



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Community Group Material:

Bible Reading: John 6:59-71

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59 Jesus “said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

60 Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”

61 Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, “Does this offend you?”

62 Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?

63 The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

64 But there are some among you who don’t believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.)

65 He said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father.”

66 From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him.

67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, “You don’t want to go away too, do you?”

68 Simon Peter answered, “Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

70 Jesus replied to them, “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.”

71 He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot’s son, one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray him. (John 6:59-71 CSB)

SUMMARY:

- Jesus fed 5,000 people with bread, then proclaimed himself as the Bread of Life, offering his flesh for the salvation of the world. This produced a sifting: the crowd was disappointed, the Jews took offense, and numerous disciples abandoned Jesus. Amidst this turmoil, the Twelve Apostles, led by

Peter, remained steadfast. The latent unbelief of many disciples was exposed. It's a cautionary tale. Not all who deserted were "false believers"; the 'dropout disciples' included genuine Christians. This holds true even today. We witness believers, including pastors, who stop following Jesus. Some even deny Christ, becoming 'exvangelicals,' no longer identifying or living as Christians. Peter's confession during this crisis highlights crucial principles to remaining faithful, devoted disciples over the long run. Let's explore and apply the lessons in our own lives.

QUESTIONS:

1. Where do you find yourself in this narrative? Are you a disciple who turns & leaves, or among those who with Peter confess that Jesus is the only one with the words of eternal life? What factors made the difference between these two responses?
2. Many disciples said "This is a difficult saying! Who can accept it?" Jesus asked them, "Does this offend you?"
 - a. What was it about Jesus' message that was 'difficult, unacceptable &/or offensive'?
 - b. What aspects of Jesus' message do people in today's society find 'unacceptable &/or offensive'?
3. Are there any Christian believers you know who have 'dropped out' as disciples &/or ceased to identify as Christians &/or abandoned the Christian faith?
 - a. According to your knowledge, what factors influenced their decision/action?
 - b. What lessons might we draw from their departure/defection?
 - c. Based on the above, what practical changes in your life might you make or suggest?
4. Jesus indicated that among Jesus' 'many disciples' there were 'some who did not believe' (6:64). John records that "many of his disciples quit following him" (6:66).
 - a. Does this imply that only unbelieving ('false') disciples departed? Discuss.
 - b. Is it possible that the "many" departing disciples included both believers & unbelievers? Discuss.
 - c. Why is Judas mentioned, both with reference to 'many disciples' (6:64b) & the Twelve (6:70-71)?
5. Supposing some of the departing disciples had previously believed in Jesus can they blame God? Is there any basis in Jesus' message (e.g. Jn. 6:37, 39, 44, 65) for them to claim that their departure was because they were "de-selected" by God &/or now "rejected/ 'kicked out'" by God the Son? Discuss.
6. Jesus says "only the Spirit gives life; the flesh is useless" (6:63). Yet, Jesus "will give his flesh for the life of the world" (6:51b). Is there a contradiction here? Why or why not? Discuss.
7. Do the Twelve remain because Jesus elected them by divine providence (6:70)? Or do they remain because they've made an informed (& human) faith-decision (6:69). Which wins? Divine election or human decision? Discuss.