

## Peter's Other Confession 07-30-17 AM

John 6 is one of the most powerful sermons that Jesus presented. It begins with a miracle the day before, when Jesus fed 5,000 people with just a few loaves of bread. Then when men follow Him, He begins speaking of a bread from heaven. They remember manna, that bread from heaven which sustained the Israelites in the wilderness. Jesus says that He is the true bread from heaven. As the sermon progresses, Jesus tells His disciples "*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you*". This statement was alarming, to say the least. Consuming human flesh and blood was a violation of the law of Moses AND the law of Noah (Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10). As well, it was something that even Gentiles thought disgusting and shameful.

When Jesus made this statement, we are told that his disciples had two reactions: *Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, "This is a hard saying; who can understand it"....from that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.* In other words, the disciple of Jesus couldn't understand what He meant, and chose to quit following Him. Jesus asked two important questions of His disciples and the 12 apostles: 1. Does this offend you? 2. Do you also want to go away?

This lesson is one for use to consider in regards to the difficult times in being a Christian. We need to accept that there will be times when we are offended by Jesus. Maybe we will experience difficult circumstances, as John the Baptist did when Jesus told him not to be offended in Luke 7:22-23. Perhaps it will be when we come to understand some of the hard teachings of Jesus, such as those found in Matthew 19 or Luke 14:26 or the teachings for submission in Colossians 3-4 and Ephesians 5-6. Maybe we will be offended when we are forced to decide whether the world speaks the truth or the Scriptures on things such as evolution, the flood, or homosexuality.

This offense (also described as a stumbling block) can cause us to want to go away from Christ. We may desire to go away to the world, as Demas did in 2 Timothy 4:10. Maybe we want to simply turn to what we see as an easier path (Matthew 7:13-14). Maybe we simply want to not think about something that hurts us, as did the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:21-22. The point is that when we stumble, perhaps we fall. But we don't have to fall.

Evidence of this is found in Peter's confession. Most are familiar with Peter's confession of Christ in Matthew 16, stating that Jesus was the Christ. This is effectively the same confession, but here it is responding to Jesus' questions on being offended and wanting to leave. Peter does not deny that they may have been offended by this teaching, and that perhaps they want to leave. But Peter also makes a very simple, straight forward point: even being offended, Jesus is the best and only chance anyone has for eternal life.

Application: There WILL be difficulties in Christ. Paul said "*all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted*" (2 Timothy 3:12). We need to accept that at times we WILL be offended in following Christ, and that there WILL be times we want to go away. As such, these feelings are not sinful in themselves. Our faith is not built on feelings, but on knowing the word of God (Romans 12:17). But just as faith without works is dead (James 2:26), so acting on these feelings IS sinful.

Jesus told those listening that believing was a work, not an emotion. "*This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent*" (John 6:29). It is work to believe, and it does not come easily or naturally at times. We need to accept this and be prepared for the times when it will be hard.

