

John: The Word Became Flesh - John 6:60-71

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- [0 : 00] It's my privilege to read the passage this morning, and so you should find that on the screen behind you. John 6 verses 60 through 71 is our text today.
- When many of his disciples heard it, they said, this is a hard saying. Who can listen to it? But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, do you take offense at this?
- Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.
- But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.
- And he said, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father. After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.
- [1 : 07] So Jesus said to the 12, do you wanna go away as well? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go?
- You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God. Jesus answered them, did I not choose you, the 12?
- And yet one of you is a devil. He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon the Scarlet, for he, one of the 12, was going to betray him.
- Well, good morning, church. Just seeing who's here. I see you back there, yeah? And you, yeah?
- Okay. We made it outdoors today. This is good. And to help you, I know this is a little bit of a placebo, but we have sort of like an outdoor patio thing going on here.
- [2 : 16] You look at that, it'll warm you on the inside. So go ahead and turn open to John chapter six. We're gonna be finishing up this lengthy chapter this morning, looking at verses 60 to 71.
- And I have the privilege of bringing God's word to us this morning. So let me pray, ask God's blessing on our time together, that he would use this for our sanctification, for his glory, and we'll have a sense that we have met with him and heard from him today.
- So let me pray. Father, we're reminded of the words, pen in Hebrews that we're to consider how to stir one another up towards love and good works.
- And we're not to neglect meeting together as the habit of some, but we're to encourage one another, all the more as we see the day drawing near. And Lord, we are here today desiring, some of us are here just simply out of obedience.
- We know what you've asked of us to meet with other believers and stir others up. And Lord, I pray that that would occur today. I pray Lord that for whatever our motivation in getting here this morning, you would use it.

[3 : 42] Lord, we'll have a sense that you have spoken to us and we will have heard from you. And Lord, would you be at work amongst us through the power of your word and your spirit, your word proclaimed?

Lord, we wanna ask for your presence and your help today, whatever the need is. Lord, if some are here and they just are far from you, would you speak to them in the course of the message today, might they hear from you?

Lord, I pray that you would delight as we continue to worship you through humbling our hearts to receive your word.

Lord, we pray for those, for our young people up at camp today that you would be using this time to draw them closer to you and for some that don't know you, Lord, we pray for their salvation today.

Lord, what a privilege it is to be called your people. And it's a wonderful name of Jesus. All God's people said. Amen. Amen.

[4 : 51] Well, in the passage where we have found ourselves, really for three weeks, it feels like longer since we had a little break there with the holidays, but we've been in this chapter for three weeks.

Jesus, his followers, there's many that have been following him across the Sea of Galilee. They were on the East side of the Sea. They're now on the Northern end, having gone to Capernaum after Jesus has fed the 5,000 through five loaves and two fish.

And it's interesting, this miracle of the feeding of the 5,000, aside from the resurrection of Christ, this is the only other miracle that's recorded in all four gospels.

And we know from the other accounts that actually it's not just 5,000 that were fed, because in Matthew 14, 21, it says, and those who ate were about 5,000 men besides women and children.

So it could have been that this crowd was upwards of 10 to 15 to 20,000 individuals. And again, it's recorded in all four gospels, but John is unique in that in this gospel, we're actually given then a follow-up.

[6 : 09] It's like the Bread of Life part two, this extensive explanation of this miracle, and it really covers the entirety of this chapter. Chapter six is the Bread of Life chapter in the gospel of John.

We have about 50 verses, verses 22 to 71, where Jesus reveals to himself to the crowd, then, hey, I am just like the bread that I just multiplied and made for you. I am the bread that came down from heaven.

And so there's sort of this bakery theme that we have woven throughout this entire chapter. What is Jesus doing here? I call himself the bread come down from heaven.

He's using a metaphor extensively in this chapter to talk about belief in him, the exclusivity of salvation being found in him, but then also the joy and the satisfaction that follows from being connected to Jesus.

The bread that I fed you with, multitude yesterday, you're now hungry again. It only satisfied you for a day. The man that satisfied Israel for 40 years, that's gone too.

[7 : 26] I am the bread that will satisfy you forever. And this is really where we connect these doctrines of redemption with creation, right?

That we were created to know God. We were created to enjoy relationship with him, that we were created uniquely from all other creatures, made in his image to deeply connect in relationship and friendship with our maker.

And that occurs solely through the person of Jesus. And really the question for us after we have been in this lengthy chapter of Jesus calling himself the bread of life, we have to ask ourselves the question, do we believe that?

Do we really believe that salvation is found solely in Christ? Do we believe that the satisfaction, the ache of our hearts can be met in communion with the person of Jesus Christ?

This morning we're gonna consider the responses of two different groups. The larger crowd of followers, and then the response of this smaller band of followers, the 12th.

[8 : 42] And perhaps the question for us to consider is who are we? Which crowd would we identify with this morning? And so we'll look at these two different crowds and see if we can then ask some questions at the end of our time together.

But the first group that we're gonna consider is the multitude and it's found in verses here in 60 verses 66. And we're gonna see what this group thinks about Jesus.

Do they believe? Well, let's begin here in verses 60 to 61. And John writes, when many of his disciples heard it, they said, this is a hard saying.

Who can listen to it? But Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, said to them, do you take offense at this?

Now the term disciple here, Montano, translates to be a learner. It's used loosely here. There were those that claim to follow Jesus, to learn from Jesus saying, hey, we're in.

[9 : 55] We are all in. There are many in that group. And why were they so quick to follow and even testify as the record shows in John 6?

In verse 14, they were saying, hey, we think you're the prophet predicted about in the Old Testament. And Jesus tells us why they were so quick to claim to be followers.

He actually confronts them. He says in verse 26 here, he says, Jesus answered them, truly, truly I say to you, you're seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

There was this expectation from this group that Jesus would meet their comfort needs, free food benefit coming to them.

And they were following Jesus because they thought, man, he's gonna add to our comfort. In fact, it goes on in verse 34.

[11 : 02] They said to him, sir, give us this bread always. Give us this bread continually. You're setting up some sort of feeding program. This is great, Jesus. We would love to follow you.

Just like Israel, they had 40 years, maybe we're gonna get 40 years of free food. This is wonderful. Jesus is the best. In fact, recall that the crowd, they were even ready to set Jesus up as their political ruler by force, it says in verse 15.

Kick out the Romans, Jesus. Give us free food. This is wonderful. And yet what we're finding now here at the end of this lengthy narrative is this crowd that was so zealous to follow Jesus, now they're having concerns.

Now they're grumbling about Jesus. In fact, they said, this is a hard saying. And what I want us to see in this chapter is there's really this progression of unbelief from the larger crowd.

Jesus, it's interesting because He's not making it more palatable to follow Him. He's not watering down His words of what it means to be a follower, a disciple.

[12 : 15] He's very unlike us. He would fail in terms of, if He was to write a book on church growth. Very unlike us in that regard.

Many in our day want to make it more palatable. Redefine who God is, what discipleship looks like. It's easy. Sin isn't sin.

Sin is a mistake. It's not stench the nostrils of holy God. Relax. You know, I think our attempts in recent years to grow the church and make discipleship this sort of easy pathway that God really doesn't expect our whole lives.

You can give Him just a little piece. He's sort of like fire insurance. I think it's really backfired on the church. In fact, statistically, Gen Z, if you're in Gen Z, you were born between 95, 97 or so, and 2000 and I think 10 is about the category.

So basically my children. And the studies show that Gen Z, three out of 10 have rejected, the gospel rejected the church because of hypocrisy that they've seen in the church.

[13 : 45] They see others that claim to be followers that don't follow very well. While we're trying to make it easier for folks to follow, oh, God doesn't want all of you. Intelligent people know if God is God, if God truly is God, He should get everything.

And so you, it's almost like it works against itself, right? Oh yeah, you can go out on Saturday night and do your thing and then Sunday morning, your hands are raised.

And our young people know. Dad's a tyrant at home, but he smiles every Sunday as though everything is just peachy with the family. Well, in fact, Christ never watered down what a disciple was, a follower.

He never did that to try to pad the numbers. Now, this group, they're initially wanting to follow, they're saying we're really struggling now and we're struggling over some of the things that Jesus said, these hard sayings.

What is the hard saying this larger audience is grumbling about? Because there have been a number of things Jesus has said in John chapter six that were difficult, right?

[14 : 56] How about I'm not gonna be your political savior. I'm not gonna be this cosmic vending machine. In both verses 38 and 52, Jesus says something very similar, he says I have come down from heaven.

And then later in verse 52, he says, I am the living bread that came down from heaven. What is Jesus essentially saying there? If you've come down from heaven, if that's your home, your place of origin, you're not just a guy.

You're claiming to be God. And they're struggling over this. In fact, we know their response because in verse 42, John records they said, is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

How does he now say I have come down from heaven? That's a hard saying. This guy's claiming to be God?

That's a hard saying. Now specifically, the saying that they're grumbling over, the most recent hard word that Jesus shares that they're choking on come from verses 53 to 55.

[16 : 18] And let's examine that here. So Jesus said to them, truly, truly I say to you unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life and I will raise him up on the last day for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink.

The crowd is listening to this and they're saying this is a hard saying. This is a hard word. What is Jesus saying here? I mean, it sounds pretty severe.

Amen? Eat my flesh, drink my blood. How should we read this church? Is Jesus here suggesting encouraging cannibalism?

Right? Is the plain literal meant here? Because the early church was accused of this. Justin Martyr records some of that that the Romans were accusing the early church of participating in cannibalism as they participated in the Lord's table.

[17 : 32] How should we read this? The Roman Catholics have their own spin on this. Roman Catholic theologians use this passage in particular to defend this doctrine of transubstantiation.

That the elements that we take in communion, they actually turn into the physical body and blood of Jesus. And yet the context of this passage, it's not referring to the Lord's table here, it's referring to discipleship.

Additionally, these verbs to eat and to drink, they're in the heireess tense. These are one-time actions, not things to continue to do over and over again, which is what you do at Roman Catholic Mass.

That's where Jesus dies over and over because the first time apparently wasn't sufficient. And so they believe in this doctrine, transubstantiation that the priest has this power.

He can hold the sacraments, the bread and the wine and somehow change it as he chants in Latin, hachestendum corpus maim, which essentially translates, this is my body.

[18 : 48] And then we have sort of this cryptic phrase in English, hachestendum corpus maim, hocus pocus. That many historians would connect to that phrase, that something magical has just occurred, that these elements have turned into something supernatural.

I don't think Jesus is setting up this doctrine with this statement here. Yeah, as we celebrate communion, Jesus is very present.

Why? Because His Spirit dwells within His people. Amen? But when we participate in the Lord's table, it's symbolic and it's meant to stir our affections back to the cross.

The God in His genius is using mixed media to take us back and center us on the Gospel. Words, taste, touch.

But maybe you're going, but J, Jesus said, eat my flesh, drink my blood. It seems just very plain. And what I want to help us with in terms of our reading, our hermeneutics, as we interpret Scripture, what I want us to recognize is Jesus often used extreme language to communicate the important.

[20 : 22] Let me give us another example of this. This is not the first time Jesus shocks us with His words. Read the whole sermon on the mount, but just highlight this section, He says in Romans 5, 29.

If you're right, I cause you to sin, tear it out. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off.

That's extreme. Is Jesus here promoting self-mutilation? Right? I mean, is Jesus attempting to turn the local church into a gathering essentially of pirates?

We're gonna come with our eye patches on and our hooks for our hands, because we took Jesus's words literally. I mean, it kind of has a nice ring, right?

Like pirate memorial church. It's kind of cool. Arr. What's Jesus doing here?

[21 : 27] He's calling us to get serious, right? About waging war on our sin. Even limiting our freedoms if there is a stumbling block in our life.

Remove it. Gouch it out, cut it off. If alcohols become a vice, don't drink as an act of worship. If social media is turning you into a covetous, jealous person, remove it.

What Jesus is actually calling the crowd to by asking them to feed on Him. He actually then tells us in the next few verses, look at verses 62 and to 64. He says, what then if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?

It is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are some of you who do not believe.

For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe and who was and who it was who would betray Him. So Jesus is not talking about cannibalism, self-mutilation.

[22 : 51] He's talking about faith. He's talking about faith, church. He says, in fact, the words that I have spoken to you are spirit. It's metaphor.

Feast on me as the bread of life. It's a metaphor for faith that totally rescues and totally satisfies.

Jesus is actually pointing this massive people to His future death, burial and resurrection. In fact, He says, what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending?

And really what He's calling the crowd to is to say, hey, be satisfied in me. Trust in me. Believe in me. That my death is sufficient to make you all together new to clean the slate of your life.

You can't earn your way to heaven through your own effort. In fact, He says, the flesh is of no help at all. And He says, it's the spirit that gives life as we throw ourselves on the mercy of Christ.

[24 : 00] And so the issue here is one of belief. Eating the flesh of Christ is trusting in His death, burial and resurrection.

We're trusting in the crucifixion that it's enough that Jesus, by His death, He can pay our sin debt in full. I was trying to explain this to a passenger the other day, the crucifixion, that we trust that there was something unique about the crucifixion of Jesus.

And my passenger, I thought, was insightful because he responded with, but haven't there been a lot of folks that have been crucified over the centuries?

And I was just like, you're right, I'm sorry. No. That wasn't news to me, but it was so insightful. It was a great question.

Yes, lots of people have been crucified. The Persian ruler Darius, he crucified 3,000 Babylonians. Alexander the Great after seizing the port city of Tyre, crucified 2,000 in his anger.

[25 : 18] And then the Romans that came to power in 63 BC, they used crucifixion extensively, and one writer puts the number of those that the Romans crucified upwards of 30,000 individuals.

There have been lots of individuals crucified in the history of mankind. What was so unique, what was so different about the crucifixion of Jesus?

What was different is that if Jesus is God, it is God who is being crucified. The resurrection then indicates, oh, yes, he was God.

He had power over death. But what was also unique about that crucifixion is that it was substitutionary in nature. It means something for us today.

1 Peter says it this way, chapter 3 verse 18. Peter writes, For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.

[26 : 29] So it was substitutionary in nature that the righteous God of the universe would die in our place so that we might be forgiven.

It's as though the judge had sentenced us as defendants to eternity without parole, in hell forever. And Jesus in the courtroom says, stop!

I will pay the price. I will serve the sentence. I will pay for the crime by giving my very life. And as an innocent, I have that prerogative.

As God, I can satisfy God. The cross, this one-time event where we place faith, trust, belief in the activity of Jesus, His death, His burial, His resurrection, and believing that that is sufficient, it is enough then for us to be justified that once guilty, now we are declared righteous before Holy God.

It's enough to redeem us to take us from the slave market of sin and to grant us freedom to walk in newness of life. It is enough to forgive us that we were once debtors now that has been paid in full.

[28 : 00] And our debt, it's gone. The sin, it's gone. It's been put in the shredder. It's gone. The whiteboard has been erased. We're clean. We've been forgiven.

And it's enough to adopt us that we were once strangers and God said, no, I'm going to make you now family. Children of our Heavenly Father.

And in the mystery of salvation, what is remarkable and maybe hard for some of us even here this morning, is that God gets all the credit.

None of us this morning should have sauntered in through the front doors going, I'm here. I've arrived. Look at what I've done. We are here because we can't do it.

That's why we're here. God gets all the credit for the heavy lifting. Even knowing what He was going to get when He was hanging on the cross.

[29 : 09] If you were to read this chapter meticulously, you would find there is a heavy, heavy dose of God's sovereignty in chapter 6.

In fact, the next verse here, verse 65, and He said, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.

Do you think I'm sovereign in this process of salvation and this chapter is replete with sovereignty? Let me highlight a couple other verses. Verse 37, all that the Father gives me will come to me.

And whoever comes to me, I will never cast out. Verse 44, no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

Why does God need to draw? Why can't He just throw out the content, the information, and we're just capable on our own to figure it out?

[30 : 24] Scripture says we have some issues. Sin has left its mark. John 6.43 says that man is a slave to sin, unable to emancipate himself.

Paul says to the Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 4.4 that man is actually spiritually blind. He's blind. And maybe the most severe statement of man's condition in his sin prior to salvation, in Paul to the Ephesians, he says you're worse off than being in the slave market of sin being spiritually blind because he says in Ephesians 2.1 he says you were dead in the trespasses and sins.

You are spiritually dead. How do you respond? In the end, we were totally, utterly unable to respond to the good news unless God initiates.

Think of it like this, Lazarus in the grave. And Jesus says, Lazarus, can you hear me Lazarus? Lazarus, come out.

He's dead. He's the work. Lazarus for him to respond and come out. And it's interesting, there are some theologians that would actually say for those in Christ we are actually the Lazari of God.

[31 : 57] If we've responded in faith, it's that God has done this regenerative work in us for us to be able to then say, yes, I believe. And so faith in Jesus is the most exquisite gift that God gives in this life.

Amen? That our repentance is a gift from the Lord. For us to actually have the wherewithal to not say, oh, that's foolishness, but to say it's true, that's God.

That's a gift from God that he has opened the eyes of the blind. I run into this all the time.

That there is just a blindness. I drove a gal this week, an 80-year-old gal, a Jew, headed to her friends.

And as we're talking, I shared that I was a pastor and so we're kind of talking about spiritual things and I want to know. I want to talk about the Messiah. I wish Messiah and Jesus and she just did not want to have anything to do with it.

[33 : 12] You know, heading to my friends. We've got like a wine tasting thing tonight. We're just going to have some great food and we're going to talk about different ideas. Like she loved ideas, but didn't want to talk about the Messiah.

There's this blindness. Salvation is a gift from God. Totally, completely. It is a work of God.

He did all the heavy lifting. In fact, I appreciate so much C.S. Lewis, his own conversion, profession. It's not as though he was looking for God. It wasn't his genius and the guy was, but he actually says in his biography, *Surprise by Joy*, he says, that which I greatly feared had at last come upon me, I gave in and admitted that God was God and knelt and prayed.

I love this. Perhaps that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England. I wasn't looking. This was God's move.

God's story in my life. He did the heavy lifting. He did the work. And why would God choose any of us?

[34 : 27] Well, Paul says to the Romans in Romans 11, he says, the depth, the riches, the wisdom, the knowledge of God, it's insurmountable. I don't know. For His glory and our joy.

I don't know. The mysterious things they belong to Him. And this larger crowd initially interested in Jesus on this day for many a wrong reason, they get to the place at the very end of this narrative where they said, Jesus, thank you!

But no, thank you. And it's tragic. It's tragic. In fact, you see their ultimate response in verse 66 says, after this many of His disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him.

It's just this progression of unbelief. They are so close, church. They were there in the presence of a miracle. They experienced the kindness, the goodness, the compassion of Christ.

You're hungry, I'm going to feed you. They were so close, they were so near. And yet they said, no, thank you. And you see this movement of unbelief, right?

[35 : 45] They were seekers that moved to be complainers to ultimately deserters. What a contrast to the day before when they were ready to make Jesus king.

But what occurred? Jesus confronted them in terms of what He's calling His followers to be fully in, fully committed. I'm not here just to feed your comforts to be a little piece of your life.

If God is God, church, He gets everything. He gets everything. Total surrender. Most did not like that God really was God.

And so most of the crowd disappeared back into a life where life could be lived on their own terms. I spoke with a gentleman about a year ago who was a professing believer.

And he just decided, you know what? God can take a hike. I don't like what he's asking. I'm going to love who I want to love.

[36 : 59] And he's not going to tell me I can't. And you saw in that individual, really, it was volitional doubt. It was moral doubt.

I want to do something and God says, no, then I'm out. I'm out. It wasn't intellectual. It wasn't emotional. It was this volitional doubt.

I want to do what I want to do. We already read in John 3 that the gospel of the world and light has come, but what did men love? Did they love light? They love darkness.

And I would say that is the prominent reason why people reject Christ. I want to do what I want to do. You're not going to tell me God how I'm going to live my life.

It's tragic. It's foolish. And this crowd, they reject their Messiah. Well, Jesus moves on and says, He's going to address now a smaller band of followers.

[38 : 09] And we see that then in verses 67 to the end of the passage, verse 71. Let's begin here. Verse 67, so Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go away as well?

Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have come to know that you are the holy one of God.

Now in John, this is actually the first occurrence we have of referencing the twelve with this term. Jesus is now turning to the twelve who have been with them perhaps for a couple of years now.

That's where we're at in the narrative. They have been with Jesus. And Jesus asked, do you want to go away as well?

And I find that the question that Jesus asks and gives us insight, that Jesus understands something. He actually understands that discipleship is difficult.

[39 : 23] He's aware. Yeah, do you want to go away as well?

It's difficult. I find this soul sentiment that Christianity is a crutch, is being laughable. Really? It's hard.

Following Jesus is hard. Amen? Am I it? Am I in the wrong church? It's hard.

Jesus even recognizes this. I actually did a sermon series years ago. I entitled Hard Sains of Jesus.

I tried to find the ten most difficult teachings that Jesus ever gave. And I built a series around it. Created a top ten list. Things like, blessed are you when people insult you.

[40 : 21] What? No, Christianity is not a crutch for the weak. On the top of the list, Matthew 16-24, Jesus told his disciples, everyone would cut him after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.

Deny? Myself? Discipleship is hard.

I'm going to deny myself. I'm going to wage war on my self-orientation. Every day for the rest of my life.

It's hard. I'm going to consider others. There needs ahead of mine. It's not just going to be about me, myself, and I.

There's the trinity, right? Of the flesh. I'm going to live by God's Spirit. Not for my flesh.

[41 : 32] That's hard. That I'm going to pursue holiness in this life. In this sin-saturated, sexually emancipated culture that has essentially destroyed chastity and moderation in every form.

It's like a bot. Or how about this one?

Matthew 5-39, if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also? You mean following Jesus means that I am going to give up the right to retaliate?

Yeah, we need the Spirit of God bad. Discipleship is hard. And maybe the question for us, as Jesus posed to the twelve, you with me? You with me?

What is it that's so difficult in terms of following Christ for you today? And maybe that's the thing that we need to reckon with.

[42 : 53] What is it that makes it so hard for me to follow Jesus today? Is it that we've ascribed to man, I'm going to live my best life and I've got to do that and I don't know if me following Jesus is going to allow me to do that.

Or maybe you're suffering today. You're struggling. You've got health things going on. There's crisis in your relationships. Or maybe you're just really disappointed with God.

Maybe you haven't actually articulated that way. I'm disappointed in life, but really it's to the author. And the list could go on.

Folks, discipleship is not easy, which is why Jesus said, are you guys in? Are you guys in? It's not easy. I so appreciate how G.K. Chesterton puts it.

He says, hey, the Christian ideal has not been tried and found wanting. It has been found difficult and left untried.

[44 : 02] And so I just love Peter's response to Jesus. It is so honest. It's gritty. It's earthy. It's real. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life. Jesus, these words are not easy words. This life of following you is not an easy course.

But you have the words of eternal life. You're the Holy One of God. Where else are we going to go? And there's this sentiment in Peter in the spirit of like, I don't know if I'm always going to like this.

This is kind of hard. But what are my options? It's so honest. And essentially he's saying, as difficult as it is, here I stand.

I'm in. And I pray that each of us who have claimed the name of Christ, that's where we stand today. I don't know what 2024 holds for any of us.

[45 : 09] Years ago, I had a youth pastor friend who was serving. It was a very hot day in Seattle. And he was serving waters to traffic that was stopped.

And he was out there actually with his entire youth group, his family. They were serving and they were giving waters to cars that were stopped and overheating and just trying to be kind.

Trying to be the presence of God in the city. And that was the afternoon that a car hit his eight-year-old son and took his life. I remember the conversations with my friend about just hearing his resolve of, you know what, I'm still in.

I'm still in. I'm still committed. I'm never going to get my son back. But where else am I going to go? And it was this posture of Peter.

And I pray that this is where we are at this morning. And maybe for us in terms of application, like how do we stay there? How do we stand?

[46 : 18] How do we have that resolve perhaps despite the crisis around or the disappointment? Maybe profound disappointment, profound loss. How do we stand? I want to suggest centrally we need a couple of things.

First, we need God's presence. You're going to stand. You need God's presence in your life, which means you've got to be a person that abides in the vine.

That you see communion with the Lord daily. And if that is void in your life, what's going to happen? You're going to look for that deep connection communion somewhere else.

You just will. I had a car full of young ladies a couple of years ago now, profess believers, and I was driving them to the bar, and we were just talking about social media, dating apps, and they freely confessed.

They said, you know what, we can't get off the dating apps. We're so hungry for attention, affection. And I would suggest that there was a void there. There's a lack of communion with their God.

[47 : 30] And so they were looking in other places. We need to be a people that abide. We have encouraged that the last couple of weeks.

We had an insert in our bulletin about different ways that you can do that. On the resource board, there's even a reading plan. And I would suggest that the best way to actually make that happen in your life is to do it with someone else.

And so essentially, you need a couple of things. You need God's presence, but you also need God's people. How are you going to stand 2024? You've got to be communion with the Lord, but you've got to be communion with God's people as well.

Being a discipleship type relationship with someone else. You've got to have that encouragement. You've got to be reminded by what is true. Let me commend to you just a very practical thing.

Again, on the resource board, guys, there's nothing magical about that board. It's just a board. But there's some resources there that I think are going to be helpful for your soul. I would say, you know, we have a number of these little booklets.

[48 : 33] Grab one. But read it with someone else. Right? How can I be sure I'm saved? If you're struggling there? Great. It's hell for real.

Man, great. We just put another, a new one out. Depression. The way up, when you're down. It's great. I read through it. It's outstanding. Grab one.

You're struggling in a way? Man, read it with someone else. And by the way, if there's an issue that you're just like, man, Jay, we would love, talk to one of the pastors, Scott, myself, whatever, and say, hey, can you give us something on this?

That would be helpful for us. We're trying to have useful things for our discipleship, our sanctification. But grab one of those and covenant with someone else. Can we read this together and discuss it?

You want to stand? You need God's presence. You need God's people. And we are not necessarily good at this in our culture.

[49 : 33] It's so interesting to me, this last week, I often will pick up Asian students that go to Gonzaga, and what I have just discovered, it just occurred to me, oh my goodness, every time I pick up Asian students from Gonzaga, there's always four of them.

And I just like, the dots connected, like, oh my goodness, they're so much better at community than us. It's not culturally our thing to need and to do things with others.

But you know what, that's the life God's called us to. That's the life of discipleship. You need others. I think there's a great principle in Proverbs 13, you want to be wise, walk with the wise. You want to be chased, walk with the chase.

You want to be growing and being self-oriented? Begin to walk with somebody who is self-oriented. Oh, I retaliate. We'll find somebody who is rich in mercy and grace and patience.

You walk with them. And there's fruit born from those relationships. Well, this passage church, it ends in a very sobering warning. Let's read it together, verse 70 to the end.

[50 : 39] Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil? He spoke of Judas, the son of Simon, a scariat. For he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.

And it's just tragic here. It's tragic. It's like this movie doesn't resolve with a happy ending. It's very contemporary for our days.

Like somebody so close to Jesus, they played the role of follower, but it was never in their heart. May that not be so of us that profess to follow Jesus.

And so I would just exhort us, let us enter into this year in a posture of surrender to the Lord. God, you get everything. You get everything. And I believe that as we are there, the Lord will give us then a commensurate amount of joy.

Because indeed, I believe what He said to be so. He is the bread of life, and He satisfies. Amen? Let's pray.

[51 : 44] Father, if we have heard your words this morning, and we have been convicted of apathy, we've been convicted of sin, we've been convicted of rebellion, Lord, would you gift us the ability to repent?

And Lord, if you have convicted us, let us not turn a deaf ear to that. Because Lord, the conviction of sin, it is the voice of God.

It is you speaking to us in a very personal way. Let us receive that. And Father, if there's things that we need to recalibrate in our lives, to move back to this place of surrender, might we have the courage not only to talk to you, to repent of sin, but Lord, might we use the grace of the church of your people?

Lord, I pray that you would give every person here this year another believer that they could walk closely with in some sort of discipleship relationship, reaching up, reaching down, and be a people that would stir one another on towards love and good work.

In your name we pray, Jesus, for your glory. Amen.