

ARE YOU A FALSE DISCIPLE?

John 6:60-71

by Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. What could be worse than finding out when it is too late that you are not saved?
2. Jesus says this will happen to many people on Judgment Day.
 - i. **Matthew 7:21-23 21** “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, drive out demons in your name, and do many miracles in your name?’ 23 Then I will announce to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you lawbreakers!’
 - ii. This people called Jesus their Lord. They served Him. They prophesied in His names, exorcised demons, and did miracles. And yet they were never truly Christians. They were never truly saved. And worst of all, they didn’t know it. They were self-deceived.
3. I wonder it is one of the devil’s priorities to convince church-going people that they saved when in reality they are not.
4. This is why the Bible commands us to test ourselves. To examine our faith. To make sure that we are saved. **2 Corinthians 13:5** “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test.”
5. **Philippians 2:12** “Therefore, my dear friends, just as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence but even more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”
 - i. What does it mean to work out your salvation with fear and trembling? This is an exhortation to make sure that your salvation is real. Make sure that you are really saved.
6. I believe that there are many false disciples in the church today. Not necessarily in our church, but in the Christian church today. People who think they are Christians but are on the road to hell.
7. One of my goals for those who attend Church Acadiana is for you to know where you stand with God. I don’t want there to be any doubt. I don’t want you to be deceived, in the dark, deluded about the state of your soul. I want you to know.
8. Today we are going to look at a passage that gives us five signs of a false disciple.

II. TEXT & EXPOSITION: John 6:60-71

60 Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”

- i. Disciples. Not the Twelve apostles, but a general designation for all of those who were following Jesus at the time.

61 Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, "Does this offend you? 62 Then what if you were to observe the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?"

- ii. Jesus had just claimed to come from heaven. Now he is saying, "You don't believe me? What if you saw me ascend? Would that convince you?"

63 The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn't help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

- iii. Many of Jesus' disciples were offended by Jesus' words about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. They misunderstood His words as literal. Jesus corrected them by saying that the Holy Spirit gives life; eating flesh doesn't help anything.
- iv. How does the Holy Spirit give life? As you hear and believe the words that Jesus speaks, God saves you and gives you eternal life.

64 But there are some among you who don't believe." (For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.) 65 He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted to him by the Father."

- v. This is a reiteration of John 6:44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him."
- vi. This refers to God's prevenient grace – lost people are dead and sin and cannot turn to Christ in penitent faith without the Father freeing their will, given them the ability to respond to the gospel.
- vii. There may be another meaning here.
 - 1. While God draws all men to Christ, He doesn't always draw all men. There comes a time when the Father stops drawing. After a person continually resists God's prevenient grace, God stops drawing this person and hands him over to the devil.
 - 2. **Hebrews 6:4-6** "4 For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, who shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who tasted God's good word and the powers of the coming age, 6 and who have fallen away. This is because, to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding him up to contempt."

66 From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him.

67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't want to go away too, do you?"

68 Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life.

69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.",

70 Jesus replied to them, "Didn't I choose you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil."

71 He was referring to Judas, Simon Iscariot's son, one of the Twelve, because he was going to betray him.

- viii. “Didn’t I choose you, the Twelve?” Even John MacArthur, a Calvinist, agrees that this does not refer to Jesus choosing them for salvation, but for apostleship.

III. 5 SIGNS OF A FALSE DISCIPLE

1. They reject Christ’s hard teachings.

- i. **John 6:60** Therefore, when many of his disciples heard this, they said, “This teaching is hard. Who can accept it?”
- ii. These false disciples liked much of what Jesus said, but they rejected His hard teachings – His teachings that would be costly to accept.
- iii. What did Christ say that was hard to accept?
 - 1. Verse 40 – You must believe in Him to receive eternal life.
 - 2. Verse 45 – If you truly love the Father, then you would accept Jesus.
 - 3. Verse 58 – To receive eternal life you must eat His flesh and drink His blood.
 - 4. Verse 58 – Jesus came down from heaven.
 - 5. **William Barclay** “The disciples knew quite well that Jesus had been claiming to be the very life of God come down from heaven, and that no one could live this life or face eternity without submitting to him.”
- iv. These false disciples knew that in saying these things, Jesus had declared war against the Jewish leaders, and they would not let Him get away with it. They knew that from this point on, Jesus was a marked man, and anyone who followed Him would be in danger. So, these false disciples rejected these teachings.
- v. False disciples follow Jesus’ teachings until they become too hard. They follow Jesus’ teachings as long as they improve their life, and their business, and their health, and their finances; as long as it makes life more comfortable. But if Christ’s teachings become too costly, too hard, too dangerous, they reject it. If Christ’s teachings lead to rejection, financial hardship, persecution, or giving up a beloved sin, they reject it.
- vi. But true followers of Jesus accept all of Christ’s teachings – every word. We believe every word; we obey every word. And we obey all of Christ’s teachings no matter the personal cost.
- vii. Notice that these were “disciples” of Jesus, but they were not true followers of Christ. The word “disciples” here does not refer to the twelve apostles, but to people who were following Jesus. The Greek word for disciple (*mathetes*) refers to someone who attaches himself to a teacher as a student or learner (John MacArthur). All true Christians are disciples, but not all disciples are true Christians. Just because you call yourself a disciple of Christ, or a Christian, does not mean you are a true Christian. A true Christian accepts and obeys all of Christ’s teachings, no matter the cost.

- viii. False disciples follow Jesus until it gets hard; until it gets costly; until it hurts. A true disciple follows Jesus no matter the cost.
- ix. False disciples follow Jesus as long as He is handing out free bread and healing diseases. True disciples follow Jesus because He is Lord, even if it means following Him to the cross.
- x. False disciples follow some of Jesus' teachings; true disciples follow all of Jesus' teachings.

2. They complain against Christ.

- i. **John 6:61** Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, "Does this offend you?"
- ii. The false disciples were grumbling against Jesus. They were complaining. They weren't complaining to Him, but about Him to one another, hoping that He wouldn't hear. But being omniscient, Jesus knew they were complaining about Him.
- iii. Why were they complaining about Jesus? Because they expected Jesus to improve their lives – give them free bread, heal their diseases, rescue them from the Romans, etc. Instead, Jesus had just made Himself a marked man; the Jewish leaders were surely going to kill Him and His followers. Instead of making their life better, following Jesus was going to make their life harder. So, they complained about Him.
- iv. False disciples expect Jesus to get them out of trouble; and when He doesn't, when He allows them to suffer, then they complain. They call God unfair, unloving, unjust, unfaithful.
- v. True disciples praise Jesus in the good times and the bad. They praise Him in the sunshine and in the storm. They praise Jesus for better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health. They praise Jesus when He gives, and when He takes away.
- vi. This is exactly what many of the Israelites did when they left Egypt. They followed God out of Egypt with the expectation that life was going to be better. Instead, they found that life in the wilderness was hard. Food and water were scarce. So, they repeatedly complained against Moses and against God. And God took great offense at this.
- vii. False disciples are fair-weather friends of God. When life is good, they declare that God is good. When life is bad, they complain that God is bad.
- viii. When true disciples suffer, they trust that God is still good, and He will use it for His glory and their good. They understand that God allows us to suffer to refine us, and to serve His purposes, and they willingly and joyfully submit to God's chastening. They don't expect God to keep them out of trouble; they expect God to get into trouble with them. They don't expect health, wealth, and prosperity, they expect inner strength and peace and joy, and paradise in the next life.

- ix. When life gets hard, false disciples complain about Christ unfaithfulness; true disciples praise Him for His faithfulness.

3. They are offended by Christ.

- i. **John 6:61** Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, “Does this offend you?”
- ii. These false disciples were offended by Jesus’ words. What exactly offended them? It could be all of it, or just the part about eating His flesh and drinking His blood.
- iii. True disciples are not offended by Christ’s teachings. Who are we to be offended? He is God. He can say whatever He wants. False disciples are offended by some of Christ’s teachings.
- iv. I’m going to give you a short test. These are some of Christ’s most offensive teachings. If you find yourself getting offended, then you may be a false disciple.
 - 1. There is only one way to heaven, and it’s through faith in Jesus Christ. John 14:6
 - 2. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman. Mt 19:5
 - 3. There are only two genders – male and female. Mt 19:4
 - 4. You should give the first ten percent of your finances to God. Mt 23:23
 - 5. Hell is a real place of eternal, conscious torment, and everyone who rejects Christ goes there forever. Mt 25:46
 - 6. Homosexuality is against God’s will. Mt 19:4-5
 - 7. Premarital sex is against God’s will. Mk 7:21
 - 8. Pornography is against God’s will. Mt 5:27-30
 - 9. You must love your enemies and forgive everyone who hurts you. Mt 5:43-47
 - 10. If you want to follow Jesus, you must hate your family.
 - 11. If you want to follow Jesus, you must renounce all your possessions. Lk 14:33
 - 12. If you want to follow Jesus, you must hate your own life. Lk 14:26
- v. False disciples are offended by some of Christ’s teachings. True disciples say, “You are God, and I am Your creation. I exist by Your hand, and for Your glory. You know what is best. Your word is my command.”

4. They don’t believe in Christ.

- i. **John 6:63-64a** “63 The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh doesn’t help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life. 64 But there are some among you who don’t believe.”
- ii. These people had seen Christ do miracles, but they still didn’t believe in Him.
- iii. False disciples do not believe Christ. They may believe some things about Jesus, but they do not believe everything that Christ taught about Himself.

1. Jesus said that He was God. John 5:17-23
 2. Jesus claimed equality with God the Father. John 5:17-22
 3. Jesus said that He was the Son of God. John 6:40
 4. Jesus said that He was the Messiah. John 4:26
 5. Jesus said that He was the divine Son of Man. John 6:53
 6. Jesus said that He was eternal. John 6:58
 7. Jesus said that He died for our sins. John 6:51
 8. Jesus said that He rose again. Mt 16:21
 9. Jesus said that He was the fulfillment of the OT. Jn 5:39
- iv. False disciples are those who don't believe in Christ.
1. Some don't believe that He is God. Jehovah's Witnesses, Muslims, Jews.
 2. Some don't believe that He is equal to the Father. Mormons.
 3. Some don't believe that He is eternal. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons.
 4. Some don't believe He was crucified and rose again. Muslims.
 5. Some don't believe that He is the Messiah. Jews.
- v. Thomas Jefferson is an example of a false disciple. He was a great admirer of Jesus. He truly admired Christ's moral and ethical teachings and example. But he did not believe in the deity of Christ. Or the miracles of Christ. So he took a razor, glue, and a notebook, and two copies of the Bible. He took the gospels and cut out what he thought he would like to hear from Jesus and pasted it into a book called *The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth*. Near the end of his life he published a book called *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. He believed in Jesus as a historical person, an admirable person, a person to follow, but not God to be worshiped.

5. They abandon Christ.

- i. **John 6:66** "From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him."
- ii. False disciples abandon Christ. Not always. Sometimes they retain the Christian label until they die, but often they abandon Christ.
- iii. The apostle John says this is one way to tell that someone was never saved in the first place. **1 John 2:19** "They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. However, they went out so that it might be made clear that none of them belongs to us."
- iv. I'll give you some contemporary examples of apostasy.
 1. In the 1940s, Billy Graham and Charles Templeton became famous evangelists. They were close friends. Many thought it would be Templeton who would overturn the world for Christ. But gradually Templeton started to doubt the Bible, starting with the creation

account in Genesis. And eventually he left the faith and became an atheist.

2. Frank Schaeffer used to travel the world and speak on Christian apologetics with his father, the famous Francis Schaeffer. He helped his father found the Christian Right, a movement in the seventies and eighties to mobilize evangelical Christians into active political engagement. After his father's death, he even carried on the ministry for a period of time. But eventually he became an outspoken agnostic and political liberal.
3. Joshua Harris quickly rose to become one of the most popular evangelical authors and speakers in the country, beginning with his book, *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*. He was the example of conservative evangelical doctrine and ethics. But then a few years ago he resigned as pastor of his church. A short while later he announced that he no longer agreed with his books on dating and courtship. Then he announced that he and his wife were getting a divorce. And then he announced on Instagram that he was no longer a Christian, and was a supporter of the LGBT agenda.
4. Jonathan Steingard was the son of a pastor, and the lead singer for the popular Christian rock band Hawk Nelson. But last year, on May 20, he renounced his faith. He wrote on Instagram, "After growing up in a Christian home, being a pastor's kid, playing and singing in a Christian band, and having the word 'Christian' in front of most of the things in my life — I am now finding that I no longer believe in God."
- v. How do we explain these stories? These men were never true disciples in the first place. They were disciples. They followed Jesus in some sense, but not in the true sense. They were never truly saved. If they were, they never would have abandoned Christ.
- vi. True disciples may backslide a little bit, but they don't abandon Christ. They don't reject the faith. Nor do they drop out of church and live like the devil for thirty years. They just don't. **1 John 2:9** "Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because his seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God."
- vii. Instead, true disciples remain with Christ. We see this in the example of the Twelve.
 1. **John 6:67-69** 67 So Jesus said to the Twelve, "You don't want to go away too, do you?" 68 Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Are you a true disciple or a false disciple?

2. All of us are sinners in need of a Savior. We deserve to go to hell for all eternity. But God sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins and rise from the grave. If you will turn from your sins and put your faith in Jesus Christ, you will be saved.
3. If you are not sure that you are a true disciple, but want to be, you can invite Jesus to be your Lord and Savior today.