



What Will You Do With Jesus

Message Notes, May 29, 2016

Context

- It is important to keep in mind John's purpose for writing this Gospel (Jn 20:30-31): 1) belief, and 2) in believing, life.
- By this point Jesus has performed miracles, earned a reputation as an unrivaled teacher, and in the process had become incredibly popular, gaining a following ranging from the curious (i.e. "the crowds") to the devoted (i.e. "the disciples").
- Not only are the Jewish leaders troubled by Jesus' popularity, Jesus is also troubled by his "popularity," because he knew the truth about the heart and intentions of those who followed (cf. Jn 2:25).
- Here in Chs. 6 and 7 Jesus draws a line in the sand with the aim of separating those who are merely fans and those who are truly with him. He defines what is required to believe and follow.
- Jesus is bringing people to a crisis of belief. They must choose either belief or unbelief.

Read John 6:52-71

The Bread of Life and Words of Eternal Life (John 6:22-71)

Jesus had just performed the miracle of the Feeding of the 5000. Everyone loved that one, yet began to grumble that Moses had fed the Israelites for 40 years. Would Jesus only feed them once? Here Jesus confronts the true state of their hearts: 1) it was God, not Moses who fed the Israelites, and 2) God wanted to give them a different kind of bread, one that would fill their souls with life rather than their stomachs with food. But Jesus knew that many of them preferred bread for the stomach to bread for the soul.

Jesus draws the line in the sand, "I am the Bread of Life, and unless you eat My flesh and drink My blood, you can have nothing to do with me." It's not that they thought Jesus mad and requiring cannibalism. They knew exactly what he was asking and it was more than they wanted to give. Many disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him. ***The people were divided.***

Jesus turned to his disciples and asks if they will also leave. Peter responds, "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (v.68). To which Jesus responds that he has chosen them, not the other way around.

Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:1-52)

- Jesus' brothers encourage him to go to Jerusalem out of their own unbelief (v.5).
- In Jerusalem, ***the people were divided*** over Jesus' identity: some thought him "a good man" (v.12), others said he was a deceiver (v.13), some wondered if he was the Christ (vv.26,31), while others said he could not be (v.27).
- Jesus invites any who will come to drink and be filled with rivers of living water. ***The people are again divided***, some wondering if he was the Christ, others refusing.
- Even the guards sent to arrest Jesus couldn't (or wouldn't) because of the authority with which Jesus taught (v.46).

The Line in the Sand

Jesus knows what is in a man, and that not all who follow him are true believers. So he makes this most outrageous claim with the result that some believe, some do not; some are inspired, some are enraged; some want to exalt Him as Christ, while some want to kill him as a deceiver or demon -possessed lunatic. There is no middle ground.

In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis demands Jesus is either a liar, lunatic, or Lord:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He either would be a lunatic...or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to...

And divisions over Jesus' identity are not simply between Christians and atheists. Many who claim to be Christians are also divided.

- Some seek a god who will keep their bellies full and make their lives work.
- Some seek a "church" that looks more like a political or social movement.
- Some want to be a fan of Jesus without having to become a Jesus fanatic.

"Drinking Blood"

N.T. Wright suggests that an account from David's life informs Jesus' hard saying. 2 Samuel 23 records that while David was being hunted by Saul, three of David's Mighty Men slipped into Saul's territory and drew water from the well at Bethlehem. David would not drink it, declaring "I cannot drink the blood of these men." The water was a symbol of their devotion and their very lives. It was far too precious to drink.

Jesus is saying the same in John 6, only we must drink *His* blood. Jesus' flesh and blood are the symbol of His very life, and to eat and drink it was to give oneself entirely to Jesus and allow Jesus to give Himself entirely to them. It is a clear call to abandon-ment to His Lordship. There is no value in admiring Jesus, or being inspired by Him. *You must eat His flesh and drink His blood.*

Questions for Reflection

1. Jesus demands a response. What do *you* do with Jesus? Is He liar, lunatic, or Lord?
2. If you are following Jesus, what are you seeking? A full belly? A political movement?
3. What are the obstacles in your life to being the kind of follower Jesus is demanding?
4. How will you commit this day to giving yourself entirely to Jesus?