

Hard to Believe... But Not for God!

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Date: 03 July 2022

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- [0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and go to John's Gospel, John chapter 6. If you're visiting or need a Bible, there's a Bible in the chair in front of you, a black Bible in the chair in front of you. There underneath, go towards the back of that black Bible. They renumber the New Testament, so you can go to the back and find page 77 for John chapter 6. John 6, 60 through 71. We'll finish the chapter, finally. Chapter 6 of John, John 6, page 77 in the black Bible. John 6, 60 through 71. 60 to 71, I'll read the passage and then we'll jump in. John 6, 60 to 71, page 77 in that black Bible. Therefore, hearing this, many of his disciples said, This is hard. Who can hear it?
- [1 : 13] But Jesus, knowing in himself his disciples, grumbled concerning this. Said to them, This, over which you stumble? Then if you should see the Son of Man ascending where he was before, there's a Spirit who is giving life. The flesh helps nothing. The words that I've spoken to you are spirit and our life, but there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who the ones who would not believe and who would betray him. And he was saying, verse 65, For this reason I've said to you that no one is able to come to me unless it has been granted to him from the Father. At this, many of his disciples left, going back, and were no longer walking with him. Therefore, Jesus said to the twelve, Do you also want to go away? Simon and Peter answered him, Lord, Lord, to whom shall we go?
- [2 : 28] Where else can we go, Lord? Where else can we go? You have words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. And Jesus answered them, Did not I myself choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is the devil. And he was saying, Judas, of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was intending to betray him. This notion in our culture that everyone is a winner, it blows up in the face when that person wants to play college sports or go into professional sports or go into the Olympics. It's hard. Not everyone is a winner. You either make it or you don't. And it's hard to do it. Or take going into the military. Just getting into the military is hard. And then, you know, going up in rank is even harder.
- [3 : 45] And then if any of these men or women want to become a Navy SEAL or become part of Delta Force, these elite special forces, it's hard. If it was easy, everybody would do it. So this notion, everyone's a winner, it's ridiculous. It's hard. It's hard. It's hard to do those things. It's the same thing with being a Christian. The gospel is simple, yes, but it's not easy. If anyone tells you that being a Christian's easy, they're either lying to you or trying to sell you something.

Because it's not true. It's hard to believe. It's hard to believe the gospel. But not if God's the one who's doing it.

John is calling readers to come and receive Jesus. Come believe into Jesus. Know Jesus. And today we'll see it's hard to believe, but not for God. It's hard to believe, but it's not hard for God to do a work in us.

[5 : 03] It's hard to believe but it's not too hard for God. It's hard to believe the gospel, but it's not hard for God. Only He is the one that brings it about for us to trust and love Jesus.

When God's the one who's doing it, you're gonna believe. When God's the one who's doing it, you'll come to Jesus. When God's the one who's involved, it'll happen.

It's not hard for Him. It's not hard for Him. Apart from the complete and total intervention from the Father by means of the Spirit, we will never believe in Jesus because it's hard to believe.

The Father must grant that ability and the Spirit must be the one giving us life else we'll walk away.

It's granted by His sovereign hand. It's according to His electing plan, His choice of election. else we'll walk away.

[6 : 21] But, when the Father grants that ability, we'll see our bankruptcy, admit our dependency, and commit fidelity to the Holy One of God.

That's what you'll see. That's what happens. When He grants that ability, we'll see our bankruptcy, we'll admit our dependency, and commit our fidelity to Jesus, the Holy One of God.

So walking through this chapter, Jesus, He fed the thousands of people. He showed the disciples who He really was, the twelve, the great I Am, which will impact impact how they're going to respond to Him in these verses that we're going to look at.

And He says, work, He's told the crowds, work for the true enduring food, which is Him, Jesus, He's the true bread of God who comes down out of heaven. Come to this bread of life.

He satisfies hunger. He quenches your thirst. Realize only certain ones will come. No one is able to come unless it's granted. Come and drink, Jesus.

[7 : 34] Come and eat, Jesus. And then today, as this major teaching from Jesus that comes to a close, we'll see that it's hard to trust Him. It's hard to believe unless God grants it to us.

Notice how it begins. This is how it begins. It's hard to believe. Look at verse 60. Therefore, many of His disciples, hearing this, many of His disciples said, this is too hard.

Apparently, more people besides the twelve were following Jesus and were regarded as His, quote unquote, disciples.

disciples. So this tells us something. It tells us that there were disciples of Jesus and then there were disciples of Jesus. There was disciples and then there was disciples.

The disciples were the twelve and the disciples were the others. There's a difference here. And these, these disciples called them Rabbi. And notice, they said, it's, New American Standard says, difficult statement.

[8 : 49] The word literally means hard or offensive. So you can even read it like this. This is offensive. The dictionary, Bauer, Art Ginkrich, Undanker, says, this word means something that causes an adverse reaction because of being harsh.

You can even translate it. This is harsh. Who can listen to it? Who's able to accept it? Who can hear it? They were admitting the offense and their inability, really.

It's hard to believe. To believe what? To believe in the person and work of Jesus. 61 to 62 unfolds for us the person and work of Jesus.

But Jesus, notice how it begins. Jesus, New American Standard, conscience that his disciples grumbled at this, literally, seen in himself. He saw in himself.

He was fully aware of their inner thoughts because he knew what was in man chapter 2 verse 23 to 25 of John's gospel.

[10 : 12] He knew where they were grumbling. Oh, and it sounds so familiar because remember, it was just like the nation of Israel did in Exodus chapter 16.

They grumbled. And they were grumbling in themselves. Jesus wasn't surprised by their reaction because he could breathe their hearts. knowing in himself that his disciples grumbled concerning this, said to them, in this you stumble?

Or over this you stumble? Or this causes you to stumble? Does this offend you? No. what offended them? Probably all of Jesus' message from verse 26 to, I don't know, 58.

Especially the whole part of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. Ew, they're probably thinking. It was making no sense to them. Ah, because remember, the word of the cross is foolishness to some.

I said to this person on Friday, I said, I was talking about the gospel and I said, I mean, think about it. Isn't it absolutely crazy about this message that there's a guy who comes and dies on the cross and you get forgiveness from that?

[11 : 44] The person said, yeah. Seriously, that's exactly what it said. I went, yeah, exactly. That's, the message of the cross is foolishness.

Now, maybe at that time they were not being drawn by the Father, but maybe he drew them later. Maybe this was just a seed planted. We don't know and it's not up to us to know.

But look at what Jesus says and here's where his person and work comes into play in verse 62. Then if you should see the Son of Man ascending where he was before.

Now, there's no if in this statement. It's just a then. He just says then. It's kind of, it's odd that Jesus does this.

And, and, one commentator, he translates it like this, which I think is a good way to put it. So, quote, Jesus is saying it like this, quote, if you reject me and my words, what will you do if and when you see me as I truly am in glory, ascending to my rightful place of power and authority?

[12 : 59] What then would you do with your unbelief and offense? End quote. Do you think this is hard, what I just said? What if you saw the Son of Man and notice he uses Son of Man, that's Jesus' messianic title of himself.

He has authority, he's human and he's deity. What then? Jesus would ascend to his rightful place after he goes to the cross.

So, what would they think about him going to the cross? Jesus is actually making an allusion to the fact that he's going to go to the cross, that's how he's going to go back to the Father, ascend to the Father, go back to his place of glory.

What would they think about him going to the cross and then ascending back to the Father to his place of great glory? How much more will they be offended when Messiah is killed?

But that's what we believe, isn't it? we believe in the person, the Son of Man who is God in flesh and the work of Jesus.

[14 : 14] He died on the cross and resurrected from the dead physically. That's what we believe. That's the message of the cross. That's the word that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians 1 and that's what people think.

That's too hard. that's offensive. I'm going to reject that word and they were rejecting Jesus' words but they were really rejecting Jesus and they were really rejecting God.

Weren't they? Carson says how people respond to this scandal determines their destiny. It's hard to believe. To believe what? To believe in the person and work of Jesus Christ. How do we believe?

Different questions we're asking from the text. How do we believe? Look at verse 63. Jesus answered this. This is how you can believe it is the spirit who's giving life. The flesh helps nothing.

[15 : 22] How do we believe? It's by the spirit. spirit. He is giving life. The flesh cannot provide anything. The flesh will not help you.

The flesh will not profit you. It will not benefit in any way. It must be by the spirit. He pointed back to the reality of the need of the spirit.

Remember chapter 3 verse 5? You must be born anew, born again, born from above, regenerated. You must be given life.

And notice this life is tied to the very words of Jesus. The next part of verse 63. The words that I've spoken to you are spirit and are life. Jesus' very words are spirit, Holy Spirit, and life.

Only he has the authority to give life and when one embraces Jesus' words, then that one is embracing Jesus himself. This flesh is death.

[16 : 35] His flesh is life. The only way a person can feed on Jesus' words is by means of the spirit of God.

He must work in that person's heart. It's the only way. That's how you believe. The spirit comes and gives life. The spirit who gives life is connected to Jesus' words because the spirit, as you'll find out later in John's gospel, he's a spirit of truth.

The spirit who is truth. He quickens. He regenerates. He brings rebirth. You're born from above.

John 3. It's hard to believe. Believe in the person and work of Christ. Well, how do we believe that? By the spirit. Why do some believe and others don't, then?

There's two reasons and we're working through the text chronologically here. First, because it's our default.

[17 : 57] Look at verse 64. But there some of you do not believe, for Jesus knew from the beginning the ones who did not believe and the one who would betray him.

he revealed their hearts. Just like he did in verse 36 with the crowd. Why do some people believe and others don't?

Because it's our default. It's our default. Unless God does a work, we'll never believe. He may know in the deepest recesses of their souls.

They were not truly believing in Jesus. It was superficial. It was fake. And Jesus knew it. It was no surprise to him. Because he's God in the flesh.

And he knows people's hearts. He knows your heart now. He knew from the past that some of these would not believe into him.

[19 : 04] And he knew who would betray him, Judas. He knew. And it's hard to believe, and this part here, because it's our default, it speaks of our unwillingness.

We don't want to come to Jesus. Jesus says this in John chapter 3. This is the verdict, verse 19, that the light has come into the world, but men love the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil.

for everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light lest his deeds be exposed. It's our default. We default to we don't want to come to Jesus.

It's too hard. It's harsh. It's offensive to us. So why do some people believe in others don't? Because it's our default first reason, but also second reason, because it must be granted.

Look at verse 65. And he was saying, for this reason I've said to you, that no one is able to come to me unless it has been granted to him from the Father.

[20 : 23] The reason why Jesus taught them that only the Father can grant certain ones to believe into him or come to him is, these ones are grumbling. They will not believe into him. They would not come and they could not come.

They don't have the ability. People don't want to come to Jesus and people cannot come to Jesus. It must be granted.

The Father is the primary agent of faith. Faith is granted to people as a specific gift from the Father. People do not believe just because they don't have faith.

That's not why. It must be granted by the Father. You must be given that faith. He must grant it to you, friends, else you will not believe.

Carson, again, genuine coming to faith is never finally a matter of autonomous human decision. End quote. They won't come and they can't come.

[21 : 38] You won't come and you can't come. It's a gift. So realize this. Remember this when you're doing evangelism.

It's not up to you. You give them the gospel and you can't even tell them. Isn't it a crazy thing that people actually believe in this? Tell them that.

Because it is. It's foolishness. I mean, think about this. You can be given eternal life because this guy who claimed to be God, God-man, died on the cross on your behalf.

It's a crazy message. But it's true. It's true. It's true. It's true. Remember that when you're giving someone the gospel.

Remind yourself of that and even pray, Father, grant them this faith. Only you can do this. I cannot do this. So once again, let me be clear.

[22 : 42] Belief in Jesus is granted by the Father to an individual by means of the Spirit. It. And when that one is granted that specific faith, that one will come to Jesus and will be raised by Jesus.

It's a fact. It's inevitable. Period. There's no, well, what if and what no. That's how it flows. As far as Jesus is concerned.

So why do some believe and others don't? Two reasons. Because it's our default. We don't want to come to Jesus and this must be granted. We can't come to Jesus.

It must be given to you as a gift. And that belief, it's granted to you by the Father and he does it. How do you believe?

By means of the Spirit. The Spirit gives you life and when you get that faith, when you're given life, you're given that faith, you will come to Jesus so much you will be raised at the end of the time.

[23 : 46] At the end of days you will be raised. Jesus will raise you. Inevitable, it will happen. Amen. Okay, so why not these guys from verse 66?

Why not these? Why did these not believe? Because it was not granted. Look at verse 66. As a result or from this time or because of this, that is because faith was not granted to them from the Father, verse 65, read it in context.

Many of his disciples left, going back, that's how it is in Greek, and were no longer walking with him. Many fell away and were not walking with Jesus.

Do you see that? And read it in the context. Why did they stop following Jesus? Why did they walk away? Because it wasn't granted, verse 65. They resigned from following Jesus.

No way, I'm done. No way to it. No. And for some people, the immediate response to Jesus and the message of truth is rejection, right?

[25 : 12] but for others, the reality of the gospel hits them like a ton of bricks later, after they've been following Jesus for some time, following Jesus for some time.

so they seem to be following Jesus. They seem to be disciples of Jesus, but then the reality of the gospel, it hits them like a ton of bricks and then they walk away.

Friends, these verses help us make sense of cases like that with these people. Clink, he says, this, quote, when an apparent disciple falls away from the church and the gospel message, the gospel of John serves as a reminder that even during Jesus' ministry, some of his disciples stop following him, end quote.

Even during the ministry of Jesus, even during what he was doing, here on earth, people walked away from him. I mean, if they walk away from me, that makes sense, I smell, of course, we get it.

Walk away from you, yeah. They actually walked away from Jesus. Even during his ministry, some of these disciples stopped following him because these persons were not granted true faith.

[26 : 52] faith. But there's some better news of verse 67, which begins on this side.

What is the result of the father's granting faith? What is the result of that? 67, therefore Jesus said to the twelve, do you also want to go away?

the more intimate disciples. And almost, he asked this question in almost like a strong, critical tone.

He asked them if they're going to stick around. Well, that's a loaded question. Are you guys going to bail on me too? It's a challenge almost.

true belief. What is the result of the father's granting? True belief. When the father grants it, there's true belief.

[27 : 53] So what does true belief look like then? And you get a small window from the text. From the text, and I gave them to you earlier, three aspects.

There's bankruptcy, there's dependency and fidelity. Good preachers do things like that, so it rhymes, right? Of course. Just kidding. Nobody laugh. Okay. What does it look like?

What does true belief look like from the text? There's bankruptcy, there's dependency, there's fidelity. Look at Simon Peter. The spokesman of the twelve, always putting his foot in his mouth.

Simon Peter answered him, Lord, what did you just say? Where else can we go Lord? Where else can we go? There's bankruptcy.

To whom shall we go? He confessed their bankruptcy and ruined without Christ. Where are we going to go? I'm bankrupt. There's nowhere else for us to go. What does bankruptcy mean?

[29 : 04] It means we come to the place where we see that no one will satisfy and satiate us more than the Holy One of God the Lord Jesus.

That's what that means. Friends, this is key. this is key as you're doing evangelism. This is key as you're dealing with biblical counseling and helping people dealing with substance abuse or gambling or food and their love for food.

This is how you deal with this. This is how you deal with someone who's LGBTQIA plus. Becoming a Christian is not becoming a heterosexual. You realize that, right?

Becoming a Christian is when you love Jesus more than anyone or anything else. That's what Christianity means. You become bankrupt. Where else can I go?

Dependency. Look it. You have words of eternal life. Where else can we go? There's bankruptcy. Where else can we go?

[30 : 16] You have words of eternal life. It's you. We depend on you. Only you have those words. There is no other truth.

You're the only truth, Jesus. We depend upon you totally and completely. Only your words give life so.

Verse 69, we've believed, perfect tense, and have come to know you are the Holy One of God. Decisively, resolutely, and definitively, I commit my fidelity to Jesus.

my loyalty to Jesus, my allegiance to Jesus. See, there's bankruptcy, there's dependency, and then I throw myself on Jesus. That's true belief.

That's true faith. That's what it looks like. You're the Holy One of God, the One who's set apart by God. You are God's emissary, the One descended, and who will ascend.

[31 : 39] This is what true belief in the Lord Jesus looks like. Now, yes, their belief, the disciples, their faith, it'll grow, it'll blossom, of course.

It will get deeper, stronger, greater, and healthier as the pages go on in John's gospel. You'll see that. They would understand this title, Holy One of God, even more.

Especially after His death and resurrection, they'll understand that more. It's true. But again, notice these three aspects. The bankruptcy, the dependency, the fidelity.

These are marks of true faith, true belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. And if you're here, you don't know Jesus, that's what you need to come to, that you must see the place that you're bankrupt, you must see the place that you must depend upon God, and you throw yourself on Jesus, I commit myself to you, you have my heart fidelity.

Interesting, this is what we do every day as Christians, isn't it? At least we should. Where I see my bankruptcy, I throw my dependency upon Jesus, and I commit myself to Him.

[32 : 51] That's what true belief is, isn't it? Every day I'm doing that. What is the result of the Father's granting?

True belief. What does that look like? Bankruptcy, dependency, fidelity. Ah, look at this though. Why do people believe? Back to this question. And you get two answers here, which is similar to what we looked at before and previously.

Why do people believe? Notice, he tells us the first reason, because of God's sovereign election. Look at verse 70. Jesus answered them, did not I myself choose you? The twelve.

You guys going to bail me? Yeah, I know you're not going to. I know. Because I'm the one who chose you guys. You didn't choose me.

I chose you. At the end of the day, it's all said and done.

[33 : 55] This is the reality. This is the only reason why you're going to choose Jesus. Jesus chooses you first. That's why you choose him.

We must choose Jesus, absolutely. We must choose to follow Jesus. Yes, you must. But when you do choose Jesus, understand, remember, he actually chose you first.

Why do people believe? Because of God's sovereign election. He elects people to salvation. He does. That's why they believe. Why do people believe and others not believe?

because of God's sovereign plan. Again, verse 70, yet one of you is the devil. The eleven were sovereignly elected by God to trust Jesus as the Father does with all those given to him by the Son.

Chapter 6, verse 37, they're the gift. And yet notice how even Judas' unfaithfulness was by God's hand. This is hard to believe.

[35 : 19] The sovereign hand of God in salvation, but also his sovereign hand in Judas' betrayal. Verse 71, and he was speaking of Simon, excuse me, of Judas, of Simon Iscariot, or he spoke Judas of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was intending to betray Jesus.

It gives further weight to Jesus rebuking the people for their disbelieving hearts, and it gives further weight in the Jesus' insight into people's inability to believe in him.

Are people commanded to believe? Absolutely. Everyone is commanded to trust Christ. Are they able to believe in Christ?

Absolutely not. The father must grant it. But is God the one at fault? Absolutely not. It's not his fault. The Bible never puts it that way.

It's Judas' fault, it's their fault. They have rejected him. It's never God's fault. Look, apart from the complete and total intervention from the father by means of the spirit, we'll never believe in Jesus because it's hard to believe.

[36 : 46] The father must grant us the ability and the spirit must be the one giving us life else we walk away. It's hard to believe the gospel but it's not hard for God.

Only he's the one who brings it about for us to trust and love Jesus. He's the one who grants that to us. He's the one who gives us that ability. He's the one who sustains us.

It's only him. Because when he grants that ability we'll see our bankruptcy, we'll admit our dependency and commit our fidelity to the Holy One of God to Jesus.

It'll happen. And we continue to do that. As Christians, as followers of Jesus, we continue to admit our bankruptcy, our dependency and our fidelity to Jesus.

Let's thank him for his grace to us, shall we? We are thankful. We are thankful, Father, that you've shown us amazing grace, wonderful grace, grace, unbelievable grace, favor that was not deserved.

[37 : 59] We don't deserve you to save us. There's nothing inherent in ourselves worth saving. You just showed mercy, you showed grace, you showed love and compassion.

Thank you. God, you showed us that you have to do you. And so we throw ourselves upon you. Where else can we go?

We're bankrupt. We have nothing to offer you. So we depend upon you. And we commend ourselves once again to you, the Holy One of God, to you, Jesus, our allegiance, our loyalty to you.

Work in us as your church. Change us. We may reflect more, even more, Father, of the very character of Jesus, of the very life of Jesus, of who He is, and how much we depend on Him.

I want to encourage you to take these next few moments to allow your mind to be filled with God's truth, to ponder it, and to think, to fill your mind with what we've seen and the truth this morning.

[39 : 43] This is between you and the Lord. This is just a short amount of time between you and the Lord. We'll sing, we'll pray, and let this be a time, a sweet time between you and the Lord to fill your mind with truth and to thank Him.

Please do that now.