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[00:00:03] So if you have your Bibles, turn to John, chapter six, verse 60 today. John 6:60. And I'd like you to stand. The Bible says in verse 60, when many of his disciples heard it, they said, This is a hard saying, who can listen to it? But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, can you imagine the disciples of Jesus grumbling? I can hear it all the time. Said to them, Do you take offense at this? Are you scandalized by this? Then what if you were to see the son of man ascending to where he was before? Is it is the spirit who gives life? The flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken and, let me just say that again. The flesh is no help at all. Right. Can we say that together? The flesh is no help at all. One more time. The flesh is. Stop relying on your flesh. The words that I have spoken to you were spirit in life. But they. There are some of you who do not believe for Jesus knew from the beginning who those were, who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him. And he said, This is why I told you no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the father. After this, many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him. I mean, that's sad. After this, many of his disciples turn back and no longer walk with him. So Jesus said to the 12. Do you guys want to go as well? Simon Peter answered him. Lord, to whom? Circle that word. Not to what? Not to where, but to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

[00:02:11] Where does our focus today? I just want to read this last verse or two verses to the finish of the chapter. Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you? The 12? And you have one of you as a devil? How's that for, like an encouraging word to say? He spoke of Judas, the Simon of Iscariot, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he one of the 12 was going to betray him. Let's pray. Father, thank you. Thank you so much for your word today. Thank you, God, for your Son. Thank you. That in him, we have discovered the words of eternal life. Thank you for the abundant life that you've brought to us. Thank you for the truth that we can anchor ourselves to. Thank you that he is the Holy One of God. Thank you. Today, that we know Him as our Messiah, our redeemer, God incarnate and God. We prayed today in a in a culture that tempts us to turn away from the truth, tempts us to modify the truth. God help us to be anchored. Help us to be steadfast. Help us to be unyielding. Help us to walk with you, God, in these challenging times that we might be in influence for the Gospel. In Jesus name. Amen. You can have a seat. You know Jesus will say something or do something that will offend you. Jesus will say something or do something that will offend you. In fact, I would say you can count on it. If you read the Bible and you're reading the words of Jesus, you can count on it that you're going to run across something that is just going to offend you. And, you know, we live in a very hypersensitive culture where when people do run across something that's offensive that Jesus said, they oftentimes respond by canceling him.

[00:04:03] Right. Well, we'll just cancel him out. And you know that that's the case when you're in the workplace. And, you know, for the most part, everyone is pretty much just written Jesus off. And you say his name, you drop a J bomb, you drop it, you drop the Jesus bomb. And like you can feel the electricity in the real like hit the crescendo because you've just spoken the unspoken name. Many people just cancel him. There are some people who cancel his hard sayings and so they'll go through the Bible and maybe they'll acknowledge Jesus as a historical figure and maybe a good teacher, but they'll just they'll just strike out those things that they don't like that he said. There are others who will modify it, you know, maybe falsely go back to the original language or reshape the context of the Bible and say, Well, that's not what he really meant. What he really meant was this and they'll modify it or they're they'll shape it to make it more palatable, more palatable, more in-line or congruent with the culture around them. You know, that is the reality of where we dwell today. And if you don't see that, then, you know, you literally have are living up the proverb. You've you've put your head in the sand. Now, I would say that this does bring some consolation, that this is not new. Even Jesus dealt with this with the multitude that was following him. We're going to see today there's a distinction between those who called themselves disciples who are following Jesus, and then, of course, those who were really disciples. Specifically those who were the 12. But the multitude was struggling with some of the things that Jesus said. Obviously, we just read that.

[00:05:51] Now, you might be thinking, Well, what was it that they were struggling with? There are some verses that we skipped. And so I'm going to tell you what it was that they were having a hard time with. Number one, remember, the multitude wanted the miracles, but they were offended at the deeper truths that the miracles pointed to remember. They were like, they follow Jesus for the show. They were miracle junkies. They were looking for the next supernatural thing. I'm not saying they would have said it like this, but it was kind of like the circus show for them. They were into the supernatural display of the power of Christ. But when it came to what those miracles pointed to, they were offended by that. They rejected that. They resisted that. They were offended. As you read the previous verses. Number two, they were offended that Jesus referred to himself as greater than Moses. Remember, if you're living in that context, at the time, Moses was the most revered person. Of course they revered Abraham. But it was Moses who was on Mount Sinai. It was Moses who received the law from God. It was Moses who came down and gave the Decalogue to the people of God. Even John said the law came through Moses. The grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. And so when Jesus said that He was greater than Moses, they were offended at that. And then the third thing that they were offended at, and for those of you who are Bible students, you know, really this was kind of the issue at hand. They were offended that the teachings of Jesus, at least on the surface, were in conflict with the law and were in conflict with cultural taboos.

[00:07:34] So when Jesus said in that you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you have no part in me or you will not see eternal life. That's saying right there was deeply offensive because at least on the surface, it seemed to be in conflict with the Mosaic Law from the Torah and then also with the cultural taboos. Now understand something when I say hard, hard saying when I say they were offended, I'm not just saying that. They just didn't get it. I'm not saying that it was just kind of complicated so they intellectually couldn't get their minds around it. When Jesus says to them, Are you offended at this? The Greek word is scandaleon, which means we get our English word scandal. From that, it means to be repulsed. It means to recoil. It means to be angered. And so this wasn't just like this wasn't just something that the multitudes were like, well, I didn't really get that, you know, like onto the next teaching. Jesus. No, they heard this and they recoiled. They were mad at what he said. They were repulsed by what he said. And I'm going to tell you right now, there are things that Jesus says that will offend your worldview. They'll offend your worldview. There are things that Jesus has said that will offend opinions that you hold. There are things that Jesus has said that will be in conflict with your group think. The little crew of people that you've surrounded yourself with. And let me just say, like groupthink goes beyond your little circle of influence, whatever influences you allow in your life. I think about the many different sub cultural influences. Well, that can be groupthink too. And there are things that Jesus says that are just frankly offensive.

[00:09:20] Maybe the offense is because you have a loved one who has chosen a lifestyle that is in conflict with the Word of God. Make no mistake about it. Jesus said some hard stuff, didn't he? Right? Right. You want to hear some? Yeah. Okay. All right. I made a list for you guys. Okay. Jesus said fear him. Who can cast body and soul into hell? Fear. Mm. Fear him. Who can cast body and soul into hell? In other words, there is. There is eternal judgment. And hell is a real place. The words of Christ. Not my words, he said in the beginning. God made them male and female. In other words, genders are binary. He said, what? God has joined together. Let no man separate. In other words, in the context, marriage is between one man and one woman. And the expectation of God is fidelity across a lifetime. His. He said, Repent. He said, Repent. Well, you say, well, what does that mean? It means that none of us are good. None of us are good. There is not a single person who has ever lived on the face of the earth that is going to be able to stand before God and say, well, it's because I'm such a good person. Right. I mean, like, hey, let's have that conversation right now. I say to you, Are you going to heaven? You say, Yeah, I'm going to heaven. I say, back to you. Why are you going to have him? Because we're having this private conversation here on Sunday morning. I say, why are you going to have and you say back to me, because I'm a good person. I say to you, the Bible says there are none who are good. No, not one.

[00:11:03] None are righteous. None seek. After God all have sinned and fallen short of His glory. This is what repentance means. Repentance means to see sin the way that God sees sin. And all of us have sinned. And therefore, all of us, all of us need to repent. He said, I did not come to bring peace on earth, but a sword. What does that mean? It means that the truth hurts and oftentimes it divides. Jesus said, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Well, what does that mean? It means Satan is not a myth. Some people are like, well, you know, this this figure, this character, the devil, the serpent, Satan. He's just a myth, a fable, a fairy tale. He was created by Christians. And so that Christians could have a common enemy that they could collectively fight against will not according to Jesus, because Jesus said that he saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, by the way. 187,000 miles per second. Right. That's fast. And when Satan stood against God, it wasn't a difficult thing for God to kick him out of heaven. That's where you are. That's where you give spontaneous applause. Because. Because God is so powerful. The final one, if you're not offended yet, let me just say this. Not because I want to offend you. I'm just saying, like, let's just deal with the fact that you said hard stuff. He said, if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. If your hand causes you to say and cut it off. Now, he obviously is not talking about self-mutilation, because if all of us who have sinned cut our hands off. Well, I mean, we all would be handless, right? But what he's saying is this God doesn't tolerate sin and neither should you.

[00:12:46] God does not tolerate sin and neither should you. Look, the way the people during the time of Jesus responded was to grumble. They grumbled. They were offended. They were repulsed at these things, and some of them turned away. Now, today, it's not always the case that people turn away. Some people just ignore those things that Jesus said that they don't like. Sometimes they modify it. You know, they try to, like I said, make it make it into something that he never said. And let me just tell you right now, there are churches across the country that do this. And I'm not making the statement today because I'm setting us up as better than other churches. I'm for sure not doing that. Neither is this pulpit ever used to attack the Church of God. I'm telling you the truth, though, that many churches, in an effort to be relevant to the culture. Many churches because they're afraid of being offensive. They will take these words that Christ said, and you will never hear them preach from the pulpit. You'll never hear them discussed. In fact, sometimes you'll even hear them being modified. And so let me just say, I reject modifying the teachings of Jesus Christ. I reject that. And. And I know, I know you feel the same way. But in addition to that, let me also say I reject people using the teachings of Jesus Christ to bash people or to attack people. And, you know, there are Christians who do this. There are Christians who just have a you know, a frustration against particular segments of our culture. Maybe for them, they're offended. Maybe for them, it doesn't fit within their perspective or their worldview, or they've got a bad experience in the past.

[00:14:33] And so sometimes it's hard to imagine Christians doing this like a real believer who has been saved by grace, through faith. Right. A real believer who has gone to the cross and confess personal sin like God, you know, here I am. I have nothing to offer, forgive me or my sins. And then you get pulled into the family of God like, behold what man? The love of behold, what manner of love the Father has displayed to us that we should be called the sons and daughters of God. Like, if that's been our experience, how could we ever take the truth or the teachings of Jesus Christ and use them to attack people? Know what we do believe in is speaking the truth in love. So you say to me today, well, how does this apply to me? Right, because everything ultimately comes back to you. Well, let me tell you how we ought to be when we hit the hard sayings of Christ or when we're offended over something he has said we ought to be embracing the sting of truth, seeing God's purpose in it for our spiritual growth. And we should be choosing to cling to that. Which is true, because that's the pathway of the true disciple. When you hit something that's hard to take, when you hit something that you just really don't want to submit to or to obey, when something's in conflict with the way that you've believed, the response for the true disciple is to embrace it. Embrace the string. The sting of of truth. Don't turn away. Don't modify it. Don't ignore it. Understand that God has purpose in it. God use is when we embrace the truth of God. He uses it to grow us spiritually, to shape us and mold us into the image of Jesus Christ.

[00:16:18] And we demonstrate that we're true disciples, not by turning away, but by pressing in and following God. Now, you might say, How do we do that in a practical way? There are a couple of things today that I want to draw out from Jesus his dialog not only with the multitudes, but also with his own disciples. You guys with me today? All right, stick it out. If I don't think you're paying attention, I'll teach longer. Okay. Number one. Number one is this in as long? You can take a picture of it on the screen if you want to realize the battle is not between competing ideologies or what is culturally acceptable, but between the spirit in the flesh, between what is true and what is false. Realize that the battle is not between competing ideologies or what is culturally acceptable. Sometimes the error that people make in the church is this We think that the ground is level and there are all of these philosophies or ideas. And Christianity is one. One among many, you know, maybe different, but all equal. And so we try to figure out where Christianity fits. That is not the case. That's not what's at stake. Sometimes we think, well, listen, you know, it's 2000 year old, 2000 years old. The book is old and and society is changing and the culture is shifting. And and so, you know, we really need to think about what's acceptable, you know, what the mores of the culture currently are. And so and so then we think, well, maybe we just need to modify it, maybe we need to shift it. There's a lot of people who don't believe in it, and the majority is always right, right, wrong. No, that's not the issue either.

[00:17:55] Hey, the issue, according to Jesus, is this is a battle between the spirit in the flesh. This is a battle between what is true and what is false. And so when you hit something in the Word of God, that that may be hard to hear. And maybe you find yourself in a place where you know your lifestyle or somebody else's lifestyle is not in alignment. You have to step back and you have to evaluate what God's perspective is from a spiritual point of view. Right. God is I don't want to see this. In other words, listen, you're not just evaluating from a fleshly perspective. You're not just taking things for face value. You're not bringing in the way the world thinks and what the culture says. You're stepping back and you're recognizing these are spiritual issues. These are issues between what is true and what is false. And you have to be disciplined to see things, to see things from God's perspective. I love what Jesus said. He said, it is the spirit who gives life the flesh. Like trying to view the things of God from the flesh will not help you. It will not help you. You know, the world and the underlying philosophy in the framework of the world will never understand the teachings of Jesus. If you're in this spot where it's like, Man, I can't wait for the world to just get it, like I get it. Well, guess what? That's never going to happen. Like, if you're hoping that your unbelieving friends one day are going to say, Hey, listen, we totally understand where you're coming from, I'm telling you, that's not going to happen either. You can't understand the things of God unless you have the spirit of God.

[00:19:35] And there will always be a dissonance. There will always be a dissonance between the way God calls you to live your life, the way God calls you to think, and the way the world operates. And the temptation for you is this You're either going to stand your ground and hold on to the truth and convey it in love, or you're going to concede and begin to compromise and you're going to be begin to yield to the way the world sees things. Paul was dealing with this with the church at Corinth because, you know, they were a church that was a worldly church. There was a lot of a worldly influence in this church. And so Paul said this to them. He said, We impart this in words not taught by human wisdom, but taught by the spirit interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual, the natural person, the person that doesn't know God, right? The person that hasn't been regenerated by the Spirit of God. The person that still has the framework of the world as the way they think. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to Him and He is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. It takes the Spirit of God to understand the things of God. If you are relying on your flesh to understand the Word of God, understand this, you will never come to the right conclusion. And maybe for you, you're like, Well, I don't understand this, so I'm going to go to my unbelieving friends to ask them to help me understand. Your unbelieving friends aren't going to be able to help you. They're not going to be able to guide you in this.

[00:21:15] You say, Well, maybe I'll take a step further from that. Maybe I'll go to my lukewarm Christian friends. You know, those those friends that have a foot in the world and a foot in the word. And and, you know, I'll ask them to help me understand this situation. Really. Is that is that how it's going to work? Like you think that you're going to get spiritual clarity by going to somebody who has compromised in their own life. Look, the fact is this, you know, we will surround ourselves with counselors that will tell us what we want to hear. Right. We will surround ourselves with counselors who will tell us what we want to hear. Sometimes I'll be talking with somebody from time to time, and they're going through a difficult life situation, you know, and I think they should know better. And so, you know, we're dealing with this issue and it's like pretty plain to me. And I say to them, man, you know, I'm kind of surprised you're in this spot where you're just clearly rejecting the obvious truth of God's word, like, who are you hanging around? Who are you talking to? Who's told you this stuff? And they'll go through the list. I'm like, Well, you know, I know you've got some good, solid friends that love God and love his word. Why aren't you going to those people? And the answer is they won't say it, but because they'll end up telling me what I don't want to hear. You know, Faith, the Bible says faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful. Right. You're having a hard time in your marriage and you really don't want to be married anymore. And the world around you is like, you know what? It doesn't really matter anyway.

[00:22:47] It's not it's not a covenant. It's just, you know, it's just convenience. And so you pick the people around you that are going to encourage you just to quit, to give up. Well, of course, those people are going to say that you need to select people that love you enough to tell you the truth. And it's not just the friends that you choose, understand? Like there is pressure all the time on us, influences from, you know, all sorts of different places that are seeking to drive us to a way of thinking that is not congruent with the Word of God. Now, I'll tell you guys right now, I'm not the guy who is going to from the pulpit say you shouldn't listen to secular music and you shouldn't watch secular movies. I and the guy and our pastoral team, what we do is we train you. We train you to be discerning. We train you to know the word. Right. And then you have the responsibility of determining, hey, I may have the liberty to do this, but the real question is, is it going to build me up in my spirit or is it going to. Is it going to distract me from God? Because the fact is, like, you know, you go home, you turn on Apple TV, you go to HBO Max, you know, you're not going to find a lot there that's going to encourage you in your relationship with God. You go to HBO and. Or you go to Amazon Prime or you go to Netflix. Okay. Maybe there's a couple documentaries. Maybe there is maybe there is some material on there that that might be benign. But the fact is this sometimes we find ourselves exposing ourselves to ways of thinking that just do not line up with the Word of God.

[00:24:23] When you resort to worldly ways of thinking Christ teachings seem irrelevant out of date and you can be tempted to reject or change them. Jesus. His words bring life because they're truth. Jesus's words bring life because they're truth. Let me ask you a question. What happens if you change his words? What happens if you alter his words? What happens if you modify the message? What happens if you strike out some of those things that he said? Well, then his words no longer bring life. Jesus is not a philosopher. He's the savior. He's not a philosopher. He's the savior. There are many people in churches today that are following Christ as a philosopher, but he didn't come to philosophize. He came to rescue. And he saved you not only from your sin, but a way of thinking that led to a lifestyle that was in conflict with God. So listen, let his words speak for themselves and receive them for what they are. They give life. You all with me? Okay. The second thing is this the real issue? You're like the second. Isn't this like the third thing? No, it's not. It's only the second. The second thing is this. The real issue is about belonging to God. The real issue is about belonging to God. In fact, this is what Jesus says. You'll notice this in verse 64, he says, But there are some of you who do not believe. And then again, he says, over 65, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the father. The second thing that is really at issue is just simply this is belonging to God. You know, there's multitudes that want to peel off and turn away from Jesus.

[00:26:05] And he's like, the real issue is this you don't believe and he knew those who didn't believe in the multitudes, and he also knew the one of the 12 that was ultimately going to betray him. Jesus had chosen him, in fact, a topic for another time. I just want to say something real quick about this verse 65, where Jesus says, this is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the father. I just want you to notice something, okay? We see in what Jesus says not only the sovereignty and the influence of God drawing people to himself, but we also see the responsibility that every single person has to respond to the Gospel. It does take the father's drawing to come to the father. It does take his drawing. It does take his granting. It does take his influence. It does take the conviction of sin. It does mean that he has got to enlighten the eyes of understanding. But in addition to that, a person still has to come. Do you may have the influence of the father. You may have the conviction of sin. And, you know, you can sit here week in and week out and be exposed to the teaching and the preaching of the Word of God. You can sit under the conviction of the Holy Spirit. You can be being called and drawn by the Father himself. But you still need to exercise your will to believe. You still need to be willing to say, God, I'm making a choice. I'm choosing to decide I'm not going to be on the fence any longer. I'm not going to be playing on the other team today. God, I choose to believe in you.

[00:27:50] And then. Back to point number two. C.S. Lewis said this. He said, I believe in Christianity, as I believe that the sun has risen not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. And that's so good. Good enough for me to read twice. He said, I believe in Christianity is I believe that the sun has risen not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else. I want to remind you today that Christianity is more than just a worldview. It's more than just a way of thinking. It is a relationship with God. It's a relationship with God. You know your marriage. How many of you are married today? All right. But just out of curiosity, how many are single today? Raise your hand. All right. Keep your hands up. If your hands are saying there is the availability list right there. Okay. I love you guys. And go hang out up beyond afterwards. And then I'm available to do the wedding service, you know? Come. So back to married people. How many of you are happily married? Raise your hand. They just got married. I did their service like theirs. And they're pregnant, so. Sorry. So, listen, your marriage is not just an arrangement. It's not just an arrangement. It's not an arrangement of convenience. It's not a contract. Like you didn't come together and then set these rules up and establish these rules as rules that you were going to follow. Your marriage is so much more than that. At least I hope it is. It's a relationship. Look, if it's just an arrangement, if it's just a contract, if it's just a series of things that you guys have agreed upon and that you want to pursue and, you know, you start to do that.

[00:29:55] Inevitably, you find yourself living two independent lives. Well, that all happens because the most important thing was never there. And that's relationship. Marriage is not just an arrangement of convenience. It's not just a means to an end. It's not just a contract. It is a relationship. And I'll tell you right now, if it's not a relationship, when the testing will come. Right. Your marriage will be tested. Your marriage will be tested. And when it's tested. If it's just been an arrangement, if it's just been a means of, you know, getting what you want, it will not stand that test. Now, what? What binds you together as husband and wife is the relationship. It's love. Because where there's love, there's fidelity, there's loyalty, there's commitment. There's a willingness to endure. When it gets hard. When it gets hard, you know, that doesn't mean that you agree on everything. It doesn't even mean that you fully understand each other. Look, we've been married, Rachel. I've been married for 26 years, and I have an absolutely extraordinary, amazing, wonderful wife. Wonderful. Hey, when. When they got crazy in Tijuana. And I told her, I'm like, we've got nothing. We have no sound. You know, it's like we may. We may have to pull the plug. She's like, all it takes is one voice. It takes one voice. You don't need any of that. You need to preach the gospel. And so I was like, Thank God for a woman like that, you know, for sure. We don't always agree. We don't always agree. And I'll tell you right now, I'm not an easy person to live with either. Don't say amen and maybe, don't say amen right now. You could. She's like, dang, right ain't right. Never a sure thing was said.

[00:31:48] We don't always understand each other. You know, I think part of the beauty of marriage is that when you're in love, it is a lifelong process of discovery in the best sense. And so when things get difficult, even though there are things you don't understand, even though there are times where you don't agree, you're bound together. You're bound together because there's a commitment, there's a covenant. And I'm saying to you today, it is the same way in your relationship with God. It's the same way because this thing that you have with God is not just a means to an end. Right. Well, you know, I went down and I did what I was supposed to do. I said the thing. I said the prayer, whatever you call it. You know, I went to the follow up and now I'm going to heaven. Really? Is that. Is that all it is for you? Because. Because when it's tested, what is tested when you're in school and you're surrounded by people who are pressing against your Christianity and you have instructors who are mocking you for it, if it's just that a means to an end or a a contract that you've established or some suppose it arrangement with the big fella upstairs, it's not going to stand the test of time. It's not what will stand. The test of time is that you love him and that you know he loves you. And there's fidelity and there's loyalty and there's commitment. Commitment to work even harder when it's difficult. Commitment to work even harder when it's difficult. Augustine Yeah, it's true. Augustine. The great church fathers said this. I had to read it twice because it will take just a second. He said The secrets of God are to make men and women eagerly attentive, not hostile.

[00:33:33] The secrets of God ought to make men and women eagerly attentive, not hostile. Look, when you go through something you don't understand, when you read something, that doesn't seem to make sense. When there's something that God says is in conflict with your flesh, it should because you love God is should compel you to lean more into him, not become hostile against him. And this was what was being revealed in this moment. There were people who stopped following Jesus and they're turning away, prove that they never belonged to God in the first place. You know, Jesus says this I'll say it in a couple of chapters. Not that he was speaking in chapters, but you know what? I was you know what I'm saying? He said, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free. You guys know that verse? Can you say it with me? You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. Do you know what he says before that? You know what he said before that this is classic because invariably no one knows the preceding verse and the preceding verse goes like this If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. So before we get to what the truth does, Jesus says, If you hold to my teaching, if you continue in my teaching, if you don't give up on my teaching, if you cling to it over the course of your life, if you are steadfast, if you're anchored, if you're unwavering in those times where you don't understand, when you choose not to bail, when you choose not to modify. So it's palatable. When you choose not to compromise, this is what you'll experience. You will know the truth. Greek word ginosko means experience.

[00:35:14] You will experience it and it will set you free. Jesus. Yeah. Jesus did not soften the truth. He did not begged them to stay. He let the truth sort out the heart because Jesus was not focused on being popular. He was focused on saving souls. So the unbelieving crowd, the unbelieving crowd had an influence on the believing crowd. There was a cacophony. That's my word for you today. There was a cacophony of controversy that was growing. And his following shrunk. His following shrunk. Unbelieving people who refuse to see things from a spiritual dimension are toxic influence and their toxic influence in the church. I don't have time to go in this, but if you pay attention to what's happening at the church, in the church at large, in almost every mainline denomination, there are there are battle lines that are drawn right down the middle. Mainline denominations are being torn over what is true and what is not true, what is acceptable in the life of the Christian and what is not acceptable in the life of the Christian. So the third and final thing today is this anchor yourself to the truth that you do now. Anchor yourself to the truth that you do know. I really appreciate what Peter says here. And let me just reread these words starting in verse 67. So Jesus said to the 12, as everyone's bailing. Right. He says, Do you want to go away as well? I just want you to know Jesus didn't like not only did it not, he didn't modify the truth. He didn't like have this social media strategy to get everybody back. He didn't think, man, I just become so, you know, not relevant. I've become so irrelevant that I need to change the way that I dress.

[00:37:01] He just let it go. And then he turned to his disciples. And you said, you guys want to bail as well? My modern day translation Simon Peter answered and said, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed and come to know that you are the Holy One of God. So he looks at the 12 and he says, Are you guys out, too? And Peter's response and understand, like Peter is the spokesperson for all the disciples. Like, without a doubt. Right? Peter is speaking on behalf of the disciples. They've gotten together, they've discussed this. They're like, hey, you know, there's there's people that we know that said they were followers and now they're leaving and there's this exodus. What are we going to do about it? What is our position? Where do we stand? How are we going to respond? And what he says is so profound on behalf of the disciples, he says, Lord, to whom shall we go? Not to where? Not to what. Because for the disciples, it wasn't about an institution, it wasn't about an organization, and it wasn't about a set of rules. It was about a person. It wasn't as if they were believing or resting in this institutional thing to mediate between them and God. It wasn't as if they had committed themselves to this brand of an organization or a set of rules, as if somehow their whole relationship with God was based on that. For them, it was the who. For them it was a person. For them it was Christ. They had come to know him. There are two things that they anchored themselves to. Number one, Peter says, you have the words of eternal life. So let me say to you today, there is no life apart from Christ in this life or the life to come.

[00:38:49] Do you believe that today there is no life, there is no spiritual life? We'll talk about this later. Two Greek words bios, Zoe. There is no spiritual life in this life. There's no experiencing heaven in this life. And there is no eternal experience of heaven, the presence of God in the life to come apart from Jesus Christ. There is one mediator between man and God, and that is the man Christ Jesus. Jesus Himself said, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father but by me. And so Peter's like, Listen, this is what we've concluded. We've had our talk. We had our powwow over a little espresso. And our conclusion is this. Number one, there's no life without you. And number two, we've come to believe you are the holy one of God. You're the holy one of God. Now, the phrase holy one is pregnant with meaning. And later on you should go to blueletterBible.org Do a phrase search on holy one. And what you'll discover is that it appears throughout the Old Testament and it means this holy one as you read those scripture, Psalm 16, Isaiah Chapter 40 to Chapter 66. What you'll discover is the Holy One of Israel was the Messiah. The Holy One of Israel was the Redeemer of God and the holy one of Israel would be God incarnate. And so when Peter says, Hey, listen, we know what you're able to bring to us and no one else can do that. And number two, we know who you are, the holy one of God. He's saying you are God's Messiah, you are God's Redeemer, and you are God incarnate. And where else? Like, where else are we going to go? I don't think Peter was like, man, you know what? You're kind of the last option.

[00:40:34] And and, you know, I mean, we're kind of stuck with you. And so it's just kind of the way it is. I don't think that was the case. I think Peter's like, man, we had our fill of life. Life offered nothing. We discovered you, and you've changed us. You are more than enough. It's not like we're just settling. When we got you, we got more than we could ever ask for. Do you. Do you see him that way today? When you think about your relationship with the Lord, are you like, God? Thank you, God. You're amazing. You're more than I could have ever imagined. And all of this only comes through. Jesus. John said this. He said, whoever has the son has life. Whoever does not have the son of God does not have life. And so today, just wrapping up, I want to encourage you to do what the disciples did. They anchored themselves. They anchored themselves to this. Today, you need to anchor yourself. The disciples, the disciples were like, You know what? Even if everyone chooses to leave, we're not going anywhere. Even if everyone chooses to leave, we're not going anywhere. We are anchored to you. We are anchored to you. Are you anchored to God today? Have you set that solid, strong conviction in your heart today? Because I know the truth is that some of you in this room, you've been waffling. You've been waffling. You've got a foot in the world. You've got a foot in the word. You've been trying to play both. And you know you can't play both. Some of you have been have been yielding to the pressure of the world, the secular pressure of the world against your Christian faith. And you've been modifying, you've been compromising, you've been making it palatable.

[00:42:17] You've been striking through those things that the Bible says that that are offensive to your flesh or offensive to our culture. And I'm saying to you today, you need to make a decision. You need to make a decision. You need to anchor yourself to the person of Christ. You say, well, you know what? I'll do that down the road when when the storm comes. When the storm comes, like you're really going to make that decision. You will not stand if you've not anchored yourself to Christ. When the storm comes, you won't stand. You have to anchor yourself to him before the storm comes so you can stand in the storm. When I put my faith in Christ. There were a lot of things that I thought there were behaviors that I was living that did not align with the word of God. And I repented. But there were still many things that I had been believing that I did not know how I was going to handle those things. You know, my undergraduate was in environmental sciences and pre-med, and so I had been trained in all these things that were in conflict with God's word. But what I did is I chose to believe and trust him with those things that over the course of time he would give me understanding. And, you know, this is what happened with the disciples when Jesus said, Unless you eat of my flesh and drink of my blood, you have no part in me for sure. They're like, Man, we don't get that. But after the crucifixion and the resurrection, they got it. Sometimes the understanding comes later. It's kind of like the illustration that C.S. Lewis gave. You know, when the sun rises, the darkness is dispelled.

[00:43:57] Over the course of time, things become visible and see a bowl, you know, as the sun rises higher and higher. And as you walk with God and as you're faithful to him and as you're a student of the Word, he helps you to understand over the course of time and let me just say this. There are some mysteries of God that will never understand but be believing, trust in him, the faith. I'm just going to close with this today. The thief that was on the cross, remember, he was crucified with another thief. And this thief made a decision to believe. But he made a decision to believe. When all of the religious leaders were saying that Jesus was not the Messiah, remember, they were walking past him and they were saying, you said that you're the Son of God. If you're the son of God, come down from the cross right now. Save yourself. You saved others yourself. You can't save this. The thief had heard this. The thief was listening to another thief revile him and mock him and blaspheme him and reject him. And then the thief had Jesus crucified right next to him, the Messiah of Israel, who'd been crucified by the Romans. Listen, I'm just saying to you. From. From. A fleshly perspective. None of it made sense. None of it made sense. The religious leaders rejected him. His friends rejected him. And here you have this crucified Messiah that made no sense. But what did he say? He said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom? He made the choice to believe. And Jesus said to him, most assuredly, I say to you today, you will be with me in paradise, and I won't encourage you today. I want to encourage you today to believe, Father, thank you so much for your word and God in this turbulent culture that we live in, constantly being confronted by things that are in conflict with you.

[00:46:03] God, we we may be mocked and ridiculed for this, but we're we don't care. We're anchoring ourselves to you. We're anchoring ourselves to you. We're not going to play the middle. We're not going to we're not going to modify and. Change. What Jesus has taught. We're not going to correct you, God. We're not going to correct you. If anyone needs correcting, it's us. And I pray today, God, I know my many of my brothers and sisters are just tempted. Especially God, the young generation among us today, just tempted. Tempted to believe the world. Tempted to believe the flesh. I pray God today that your strength would rise up within them and that they today would choose to believe you. Today as her eyes are closed, as our heads are bowed this morning. If you've never put your trust in faith in Jesus Christ, we want to give you an opportunity to believe you may for many weeks have been sitting under the the teaching of the gospel and and yet you've never chosen to follow Christ. Today is your opportunity to do that. And so if this is you this morning, I want to pray for you. I'm just going to ask you, would you raise your hand today? You'd say, Pastor, that's me. I want to follow Jesus and. Walk with him and believe in him as my savior. Awesome. Thank you for raising your hand. Anybody else? I see your hand, too. Thank you. So your hand over here. Thank you. It's awesome. Not so good. He loves you. Over here on my right. God bless you. Thank you. See here. And you're in the front. Today, maybe as a Christian, you know, you've just you're under pressure. And, you know, my heart for sure goes out to you.

[00:48:19] You just been under a lot of pressure, and it's it's just confusing to you. You're confused. You do love God. And and yet there there are so many forces pulling you, tugging on you. And Christian, I just want to encourage you to do what the disciples did. You have to anchor yourself. You have to be all in. You have to commit. Even when there are things you don't understand. And I just do believe today there needs to be an opportunity for those of you who are in this spot, you just need to raise your hand today and don't be ashamed to raise your hand. You've heard some things that might be difficult, but faithful are the wounds of a friend. I see your hand in the back. I see your hand as well. Just stretch your hand up high today. Thank you. Thank you. And I see your hand here in the center. Thank you. Oh, I see your hand. It's awesome. God loves you guys so much. I see your hand. Thank you. I see your hand too in the workplace. It can be hard in school. It can be hard and on social media. Make the decision today. Anybody else? Awesome. Thank you. I see your hand over here on the right. Father, thank you for the news today. And God, we pray, pray today that you would be their strength. God, that you would show yourself strong just in a just in a mighty, mighty way. Today, we're going to do two things. I'm going to I want to lead you in a prayer right where you're seated today. And then at the same time, I'm going to invite our the follow up team to come forward today so that after I lead you in this prayer, you know, you can just come up and get prayer today, like we're here for you.

[00:50:23] We're here to serve you, and we're here to encourage you. And so let me lead you in this prayer today. If you raise your hand. Just follow me in this prayer. You can try it out loud. Father, thank you for speaking to me. God. Thank you. That you don't quit. You don't give up on me. You've seen my struggle. And today I come. I come confessing my sin. I come choosing to believe. That Jesus is the Holy One and that through Him you've provided. Life for me. Life in this life and life in the next life. Today. I give you my heart. Fill me with your strength. God, I am all in. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Let's all stand today. Today, if you pastor Tony and the team is going to lead us in a closing song of worship, I would encourage you just to stay put and give God praise today. If you raise your hand, follow me in that prayer. We have great people here in the front that want to pray for you. And so I just want to encourage you right now, come on forward and get some prayer today. Maybe you didn't raise your hand, but, you know, it's tough right now where you're at. We want to pray for you as well. God bless you guys. Have an awesome week in Jesus name. Amen.