

Who are you going to follow?

Sometimes it is just easy to follow someone. I think that every person who has ever gone to school has had a teacher that you would have followed anywhere. I loved my first teacher. She was awesome. She was so caring. I probably don't remember the times that she wasn't or I got myself in trouble. (That was a long time ago.) She had a way to make learning fun. She always seemed to have the right words to say. I wish every teacher that I had after her would have been like her. Like every person who has ever gone to school, over time I had professors and teachers that were much harder to follow.

Maybe you once had a boss at work that it was easy to follow him. He was patient with you. He was encouraging. He wanted you to succeed in your work. He was easy to follow. But then he moved on to a different job, and it wasn't as easy to follow your new boss.

You were only a little kid when you stepped out on the basketball floor. Your first coach was great. He worked with you. He taught you. He gave you one tip after another. You were getting pretty good with your shot. You were going to be the next NBA superstar. As you got older, reality hit. You didn't have the skill to follow in the shoes of a NBA player.

Regardless, of who you wanted to follow doesn't become as appealing to follow anymore. Maybe following is harder than we thought. Maybe following is just simply beyond our reach. Maybe we begin to realize that we just simply can't copy someone else or duplicate their talents. At some point, we just simply stop following. We ask ourselves the question: *Do I really want to follow him or her anymore?* As time goes along, our expectations change, we get disappointed and we get discouraged.

We realize that we cannot handle things anymore by ourselves. We can't control the events of this world. We can't even control some of the events of our own life. We couldn't stop that tire from going flat. We couldn't stop mom or dad from getting sick. We couldn't control whether you kept or lost that job. There are things in this life that we can't handle. It's too much! There is no way that we can handle Satan by ourselves. We demonstrate that so well in our life as we fall to his temptations every single day. There are going to be times that we might even go through things that may cause us to question whether or not we are even going to follow Jesus anymore. That was what was happening with the people in our text this morning. They began to leave Jesus. Jesus turns to his 12 disciples and asks: **"You do not want to leave too, do you?"** In other words, who are you going to follow? Let's look at how we can answer that question of Jesus today by looking at these words of John.

In order to understand what is going on in these last verses of John 6, we need to go back to the beginning of this chapter. It begins with Jesus feeding the 5,000 with 5 loaves of bread and two small fish. This massive crowd begins to see what is happening. As they talk with each other, they come up with an idea. Let's make this Jesus our king. If he's our king, we won't have to worry about anything. If he can provide all this food, he can certainly take care of us. Since Jesus knew what they wanted to do, he just simply left. They were looking for a different version of Jesus than the one that existed.

The people realize that Jesus left. They figured out that he was going to the other side of the lake. They race run as fast as they can. They find Jesus. They play dumb and ask Jesus: **"Rabbi, when did you get here?"** Jesus saw right through them. He turns to them and says: *"you are only looking for me so that I can give you more bread; so I can fill your bellies with more food. I'm not here for that. I have something much better – I you to have bread that will last for eternity."* They reply: *"Oh, that sounds good too. Where do we have to sign up for this bread? What do we need to do?"* Jesus tells them that they are not getting it. You don't do anything. You simply believe in the One whom God has sent. I am that Bread. Believe in me. They go: *Sounds great. But you are going to have to prove it to us though. Why don't you do some more miracles? You know at least Moses gave the people food for 40 years in the Old Testament. Come on, at least give us some more.*

You can almost see Jesus shaking his head at them. They just are not getting it. So, the rest of chapter 6 is Jesus once again trying to make it clear of who he was and why he had come. The more Jesus talks, the more they understand what he is saying. They were not getting a free lunch today. They weren't even going to get any more samples of bread. As Jesus goes on in these verses, you can just see the light bulb go on in their minds. They are starting to get what Jesus is saying. The version of Jesus that they wanted is not the version of Jesus standing in front of them. They say to Jesus: **"This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"** The teaching of Jesus was clear to them. It was crystal clear. They just couldn't believe that Jesus was the Bread from Heaven. Jesus tells them that they need to see that he is the Bread of Life whose words are full of spirit and life.

This is the day that everything changes. From this day forward, the crowds go away and people aren't as interested in Jesus any more. They just don't want to follow anymore. Then Jesus turns to the 12. He looks them straight in the eyes and asks them the question: **"You do not want to leave too, do you?"** That question is an uncomfortable question for the 12 disciples of Jesus. If they say no, that might not be the complete truth. This whole massive amount of people following Jesus is falling apart. There might be a part of them that wants to leave. If they say yes, it's pretty clear how Jesus will feel about them. Then Peter gets it right with his answer: **"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life."**

That answer takes away the doubt. That answer takes away all the questions. That answer is the answer to the question: *Who are you going to follow?* Jesus. He has the words of eternal life. When we look at Jesus and his teachings, we may not understand everything. We may look at everything that is going on around us and we may not always understand it. Did Peter get it all that day? No. Do we always get it? No. But one thing is clear – everything will be ok in Jesus. The blood he will shed on the cross will make it okay. He has the words of eternal life. May God help everyone one of us to say along with Peter these powerful words: **"We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."**