

Saying Yes or No to Christ

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[0:00] How many of you enjoyed singing this morning? Come on, raise your hand..! Did you enjoy singing this morning?

We sang a little longer than we normally do.! Listen to me. And that's okay. In fact, that's wonderful. But I still get time. And honestly, I have a heart that's full.

And the truth of the matter is, is that the Scriptures are what make our singing what it is. Do you understand that? It's the truth that frames our singing.

And it's the truth that encourages our affection. And it's the truth that we delight in this morning. Let me read the passage to set the text and then ask that you join me in prayer. John chapter 6, we're going to look at first at verse 53.

[1:17] Verse 63.

They said, This is a hard saying. Who can listen to it? Our Father God, for us this morning, prayer is our thankful expression of confidence in you, our happy recognition of your person and your presence and your abiding interest that we who are your children find the glory and the fullness that we have in relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

And in this period of time that we call life before we step into your presence as believers to enjoy the presence of Christ forever, we are thankful we are thankful that you have given to us your word, you have given to us your Holy Spirit, and we would ask that we with humility would depend upon the Spirit and rely upon your word that we would grow in our love for the Lord Jesus that someday we are going to see and that as a result of that, we grow in our humility and our affection, the holiness of our passion for your glory, the clear and deliberate lifestyles that display the character of Christ in a broken and struggling world.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I want you to know as you pick up this passage we're going to be looking at John chapter 6 from verse 60 to 72 and I'll tell you ahead of time that what this chapter is is a closing summary or better yet a grand finale.

As I was thinking about it in a musical sense and I don't profess to be a musician of any form, but I do appreciate good music.

[3:57] I would say that in some senses John chapter 6 verse 60 from that verse on to 72 is a little bit like the Hallelujah Chorus. It is the summary and the great blowout to this extended chapter in which John has been building a case and lifting the glory and the supremacy of Christ.

It's also a little bit like Tchaikovsky's Overture 1812 and any of you that are musicians know how that ends. Tchaikovsky was writing to celebrate the victory of the Russian army over the invading French and the way in which that comes to a grand finale is they actually used cannons to kind of boom, boom.

Now they emulate that using cymbals and drums and even on occasions they'll pipe in the sound of cannons. but it's something that if you are in any way inclined musically when you come to this part your hair stands on end.

How many of you have that happen every now and then? Your hair stands on end. I mean, on the arm it goes up. It happens to me when I'm fired up. The hair on my arm goes up.

They're like, I'm into that. My wife said don't shout so I gotta back off a little bit. Hi Judith. I love you. She's my best critic.

[5:22] So, anyway, don't shout. I made a note to myself even and it doesn't pay attention. But you know, you get fired up thinking about what we're looking at this morning. This is the climax to John chapter 6.

There'll be more climaxes, trust me, but this is an early one. Remember how John comes together and what his goal is? He wants us in reading the book of John to know that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world that knowing that we can believe on Him.

John 6 opens with, how's it open? Does anybody remember? Remember he takes his disciples and they go away because they need a little bit of break. They're kind of washed out and fatigued from ministry and they need to get away but when they're getting away the crowd follows them about 20,000 and they're out there and when he sees the opportunity guess what he does?

He starts teaching. I mean at the end of the day his affection for people led him to open the scriptures and inform them of the things they needed desperately.

They stay past dinner time and he feeds them about 20,000. As the result of that you'll remember that the crowd decided that it would be a good idea to make him king and what does he do?

[6:44] He resists. He sends his disciples away to protect them from being carried away with that ambition and then he goes up the mountain to pray by himself. The next day he finds himself again surrounded by the crowd.

He had moved over to Capernaum and there he was and the crowd came and he preached an extended sermon. An extended sermon. And in that sermon that we find the substance of it here he makes it undeniably clear that he is the only way of salvation.

He alone. He makes reference to the fact that he would die and that his sacrifice would be the only hope that people have in satisfying the wrath of a holy God against sin and that faith in him was the only way of heaven.

Well as you look at this passage what we're going to find is this summary of the lengthy part that we've talked about pressed together and we're going to see first of all salvation refused.

Now that's hard to imagine isn't it? Salvation refused. We're also going to see salvation received. And then here's what I want you to do. I want you to stop just for a minute.

[8:10] Take your Bible or take your whatever you have iPad or whatever and I want you to put your finger on a couple different things. Look at verse 64. It says he knew who it was who would betray him.

Now we're dealing with a kind of a global summary at the end of the chapter about Christ's ministry and here is a little it almost seems to be a little marginal comment.

He knew who was going to betray him. It even gets ramped up if you will go ahead. You look there at verse 70 it says Jesus answered then did I not choose you the twelve and yet one of you is a what?

Devil. Verse 71 he spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot for he one of the twelve was going to betray him.

Now look you can understand the Jews redacting Jesus. I mean we follow that. We see that. You can understand the disciples who else shall we go to?

[9:12] You have the words of life. What is Judas doing in all of this? Ask yourself the question what is Judas doing in this picture? I wouldn't ask the question if I didn't have an idea.

And I want you to chew on that and think about it because I think Judas' presence is profoundly significant to us in our awe at the glory of salvation.

Well let's get into the passage and pick up first of all on salvation refused there in verse 60 when many of his disciples heard it they said this is a hard saying who can listen to it?

And I want you to recognize that when we pick up here in verse 60 we find that this is at the conclusion of actually two days of ministry and in those two days of ministry I want you to know that Christ had over and over again made the issues of salvation undeniably clear and lest you have any question about it salvation is not something that just kind of delivers us from mediocrity and gives us something better than what we had before salvation is the grace of God that delivers us from the moral bankruptcy and darkness of our own heart and gives to us eternal life a change we who were dead in trespasses and sin become alive in Christ Jesus we who were once the absolute miserable hopeless broken individuals in our rebellion against God become the children of God salvation always has the starting point in helping a man recognize the hardness of his heart and the despair of his soul and unless you understand the darkness of your heart and the sin that is there you have no need for the Savior

Jesus made that clear in his preaching and as you work your way through the passage you will see that actually when people heard what Jesus had to say they were offended at it that brings us here

to verse 60 and mark what it says this is a hard saying and what I want you to understand is this is that people understood Christ's message and they didn't like what they heard they didn't like what they heard how many of you have wondered that well if I could just make the gospel a little clear I mean obviously everybody would like it hey that's not necessarily the case and the absolute perfect instrument and messenger of the Lord of hosts namely his own son who with perfection and humility and with tenderness preached the gospel message at the end of the day when people understood it they didn't like it now mark what this actually is saying the statement was really not a humble understanding or a humble admission that the gospel was difficult to understand when it says this is a hard saying how many of you have actually had to deal with hard sayings that you couldn't get your hands around

[12:31] I mean you know someone's trying to explain something to you man can you go over that again slowly because I don't get it it's hard it's complex that's not what they were saying at all what they were saying is this is they understood exactly what Jesus was saying and they were irritated by it they found the gospel objectionable now why is that why is that the truth of the matter is is that the gospel begins by helping us recognize the bankruptcy of our soul and the darkness of our heart and the rebellion of our nature against the authority and the supremacy of God and the gospel begins by first of all letting us know that we are in a terrible situation it's kind of interesting actually I was thinking about this this morning as I was praying because if you were to listen to a lot of televangelists you would hear a very interesting gospel do you know what it is Jesus has a wonderful plan for your life and if you kind of send me a check or two

I will see to it that you prosper how many of you heard something like that or if you put your hand on the tele not the telephone anymore that's and not the TV anymore flat screen but you know hey if you do this and that whatever I can either take care of your financial needs I can make you a happy and wealthy person everybody in your neighborhood will like you just follow my plan and write your check thus and so and I'm going to bless you that's not the gospel that is a huckster peeling to people's carnal desire the gospel is this first of all you've got a horrible disease that is going to doom you forever and Jesus has the answer and come to him with a broken and contrite heart and he is going to save you I do want you to understand that the gospel is hard news before it's good news and it's often rejected and so when we bring the sweetness of the gospel when we bring the hope that is there in Christ

Jesus we shouldn't be overwhelmed if on occasion it ends up offending people and is really troublesome you see people don't mind having some of their symptoms to sin addressed but what they really have a problem with is having the root issues of their heart exposed and brought out into the light where only Christ can deal with them and so as you look at this opening passage I do want you to understand that as we get a drift of what ministry was like for Christ we shouldn't let people's rejection of Christ and the message of hope of salvation in him alone end up being something that overwhelms us and causes us to be discouraged in sharing our passion to see people come to Christ don't let people's struggle discourage you from ministry now incidentally as you look at this passage you find there in verse 60 people are pretty irritated but look at 61 Jesus knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this said do you take offense at this that's kind of a duh question isn't it like is this really a problem for you how many of you learned that sometimes questions are just designed to frame the moment are you having a problem here is there something bothering you he knew what was going on look at verse 62 then what what if you were to see the son of man ascending to where he was before you see he had helped them see that their real problem in life was not that they needed another meal or increase in their income or maybe a little bit of health care the real issue was the spiritual hardness of their heart and their moral depravity and they struggled with that they got irritated he says hey let's take it a step further how is it going to affect you look at verse 32 62 how is it going to affect you if you were to see the son of man ascending to where he was before what is that all about remember Jesus had come down from heaven and here he was on earth preaching that he was the son of man and he was also going to be the one who was their redeemer and hope and he says and I'll tell you what if you're irritated with hearing what I have to say let me tell you the time is coming when I'm going to go up turn in your

Bibles over to Acts chapter 2 so you have a little further understanding of this in Acts chapter 2 the sermon that Peter preached at Pentecost begins this way now you're going to wonder if I'm going to skip over to verse 14 no I'm not okay but in essence what Peter says is this is listen you guys listen carefully to what I have to tell you there in verse 22 men of Israel hear these words Jesus of Nazareth a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst as you yourself know this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men hey is that a way to win friends and influence people when you tell them what they are I mean hey you guys out here a bunch of skunks and let's top it off keep on working forward Peter explains and this Jesus who you crucified what happened he rose from the dead and let's go a little further if you will notice in verse 36 it says let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and

Christ this Jesus whom you crucified in the context of the argument he explains the fact that Christ abides in heaven he's lifted up he's up there now and he is going to come back someday and he is going to deal with those who have rebelled against him and refused him and here is Jesus going back to the passage in John what he is doing is telling them undeniably and clearly the day is coming when he is going to rise again and rising again he is going to be the judge and the Lord of the whole earth if they were struggling with hearing him in the flesh tell them that they had a sin problem he says that's nothing compared to when I show up again and I actually deal with all the issues going on in your life look at verse 66 after this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him the verse marks a very distinct change in

[19:43] Christ's ministry very public open and we find that this large throng of people who heard the gospel clearly proclaimed ended up saying we don't want anything to do with what we're hearing and what we see here is that gospel truth eventually leads people to believe or reject Jesus and so one of the things that you can kind of evaluate in your own ministry and by the way why are we drawing breath today does anybody have an idea why we're drawing breath listen to me it's not so you can kind of accumulate something so you can retire and eventually end up in a nursing home everybody got that we are here on temporary assignment for one explicit reason and as a draw people to Jesus and when that's over we're checking out and going home everybody said amen we're not here together primarily primarily just to enjoy one another's company we are here to have our hearts and souls encouraged by the glory of Christ and as we are here together it is to kind of catch the virus and the infection and we go out and spread the happy disease of Jesus is the only answer everywhere we go right don't be surprised if people don't like it don't be surprised and you can evaluate the testimony and ministry of Christ and use it as a as a benchmark or an example of how you go about it for one I do want you to know that faithful witnessing involves meeting needs say it with me faithful witnessing involves meeting needs when we go out what day is it

Greg we're going out to do oatmeal 19th I should have asked Connie Connie what day are we going out it's 19th when we go out and pass out little cups of oatmeal and by the way there it's really nice it's hot it's been fixed and in the back do you put strawberries and raspberries on top of it and then there's a separate little baggie that has you know sugar in it and a spoon and a napkin I mean it's really well prepared we're going out there and we're showing kindness but do you know why we're really doing it because there are people that need Jesus and I don't mind whatever it is that gets an opportunity and by the way so far I've not had one chance really really to share the gospel with anybody that I've talked to there it takes time the last well I won't go there we get sidetracked okay you start with kindness everybody got that say it with me you start with kindness I do want you to know that eventually faithful witnessing involves more than just kindness it involves the gospel and when that happens don't be surprised if people don't accept it well that's pretty sobering look at verse 66 it says and from this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer walk with him maybe he should have taken a class in how to be persuasive you know try something I mean well let's keep going so Jesus said to the 12 do you want to go away as well now I want you to look at

salvation received and do understand this that when Jesus asked this question everybody look up so you don't miss this he wasn't asking because he was insecure how many of you sometimes have asked questions where you're really trying to hope that the question comes back or the answer comes back and kind of elevate your spirit I mean out of 20,000 about the crowd you can see them kind of shuffling off and irritation muttering with each other about low life Jesus I mean why did he just keep feeding us giving us this business about our sin and blah blah blah we're leaving and he says are you guys packing up and leaving too and he wasn't asking because he didn't know what the point was he wasn't asking because he didn't know the hearts of men his question was not for the sake of discovery but really for the sake of display so many times in your life the challenges that we endure are more for the sake of helping us see the issues so we can actually come to grips with what's going on and we can find the sufficiency of Christ do you understand that point let me say it slowly the difficulties and the challenges that you face are often brought into your life to help you discover the needs that you have and the sufficiency of Christ well I do like Peter's answer look at it we just sang it earlier Peter says Lord to whom shall we go you have the words of eternal life well that's an answer that just knocks it out of the park isn't it and I want you to understand as you as you look at this passage that here is is Peter and he steps out to the front he says listen I see all these people who are rejecting you but you know what are we going to do you're the one that has the words of life these dear men that that were part of this little little group 12 were not casual followers that were intrigued by occasional miracles out of the 11 apart from

Judas 10 of them would die as martyrs and so I want you to know that when Peter says what he does here in this passage he says you're the ones has the words of life what he was saying is this is that the salvation that we've received brings complete faith in the finished work of Christ alone now when you stop and think about this here is 20,000 who walked away and 11 basically that stayed it would be interesting for us to kind of stop and say how did it happen that way well for one I want you to look then at verse 68 or 69 or I'm sorry 70 Jesus in 70 answers so how is it that you've come to faith he says did I not choose you the 12 how is it that those individuals had come to faith he says I chose you now go back to 44 just for a minute and not for the sake of of irritation but I want you to understand that when Jesus said did I not choose you the 12 the point that he was making is that your relationship with me is of my drawing you to faith verse 44 no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him no one and so it's interesting as we look at this passage to recognize that here is Peter making a profession and confessing his faith and yet Jesus also reminds him of the fact that his understanding was the work of grace it was not Peter just being smarter than the rest let me give you another illustration that is exactly the same and I want you to turn for it because of the importance of the of the argument I make turn in your Bible to Matthew chapter 16 verse 17 go back to keep your finger in John because we are coming back there but

Matthew chapter 16 verse 17 just mark what what happens in that case Jesus is talking with the disciples he said hey by the way who do men say that I am and they kind of rattle off different things that they'd heard and and Jesus says that yeah okay but what do you say well who do you think I am Peter says what you are the Christ the son of the living God and I can see Jesus breaking into a smile and say let me put an a-plus in your grade book you are smarter than the rest of them is that what he says huh you got it Peter I mean you're the best student I have is that what he says oh verse 17 and Jesus answered him did did did Jesus let Peter give himself an attaboy and a pat on the back what would he do immediately after Peter's confession Jesus launches he says blessed are you Simon Barjona for flesh and blood what has not revealed this to you but my father is who's in heaven you got it with someone else's help don't want to ask you the question but how many of you ever relied on somebody else to get an answer in a class huh you know is that you didn't know the answer you and there you are you got you look brilliant don't you

Peter got the answer right Jesus turned around and said you didn't get it with your own help you didn't get it by yourself the father my father he's the one who lit you up and helped you understand and so why is God so focused on helping us understand that salvation is his business and he's the one who does it I must confess that the fact of God's sovereignty in salvation and the truth that salvation is his work alone could be a little frustrating a little confusing if kept to itself how many of you heard what I just said you see I believe entirely in the sovereignty of God in salvation but at the same time I recognize that salvation is something that is profound in its beauty and its declaration of the glory of Christ and as you think about this matter of salvation it should awe you that God saves it all earlier in the week I listened to Louis Giglio in his video or his DVD called indescribable how many of you ever listened to Louis Giglio raise your hands come on get him up I'm losing out the

crowd here Louis Giglio and has a great you can pick it up on YouTube a thing called indescribable he knocks it out of the park talking about creation listen to me creation is small potatoes in terms of its significance in declaring the glory of Christ in this universe do you want you to recognize that at creation you want you to recognize that at creation the angels kind of shouted for joy it's like yeah you know another universe you know whatever and and that's small salvation is something that causes them to be awestruck so why is Judas in this picture why is Judas in this picture there in verse 64 Jesus says he knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe and who it was who would betray him and in verse 70 did I not choose you the twelve and yet one of you is a devil he spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot for he one of the twelve was going to betray him and as you look at this what I want you to recognize is we have the Jews who rejected Christ we have the disciples who are drawn by grace to receive Christ and overarching this thing is the awesome glory of a God who cares enough for us that he is unrelenting in his interest in our salvation and here's Judas in the picture and he is there to show us grace abounding

[31:46] I want you to recognize that every step of the way Christ who had chosen Judas to walk with him knowing fully that Judas would betray him had to have pled with Judas with the tenderness of Christ that he would walk away in faith and not in doubt Judas spent three years watching Jesus he watched Jesus perform miracles he saw Jesus handling the scriptures he heard the teaching of Christ he saw the compassion of the Savior who came into the world to save sinners and I have no doubt that over and over again Jesus with a winsome and a broken heart ministered to Judas and how did Judas handle it?

He turned his back you know what? the night that Jesus was betrayed what he did was he broke bread with his disciples and after he had done that he washed their feet do you know whose feet he washed along with the other eleven?

he washed the feet of Judas I don't look at the statement in verse 70 as an indictment or even so much as prophetic but as one that was a recognition of the desperate spiritual need of Judas for the sake of drawing attention to the Savior that he might be saved rather than doomed and here is Judas a model and an example to us of how Christ loves the broken and ruined sinner and even in his rebellion is winsome in his appeal to them the last thing that Jesus said to Judas when he came into the garden was this do you betray me with a kiss?

are you doing this? for real? and the way that Jesus ministered to Judas reminds us that in gospel ministry there are no limitations to our affection and our tenderness do you understand that? listen to me it gives me an idea of how to handle a neighbor who's really irritable be like Jesus it helps me understand how to handle a rebellious child be like Jesus it helps me know how to deal with rejection and the disappointment of the hardness of the world that we live in be like Jesus so as we close John chapter 6 here's what I want you to recognize that this passage gives to us a wonderful picture of the Lord Jesus Christ truthful in exposing sin and pride people walked away from hearing Jesus and they understood exactly what their heart's condition was we see also that Jesus was humble in explaining that salvation is the work of God we also see that he was wonderful in bringing salvation to all those that were called and he was loving even to the most hard and unrepentant sinner in the mix so let me ask you this that's my Jesus do you know him do you know him do you know the one who came into this world to save sinners of whom I am chief or are you sitting out here this morning with a heart that is burdened by the guilt and shame of your life and I want you to know

[35:35] Jesus is the only answer Jesus is the only answer let's close in prayer our father as we look to the scriptures this morning and we see the glory of our savior our longing is this is that he would be lifted up among us and that we would delight in him as our God and our savior and I pray this morning that as we bring this service to a close that those who are here that do not know Christ would have their hearts warmed by the Holy Spirit and recognizing the burden of their soul would come to Christ repenting of their sin and believing in him alone for their salvation that's our prayer that's our desire as we sing that Jesus would be lifted up and we ask this in his name amen let's stand together as our band comes to lead us in our closing song let me encourage you if you're here

today and you recognize the spirit of God is addressing a spiritual need you have you may be here and he is calling you he's talking to you about the spiritual burden of your heart and you recognize

I need Christ as my savior as my savior