**

There is a story about a monastery in Portugal perched high on a 300-foot cliff. It can be reached only by a terrifying ride in a swaying basket. The basket is pulled with a single rope by several strong men who labor as they pull their cargo up the sheer cliff. One American tourist became nervous as he began the journey because he noticed that the rope was old and frayed. “How often do you change the rope?” he shouted to the monk as the trip up the mountain began. “Whenever it breaks!” Came the reply.

Millions of people who would never entrust their physical well-being to a frayed rope have entrusted their souls to such.

How? They have done this by choosing to believe that there are many ways to approach God. This belief is false and will inevitably lead to eternal destruction, if not changed to reflect the truth as revealed clearly in the Word of God.

Hopefully as we approach the passage this morning this will be crystal clear. You hopefully will remember that we are presently looking at the life of Peter in preparation for a study of his epistle. We have looked at His first meeting with Jesus in **John 1:35-42**. We have looked at a second significant event that took place nearly a year later in **Luke 5:1-11** which was the miracle of the fishes. The third event that we studied which took place approximately a year after the miracle of the fishes was when Peter joined Jesus in walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee. When he first began to walk toward Jesus on the water everything was fine. But then we are told in **Matthew 14:30**, when he saw the wind he became afraid. He lost his focus. Rather than concentrating on the object of his faith which was Jesus he began to concentrate on the object of his fear, which was the wind, and as a result he began to sink. Peter had started well but had failed to finish. He had proven himself faithless but this was not his last opportunity for his faith to be tested.

This morning we will be looking at a fourth incident from Peter’s life that took place shortly after he had returned back with Jesus and the other disciples to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

#### Peter’s Choice Tested

When an individual makes a decision to come to Christ we might assume that all his questions have been answered. We might assume that all the things that individuals struggle with in terms of their understanding have been cleared up. This just is not the case. Not only were the multitudes at times confused by what Jesus was saying, but even the disciples themselves at times were confused. Let us consider the passage that we have before us this morning.

Jesus had just fed the “5,000.” The details of this miracle are recorded for us in **John 6:1-21**. People are continuing to throng around Jesus. People want to be with Him but they want to be with Him for the wrong reasons.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

Look at **VV. 25-27**, “**And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You get here?’**” (26) **Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves, and were filled. (27) Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal.’** Many of those who are continuing to follow Jesus, even though they have witnessed awesome demonstrations of miraculous power, have not yet come to the point in their lives where they are willing to trust Christ for anything other than for food!!!! They are still very much earth bound and are simply thinking about creature comforts alone. The verses we have just read are challenging them at the area of their greatest need. How will they respond?

Look at **V. 28**, “**They said therefore to Him ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’**” They are nibbling? And Christ very succinctly gives the answer to their question in **V. 29**, “**Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’**” There is no other answer. For those who desire to enjoy eternal life it is by believing in Jesus alone for their salvation. Repeatedly in the scriptures this is the only answer that is given to those who are seeking eternal life. The Philippian asked Paul “What must I do to be saved?” And Paul responded, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved.” The only work that can be performed that will result in salvation is simple, belief in Jesus as He is revealed in the Scriptures. And whose work is that? Is it our work or is it the work of God? What does the verse say? “**Jesus answered and said to them, ‘THIS IS THE WORK OF GOD, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’**” Those that the Lord has chosen to draw to His Son will believe. And it is through this faith alone, which is produced by God alone, in Christ alone, that will save.

The multitude of people following are hearing the words of Jesus, but they are not responding in faith. Look at the next verse, “**They said therefore to Him, ‘What then do you do for a sign, that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?’**” What a mockery? If they have not already, by virtue of the miracles they had already seen, come to the point of trusting in Christ, nothing else that Christ might show them will change their mind.

Jesus therefore launches into a discourse that we commonly refer to as the “Discourse on the Bread of Life.” It is a discourse given by Jesus to expose unbelieving hearts. This discourse in a sense is a test. It is a discourse that is designed to separate the chaff from the wheat. It is an extended discourse which speaks of the person and work of Christ. As this multitude is exposed to this extensive teaching, it will separate those who are being drawn by the Father to the Son and those who are not.

In respect to the person of Christ He refers to Himself as the Bread that comes down out of heaven. This caused a great deal of difficulty for the vast majority of the multitude who had been following Jesus for fleshly reasons. Look at **V. 41**, “**The Jews therefore were grumbling about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread that came down out of heaven.’**” Jesus was placing Himself on the level of the divine and they were unable to accept this concept.

In respect to His work, He refers to the necessity of those who come to Him for salvation, needing to “eat His flesh and drink His blood.”

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

Look at **VV. 56-57** “**He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.**” This of course is figurative language. Christ really wasn’t bread. Just as Christ was not a vine in **John 15** or a door in **John 10**. He is using this term only as a figure to explain a spiritual concept. And so it is here. He is not speaking about individuals having to eat His literal flesh or to drink His literal blood. He is speaking of our need to appropriate the benefits of His death on the cross. He is speaking about our need to appropriate the benefits of His sacrifice when He gave up His body and shed His blood. Not trusting in our works but in His work alone on our behalf.

What was the response of the multitudes? Look at **V. 60** “**Many therefore of His disciples, when they heard this said, ‘This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?’**” Jesus goes on to give a brief explanation in **VV. 61-65** which we must remember is not necessarily designed by Christ to lead this particular group to faith, but rather to separate the chaff from the wheat. We therefore read in **V. 66** “**As a result of this, many of his disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore.**” Those who were not being drawn by God the Father to Jesus, at this point used their confusion about what He was saying as an excuse to reject Him. However this was not true of all. There was a small group that remained with Jesus who very likely had much the same confusion. Why do I say this. There was no way that they could have understood what Christ was referring to when He referred to His flesh and His blood. Why is this? He had not yet begun to speak of His death clearly until after this incident. This is very clear from **Matthew 16:21**. If what Christ was saying was nearly as confusing for them as it was for the multitude, why did Peter remain?

### Peter’s Choice Explained

Christ now addresses those who chose to remain and one of those people was Peter. In this address Jesus is calling the disciples to think through their response not to leave with the others. Look at **V. 67**, “**Jesus said therefore to the twelve, ‘You do not want to go away also, do you?’**” To this question Peter quickly responds in **V. 68** “**Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.**”

Peter makes it very clear that they could not find eternal life in any other but rather only in Him. Peter may not have understood everything but there were things he did know.

Peter knew that he had to make a choice. There is a widespread assumption in America today that the religions of the world are essentially the same, and only superficially different. However, the reverse is actually true; the religions of the world are superficially the same but fundamentally different. Christianity is in a class by itself, with no real common ground with other teachings. The differences are radical, complete, and insurmountable. There was nowhere else to go for the disciples because they had come to believe that in fact Jesus alone had the words of eternal life. Isn’t this exactly what Peter just said, Peter knew that he had to make a choice and his choice was to trust in Jesus.

Peter knew that truth was rooted in the nature of God and not subject to personal opinion. If Christ is indeed the Holy One of God, and has the words of eternal life, His teachings are applicable to all the cultures of the world.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

It is folly to suppose one can say that a particular religion is true for me but may not be true for you. It would be absurd to say that  $2+2=4$  is only an American idea. When Jesus said, **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6)**, He was excluding all other avenues of approach to God. Peter understood this. And as such he knew he had to make a choice and he obviously chose to stay with Christ. But this is not all that Peter knew.

But Peter also knew that it was a reasonable choice to make. Look at **V. 69, “And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”** Just because I shared with you that there were certain things that Jesus said at certain points in time that the disciples would probably have not been understood, it does not mean that the choice to place their trust in Christ was unreasonable. The choice to believe was based on certain objective realities such as:

What Jesus did! The disciples had been eyewitnesses of Christ’s power. His miracles were observable. They had seen the water turned to wine. They had seen the lame able to walk, the blind able to see, the fish called into their nets, the multitudes fed with 5 loaves and two fishes, Jesus walking on the water. To the disciples this was compelling evidence that Jesus could and should be trusted.

What Jesus taught! Not only had the miraculous works of Jesus caught the disciples eye, but also what Jesus taught. It was a unique message taught with authority.

The message concerning His person was unique! Think about his outstanding claims. During the revolution of 1918 in what would become the Soviet Union, Lenin said that if communism were implemented there would be enough bread in every household. Yet he never had the nerve to say, “I am the bread of Life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst (6:35). Hitler made astounding claims for the role of Germany on planet earth, believing he was instigating a thousand-year Reich (rule). Despite his outlandish claims, he never said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me” (14:6). Buddha taught enlightenment, and yet died seeking more light. He never said, “I am the light of the world; he who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (8:12). Muhammad claimed that he and his tribes were descendants of Ishmael, another son of Abraham. But he did not say, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I AM” (8:58). Certainly Jesus set Himself apart in the minds of those that listened to Him as special and as a person who could actually address the problems that they wrestled with. And in addition to this;

The message concerning the way of salvation based on His work was unique. He taught salvation is a free gift given to those who believe in Him. In **John 5:24** Jesus said, **“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”** This teaching to the ears of those who recognized that they were spiritually bankrupt made a lot more sense. How could they who recognized the depth of their sinfulness ever merit by any act of personal righteousness the glory of heaven and fellowship with a Holy God.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### Peter's Choice Contracted

The choice by Peter becomes all that much more magnified in contrast to Judas Iscariot. Look at **VV.70-71, “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.”** Judas had all the information that Peter had. He had experienced the same things that Peter had and would even experience still more. He would experience greater expressions of Christ's power. He would experience even more clear and extensive teaching, but in the end Judas would continue to reject.

The choice that we make is not based upon having all our ducks in a row. Having all the answers to the all our questions. It is based on the Lord opening our eyes to the truth and responding in faith to what we already know, leading to a genuine and sincere commitment to Christ. When this is done a process is begun that will lead to greater and greater understanding and enlightenment which we will see clearly demonstrated in Peter. And if this is not done we will remain in darkness which was clearly demonstrated by Judas Iscariot.

### CONCLUSION

Jesus asked the disciples “Will you leave me also?” Peter responds back, “Where will we go you have the Words of eternal life.” I trust that we share this conviction with Peter.

This morning I stand before you as one that knows that there is nothing that this world has to offer that can replace what I have found in Christ, which is Life and life abundant.

This is my conviction. What is your's. I would hope and pray this morning that there is not a single individual here that would answer differently than Peter answered. What a glorious testimony to Christ if every single individual here this morning would be able to answer Christ's question in the very same way. Where would we go? You have the words of eternal life.