John 6:60-70 The Words of Eternal Life

In v. 68 Peter says, "***Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*** . . ." In this chapter John's emphasis is on "those who come to Jesus," as the true bread from heaven, will find eternal life, and not just eternal life as it looks to the future, but LIFE NOW. And, those who come to Jesus have everything they need for life and godliness. This means that as the Son of God in the flesh (John 1:14), EVERY word he speaks is the Word of God. And this is Peter's emphasis in v. 68. He is saying, "*We believe WHO you are! Therefore, we believe ALL the words that come from you*." So, what are some things we can learn from this text about the Words of Eternal Life? I have 2 truths: 1) Words of separation, 2) Words that give life.

1. The Words of Jesus Separate. I use the word "separation" to show that there are always those who believe the words of Jesus and there are those who do not believe the words of Jesus. We see this throughout John 6. After the great miracle of feeding the 5 thousand the crowds overwhelmingly follow Jesus. And, there are many Jewish leaders who also follow Jesus to a point. (See 6:59). Jesus begins to explain that as God gave manna in the desert to keep his people alive physically, so Jesus says, "**I AM**" the TRUE bread from heaven. And if you "***come to me***" I will give you life . . . even eternal life! And because of this teaching, these WORDS he speaks, they question and grumble and get upset. In their minds, he is a carpenter's son from Nazareth. So, how can he claim to have the same authority as God. In their minds, this is ludicrous. And in v. 60, Jesus' teaching makes its way down to the crowds, to the many "disciples" who have been following him because of his miracles and his giving them food. Many of them say, "***This is a hard saying; who can listen to it***?" And Jesus says to them, "***Do you take offense at this***?" And then in v. 66 we read that "**many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him**." Also, in this passage we see that one of his closest disciples, Judas has already turned away in his heart and will eventually betray the Lord Jesus (vv. 70-71).

Let me ask, "*What was the occasion for this separation*?" It was the teaching, the words of the Lord Jesus . . . Well, nothing has changed today. The words of Jesus are words that separate. They separate believers from non-believers. In the final judgment they will ultimately separate the "sheep and the goats." But for now, they separate true and non-true disciples. They separate friends. They separate family members. Today, WE believe the words of Jesus. This is why we meet! This is why we separate ourselves as the church of Jesus Christ. All roads do not lead to heaven!

With this in mind, let's delve deeper into this text and see if we can find some of the motivations of the world as they consider the words of Jesus. In other words, in this text, WHY do they reject Jesus? What does the world find hard about his teaching? This will help us understand the motives of this world and even examen our own hearts.

1) People are more interested in physical things and neglect the deeper spiritual realities that lie behind them. Let me mention 3 examples from this text and the gospels in general.

i. Physical food. The crowds followed Jesus because he fed them. He filled their bellies. Look at v. 26: "**Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves**."

ii. Miracles. All of Jesus' miracles are physical. People are healed. Demons are cast out. Storms are made peaceful. Many follow him because of his miracles. I don't think we see this today as much because we don't live in the times of Jesus or the apostles when miracles were in abundance. But, I hear stories all over the world of miracles being the reasons people still follow Jesus, or at least the "promise" of health or wealth. This kind of "prosperity" gospel is often the motivation for following Jesus. Once the "health" or the "wealth" goes, once the gospel doesn't meet one's needs, so do people fall away and walk with him no longer.

iii. Politics. We see this also with the politics of their day. Many, after seeing Jesus' miracles and listening to his words of authority, considered him to be God's Messiah. But, they only followed him until their politics didn't line up with the reality of the cross. They saw the "kingdom" of Jesus as only a physical reality (just like the manna). Much of the crowds followed him because they were constantly thinking, "*When will you defeat Rome*?" Even James and John ask, "***Lord, can we sit at your right hand when you come into your kingdom***," thinking it to be in their lifetime (Mark 10). Even after the resurrection, his disciples come to him and say, "***Lord, will you at this time retore the kingdom to Israel***," still thinking of his physical kingdom (Acts 1:6).

In John 18:35-37 we find John's story of Jesus' words with Pilate as the one who held the sword in judgment. "**Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered you over to me. What have you done?" Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." Then Pilate said to him, "So you are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice**."

Now, we cannot separate the physical from the spiritual. We are body and spirit. And, we live in a physical world with physical kingdoms, nation states, etc. And Jesus is Lord of all these. And, He is building his kingdom on this earth. But, sin, death, and the devil will not be ultimately defeated until the return of Christ and the "last" day (See vv. 39, 40, 44, 54). I think some of the Christian Nationalism, depending on the flavor, is most assuredly guilty of doing this very thing, emphasizing physical over spiritual realities. Now, we are always the best citizens. But, we are the BEST citizens because we understand the words of eternal life. We understand the spiritual realities behind the physical ones.

I am concerned with much of the Christian National conversation for many reasons (come speak to me or the elders in this regard.) But, one of my main concerns is the "fruit" that comes from those who want to take up the sword now for the name of Christ. What is the fruit of the Spirit? Turn with me to Gal. 5:19-24 "**Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality,**

**impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**." Brothers and sisters, do not hear me say that we are not to be engaged in this world and in our politics. We should and we must! But, the emphasis is always upon the Spirit as Christians, not the physical sword. I think of Paul's words to the Ephesians (and us) when he describes our battle and tells us about our weapons. He says: "***Take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of Christ***." (See Eph. 5:10-20). Let's move on.

2) Those who hear Jesus' words are unprepared to relinquish their own sovereign authority in religious matters. When this happens, a person is not capable of even taking the first steps of genuine faith. Look back to vv. 41-42: "**So the Jews grumbled about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 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'**?" Many of the Jews from Jesus' hometown were not willing to receive his words as true. Because of his humble surroundings, they could not even believe the miracles and the soundness of his teaching. This is the great majority of the world today regarding Jesus' deity. Regardless of his miracles, his authority as a teacher, even his resurrection, much of the world are unwilling to give up their sovereignty of what they "believe." If you will come to Jesus, you must be willing to relinquish what YOU want in this world and surrender to the sovereignty of Lord Jesus!

3) Those who hear Jesus' words are offended. In John 6 the Jews were offended that he claimed to be greater than Moses. So, they would not come to him. What about the rest of the world? In 1 Cor. 1:22-23, Paul preaches to the Gentile City of Corinth saying, "**For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles** . . ." For the Jews of Jesus' day his claim to deity offended them. For the Gentiles the humility of the cross was foolishness. This offended them. Look over at v. 62 for a moment. Jesus says, "***Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before***?" Now, I believe these words certainly refer to his resurrection and his ascension. But, what leads to his resurrection and ascension? His death. Those same disciples would eventually see Jesus go to the cross. And, it was the cross that led to his glory. Jesus must die if he is to ascend to glory! And Jesus' path to glory is always offensive to the world.

So, if you are not a Christian, what offends you? And, if you are a Christian, why do you believe? What causes you to see the spiritual realities behind the physical? What causes you to give up your sovereignty and submit to his? Why are we NOT offended at the great humiliation of the cross? This leads us to our 2nd truth.

2. The words of Jesus are life-giving. The words of Jesus give life. The words of Jesus (Words of Eternal Life) CHANGE us. How? What makes them powerful? Well, as we've seen, they are the Words of Jesus, which are the words of God. Look at v. 63: "**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**." So, back to my question: If you are a Christian, Why are you NOT offended at the great humiliation of the cross of Christ? Why did Peter and the closest disciples not walk away? Look at v. 65: "**This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father**." Today, if you have come to Jesus, if you are a Christian, it is because you have heard the words of Jesus. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the sovereign plan of God, you have been changed. The cross of Christ is the most beautiful thing to you! "FAITH COMES BY HEARING AND HEARING THE WORD OF CHRIST" (Rom. 10:17).

I think of 1 Thess. 1:2-5. Paul says: "**We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction**." Do you see the POWER of the Word of God in the life of the church? Brothers and sisters, your "work of faith," your "labor of love," your continued "hope in the Lord Jesus Christ," is the proof of powerful Word of God. Ask yourself, "Are these things true in my life?" "in our life as a church?"

Let me read 1 Cor. 1:26 for a good commentary this morning. Think back to my question: "Why are you not offended at the cross of Christ I read these words. "**For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God**" (1:26-2:5).

Today, you faith does not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Because of the powerful word of God, you understand the spiritual realties behind the physical. You have given up your sovereignty to the Lord Jesus Christ. You are not offended by the cross. You love the Lord Jesus more than you love the things of this world, more than the things he gives you.