

# The Gospel of John

## True and False Disciples

John 5:44-6:2,

### INTRODUCTION:

This sermon is going to be different than any sermon I have ever preached. It will be entirely an **introduction** to set us up for what remains in the chapter. There will be no BODY per se.

The most disastrous thing that anybody can do is to cause people for any moment to think they might be true followers of Jesus Christ when the truth is they're not. That should never be the stock and trade of anyone who calls himself a minister.

### All Stand and Read Scripture.

#### **John 5:44-6:2 (NASB)**

<sup>44</sup> How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and only* God? <sup>45</sup> Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. <sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. <sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

<sup>6</sup> After these things Jesus went away to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). <sup>2</sup> A large crowd followed Him, because they saw the signs which He was performing on those who were sick.

### Prayer

We are backtracking here a bit in order to set up the overall theme that was introduced in chapter 5 and taught in chapter 6. There is one theme here. And if you can understand the one theme from these chapters, then it will make sense to you, even though we will string it out over a few weeks. The theme in this section of scripture is **The Characteristics of False Discipleship**. These verses are here to show us the **difference between a true and false follower of Jesus**. This is a **huge** issue. That is why 71 verses in chapter 6 are given to this. It is **not** a minor detail. Remember "**The gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it**" **Matthew 7:13-23** and there will be many who say, "Lord, Lord," and Jesus will say, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness".

That is the purpose of my ministry here is it not? I **must** share with you what the scriptures say are the characteristics of a **true** disciple. Because none of us want to go through all of the motions of being a Christian only to find out in the end that Christ

never knew you

Remember Jesus tells in **John 10:27 and the first part of 28**. "My sheep **hear** my voice. **I know them** and **they follow Me**. **And I give them eternal life.**"

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

Hold up the "Faithful Ketchup" used in Vacation Bible School. He is the most "faithful" ketchup packet I have ever seen!

He only responds to the Master's voice. When we HEAR what God wants us to do through the scriptures, it is critical that we FOLLOW (Obey Him).

**Have Luke come forward. Ask him if he can make ketchup respond. He will say "MAYBE". Have Luke tell "Ketchup" to do something. Do not allow it to respond until you verify that God gives His permission.**

When we are faced with decisions in this life, the response to that decision MUST always be based upon God's truth.

When God through Moses told Pharaoh what He wanted him to do, Pharaoh **definitely** him, but each time he hardened his heart and disobeyed Him. If we are a **TRUE DISCIPLE** we will **obey** God's will that He has for our lives based upon the scriptures and how we are to live as one of His sheep.

That is why James tells us that **Faith without words is dead**. **James 2:18**. We are **not** saved by our works. We have already been saved by our only means and that is **through Jesus Christ! Our works are and end result of our faith.**

Nothing good that we do on this earth will save us. So if you are only depending on your morality and good works to save you, it will fail.

### **Acts 4:12 (NASB)**

**<sup>12</sup>And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved."**

It is critical for people to do a heart examination and make sure that Jesus **DOES KNOW US!** God expects us to read the scriptures for ourselves and insure that we understand what He is requiring of us. God expects each of us to have enough concern for our eternal salvation that we take seriously the responsibility to check the scriptures for yourself. **Do you have a regular devotion time with God?**

### **2 Corinthians 13:5 (NASB)**

**<sup>5</sup>Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?**

It is YOUR responsibility to check the scriptures frequently to ensure that what I am telling you is true. **You** will be held accountable for your own salvation! If Jesus were to say to you at the final judgment "Depart from Me, I never knew you" you will not be able to respond, "But Wayne said..."

Our Lord clearly made an issue out of this. There are people who attach themselves to Jesus and to the gospel to one degree or another, to Christianity, to the church, and then defect or desert. They do not last. They do not persevere! It was Jesus Himself who said in **Mark 13:13** that *whoever perseveres to the end shall be saved*.

There are plenty of defectors, that's obvious to all of us, and we've all had that experience. Those of us who have been Christians for any length of time, know people who made a profession of faith in Christ and then walked away from the gospel and walked away from the church, and walked away from any interest in Christ or the Word of God. We understand that. All of us have had people like that in our lives.

The Apostles certainly experienced that. Paul looked back over his life in **2 Timothy 1:15** and said, *"All who are in Asia turned away from me,"* and then in **2 Timothy 4:10, 16**, *"Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me"*. And **verse 16**. *"At my first defense no one supported me, but all deserted me"*.

Paul recognized defectors. He recognized that there would be traitors in the church. And we all understand that. It gets painful when it happens in **our own circle of friends**, when we know **people who once professed an interest in Christ and no longer does**. It gets really painful when it turns out to be **children in our families** that walk away from Christ. Is equally painful when it's a **spouse** who once was involved in the church and professed an interest in Christ and no longer does. We feel the pain of that. But it's a **reality** and that's why 1 John 2:19 is in the Bible.

### **1 John 2:19 (NASB)**

*<sup>19</sup>They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.*

There will be defectors. We don't want to make it easy for false followers of Jesus Christ. We want to make sure we are crystal-clear about the difference between a **True Christian** and a **False Christian**, a **True disciple**, and a **False disciple**.

Since we have just finished Vacation Bible School where the theme was based upon the Life of Moses, I will use that as an example. Think of all of the things that God did for Israel in order to keep His covenant with Abraham in **Genesis 22:17**. After Abraham **tried** to sacrifice Isaac on the altar in obedience to God's demand, God said, *"I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies."*

**Moses** was the one that God chose to carry out part of that promise.

Think of all of the things that God did to **protect** the Israelites against Pharaoh and the Egyptians in order for them to escape their bondage and eventually enter the promised land. That was all because He had a plan for Moses' life, as He has for all of us, and insured that Moses had the opportunity to do His will.

- Moses was placed in a basket in the Nile river because Pharaoh had decreed that all male Hebrew children were to be killed. Pharaoh's daughter, of all people, found him and believed that he was a gift from the gods. So God preserved his life.
- Moses appeared many times before Pharaoh and demanded **"Let my people go!"** Pharaoh could have killed him at a whim, but God protected him and caused him to

keep listening to Moses.

- He caused ten plagues to fall over Egypt. The plagues only affected the Egyptians. The Israelites were not affected. How amazing is that!
- He allowed Moses to part the Red Sea and let the Israelites cross on dry land. When Pharaoh's army of ten thousand men with horses and chariots tried to cross also, the waters came back together and Pharaoh and ALL of his army was drowned, yet all of the Israelite's were spared.
- God fed the Israelites with manna and quail during their wandering in the desert.
- God supplied water to them by having Moses strike a rock.
- He eventually DID lead them to the promised land in Canaan.

And there were many, many, more miracles that God did for them in order to keep His covenant. One would wonder how anyone could experience all that God had done for them and **then fall away**. But many of the Israelites did!

- They complained that Moses had sent them all out to die. That they were better off under the severe slavery of Pharaoh and the Egyptians.
- They complained about the food.
- They built idols.
- They would not trust God to conquer their enemies! If God could part the waters of the Red Sea, don't you think He would have the ability to conquer their enemies?

And on, and on, and on. Because of all of their disbelief, they had to wander in the desert for forty years!

Perhaps the most familiar event in the New Testament where we come across the tears of Jesus is in **Luke 19:41**. This was during His triumphal entry as He approaches Jerusalem.

It says, "He saw the city and wept over it, saying, **"If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace"**...In other words, if you only could realize **what you had rejected!**" Better yet, **"Whom you had rejected!"** I want to say it in that way because I want you to understand that spiritual defection, spiritual apostasy, false discipleship **breaks** the heart of God and the heart of Christ.

One of the most profoundly touching texts in Scripture on this subject is where **our scripture text is found this morning, John 6**.

Hopefully you can hear this scripture, not only intellectually, but even emotionally. The sorrow is so great as you see our Lord Jesus trying so hard to convince the Jews of His divine power and authority.

We try to relate that to people all the time

- that when you can't understand life,
- and you can't understand your circumstances,
- you don't know why things have gone the way they've gone,
- when our children or grandchildren deeply disappoint you
- or troubles come your way,
- or disease or the threat of death,
- or disappointment,

- you lean hard on the sovereignty of God, right?

This is what we lean on when things on this earth trouble us. We lean on the assurance that God is sovereign. That God has power over everything both physical and spiritual. God is in charge, there nothing is nothing happening outside His purpose and His will.

I want to remind you that while Jesus is fully God, He is also fully man. Having the nature of being fully man, He is tempted at all points like as we are, and if God weeps over men who fall away, Jesus does as well. And it pains Him very much because He knows the end for those who ultimately reject Him. It's noted at the end of the chapter, **John 6:66**, "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore." And then that sad, painful statement of **verse 67**, "So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"

It's really an agonizing, painful experience for our Lord. So perfect, so compassionate, so powerful, fully God, gracious, merciful, kind, this chapter starts out with Him spending the day healing like every day. And then this massive feeding of thousands of people, which demonstrates compassion and power. And it ends with the defection of many of His followers and the Jews seeking to kill Him. It's a crushing chapter.

It's foolish just to assume that anybody who talks about Christ is a true follower, or anyone who attaches to Him in some way is a true follower. **Verse 66** introduces us to a simple concept. It is possible to be a disciple who walks away **from** Jesus. Many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore. Finality, they left.

That is a clear indication that the word "disciples" is generic. It is the word *mitylene* (Miss To Lay' Nay) in Greek. It means a student or a learner. Which doesn't tell you anything about the person other than that they're there, absorbing the experience.

You could be a disciple that is a true follower of Christ. But you can also be called a disciple and it might mean nothing more than that you were uncommitted and only interested superficially.

Chapter 6 is about disciples, the real and the false. And you have got to start looking at this chapter on the personal level, **asking if this is me and where do I fit?**

As I told you from the beginning this entire sermon is basically an introduction to the sermons in the next few weeks. But before I close I would like to emulate a BODY to this sermon by briefly show you the signs of a false disciple that has been disclosed to us through chapters 5 and 6.

## **BODY:**

### **I. FALSE DISCIPLES ARE ATTRACTED BY THE CROWD.**

I would like to think that you're at Greenwood Christian Church because you're attracted by the worship and the Word of God. You have a desire to worship. Since we are such a small church, I suspect that that is true. There is no crowd here to attract you.

False disciples are attracted by the crowd. Remember when the loaves and fishes were distributed to those who were following him that there were 5,000 men which would equate to thousands and thousands of men, women, and children?

The daily healings and demonic deliverances of Christ have led to massive popularity.

They are there because the crowd is there. You know how that works. Sometimes you're walking along, you see a small crowd and you wonder what's going on, so you add yourself to the crowd and you become the next layer, then the next layer, and the next layer, and the next layer and eventually you kind of figure out what's going on. When something dramatic is going on the crowd swells.

## II. FALSE DISCIPLES ARE FASCINATED BY THE MIRACLES.

You could draw a crowd at a football game, that's not a supernatural event. But if you start saying "God is here, God will change your life, this is a supernatural event. God may change you physically, He may heal you, you may see a miracle, He may change your life, He may change your career, He may change your economics. You may get a social miracle. You may get an economic miracle. You...you just don't know, this is a supernatural event."

That's very attractive for people who feel they are struggling in this world.

It says repeatedly throughout the New Testament, again and again, and again and again, they were drawn by the signs and the wonders. Remember what Nicodemus said?

### **John 3:2 (NASB)**

***2 ..."Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."***

## III. FALSE DISCIPLES THINK ONLY OF EARTHLY BENEFITS.

Jesus was walking among his followers and What was He preaching? The Kingdom of God. What is the Kingdom? Well I'll tell you what it's not. **John 18:36** tells us ***"My kingdom is not of this world."***

When He was preaching the Kingdom, He wasn't talking about temporal life. He wasn't talking about the land under their feet and the political issues that they were facing.

When He was talking about the Kingdom as He healed their diseases and their illnesses. Most of them did not respond by repenting and believing in Him. No, they wanted to make Him a King because all they could think about was the earthly benefits to make Him a King. We want food. We want physical healing. They just wanted Jesus to give them the material things that they desired.

## CONCLUSION:

And that gets us to the text where we're supposed to be in this morning. But you've enjoyed the trip, haven't you?

So next week we will start again in a verse by verse study of the scripture and learn of a **fourth characteristic** of the false disciple. **The false disciple has no desire for worship.**

**The Family of God.**