

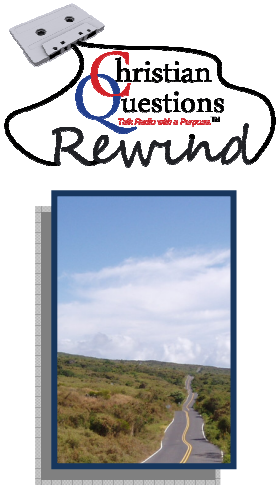


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Where Else Would We Go?

John 6:67-68: (NKJV) ⁶⁷Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?" ⁶⁸But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."

All of us who claim to be Christians would probably agree that Jesus is the centerpiece of our lives and that following him is our most important task. If we were to leave the conversation there, then it would seem to be a clear and easy conclusion. However, there is so much more to this story! What does it mean to truly follow him? What are "the words of eternal life" to which Simon Peter referred? Are they easy to find? Are they easy to follow? Are they available anywhere else? Stay with us as we look into these words of eternal life and example of Jesus to see if we are truly following him and no one else!

Questions for consideration:

1. Why would people have wanted to go away from Jesus?
2. What are "the words of eternal life?"

1. Why would people have wanted to go away from Jesus?

First, let's establish the context of our theme text. We will review John 6:25-70 in pieces.

Observations:

- Jesus had just finished feeding the five thousand with five barley loaves and two small fish;
- Jesus knew that many had crossed the sea to follow him for free food;
- Jesus called them out and admonished them to seek true nourishment from heaven;
- Jesus proclaims that he is the source of that food;
- Those present, therefore, ask him what to do. How sincere were they?

John 6:29-31

- Jesus' answer is simple - believe in ME;
- Now it begins to get interesting because they ask for a sign and works "worthy" of their belief; (as if the miracle of feeding wasn't enough!?)
- They cite Moses and the manna as their standard of comparison (below).

Exodus 16:6-8: So, the gauntlet has been cast down and Jesus is "on the spot." Sure, he fed a mere five thousand with the already existing bread and fish - the question is, can he prove himself greater than Moses?

John 6:32-33

- Jesus corrects their understanding - It was God, not Moses who provided the bread!

Object Lesson: When we look to compare Jesus to another - be it a person or some organization - be sure we compare based upon fact and not assumption.

- Jesus tells them plainly that this bread (the manna in the wilderness) was a picture;
- Jesus reveals that picture as one who comes from heaven to give life to the World. (It had been a foreshadowing that he would be the spiritual manna!)

John 6:34-40

- Their response shows that they didn't listen to Jesus' teaching. (verse 34)



Object Lesson: We must look beyond our pre-conceived conceptions to find understanding of what is true.

- Jesus then fulfills their request and describes the "hunger and thirst" (in spiritual terms) that he came to satisfy; (verse 35)
- Jesus reminds them of the opportunity that they have and are missing by their not believing; (verse 36)
- Jesus then gives the assurance that those who are his by way of his Father will find acceptance and everlasting life; (verses 37-39)
- Jesus furthers his assurance that ALL who will see and believe will be given life. (verse 40)

John 6:41-42:

- This is NOT a surprising reaction!
- Their focus on Jesus as the son of Joseph and Mary may have been an allusion to the "questionable" conception of Jesus.

Object Lesson: When we ask questions while entrenched in our pre-conceived perspective, the truthful answers we get will only further our Consternation!

John 6:43-51:

- Jesus tells them to stop the "murmuring", the quiet complaining;
- Jesus repeats his answer about God doing the drawing and the reward of that drawing; (verse 44)
- Jesus subtly points out the consequences of their lack of willingness to truly hear; (verse 45)
- Jesus raises the stakes by further separating his own life from theirs; (verse 46-47)
- Jesus further proclaims his position as the bread from God that brings life in contrast with the manna which only sustained life temporarily; (verse 48-50)
- Jesus bluntly states that his flesh is given for the life of the world. (verse 51)

John 6:52-58:

- Now the Jews resort to arguing amongst themselves as they seem to be finally listening;

Object Lesson: If we only listen to those things that would provoke us, it proves that we are engaged in selective listening and most likely locked out of truth.

- Jesus now presses their tolerance with some seemingly outrageous statements; (verses 53-57)
- Jesus reminds them of the comparison that *they* originally made and emphasizes his role as the life-giver. (verse 58)

Jesus meant to confound some during this weeding out process.

John 6:59-65

- All of this conversation took place in a crowded synagogue - not in quiet;
- Jesus' own disciples had a hard time with these things; (verse 60)
- Jesus, knowing this, reminds them of things even more difficult to comprehend; (verse 62)



- The identity crises persisted until Jesus ascended to heaven. Even though they saw tangible miracles, there was a lingering doubt about his identity, because events didn't happen as they would have expected;
- Jesus gives them the key to understand! (verse 63) He tells them that this is not literal; rather, it is a figurative teaching.

Matthew 13:10-16

- Jesus, knowing that there were some following only for "dinner and a show," taught these things to reveal their true form. Unfortunately we see this in Christianity today, where you can get the "show," but they aren't willing to speak the things that might be difficult, that draw out true followers of Christ. There was a sifting work going on to find those that really wanted to follow him, and that same work is going on today.

John 6:66-70

- Jesus' boldness chased away many who were disciples in name only;
- When confronted with this dilemma, the twelve respond in faith realizing that there is no other option through which they can follow the Messiah.

Object Lesson: Finding, following and fulfilling the will of God through discipleship is a challenging endeavor which will test the very fiber of our character!

2. What are "the words of eternal life"?

Matthew 16:13-19

We must recognize and confess that Jesus is The Christ;
There is NO other foundation upon which to build.

Matthew 16:20-28

Understand and accept the pathway of sacrifice;
Deny yourself daily;
Be willing to suffer ignominy;
Be willing to be "worldly poor"
all for the sake of Christ!

2 Timothy 3:10-17 Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 5:3: Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed: Strong's #3107 makariov *mak-ar'-ee-os*; supremely blessed; by extension, fortunate, well off

Matthew 18:1-3: Children are: TRUSTING, TEACHABLE, INNOCENT, ENERGETIC We are "well off" if we can become like children in these ways.

Proverbs 16:19 James 4:10

Matthew 5:4: (RSV)
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Mourn: Strong's #3996 penyew pentheo pen-theh'-o; to grieve (the feeling or the act)

Psalms 40:1-3 Isaiah 61:1-3



Matthew 5:5: (NRSV)

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Meek: Strong's #4239 prauv praus prah-ooce' mildness of disposition, gentleness of spirit, meekness

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 2 Timothy 2:24-25

Summary of Caller Comments: Continue to study and do it in the context of fellowship. The bias of the Pharisees that kept them out of true spirituality can happen to us as well.

The Meek inheriting the earth: Psalms 2:7-8:

Matthew 5:6: (NRSV)

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Psalms 42:1-6: This gives us a picture that out of necessity of our desiring with everything within us to follow after God, truth and righteousness. We have to hunger and thirst for it, and Jesus will fulfill that hunger and thirst.

Romans 6:11-14: We have a choice if we want to live under sin or righteousness. The Apostle tells us to make that choice for righteousness.

Matthew 5:7: (NRSV)

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

There is an important principle for us to treat others the way we want to be treated. Mercy triumphs over judgment if we want to live the words of eternal life. Justice matters in the context of compassion and mercy.

Matthew 7:1-7 James 2:12-17

Matthew 5:8: (NRSV)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

What would seeing God be like? The prospect is amazing!

Psalms 24:3-4 Hebrews 10:21-25

Matthew 5:9: (NRSV) **Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.**

Are we living this or do we have an agenda behind our actions? Romans 8:35-39: Christianity in its truest, purest form is difficult, challenging, and not natural; but the words of eternal life tell us to take up our cross, deny ourselves and follow him to be Overcomers. This is not because of what we have to offer, but what Jesus gives us through God's spirit and our fellowship one with another.

***So where else would we go?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!***