

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expository Study of **The Gospel According to Luke** **Chapter 7- Luke 6:12-16** 77- Jesus Chooses His Apostles- Part 1

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Luke 6:12-16

12 It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

13 And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

14 Simon, whom He also named Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew;

15 and Matthew and Thomas; James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot;

16 Judas *the son* of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Now this is a section of Luke that is going to be like a small mini-series as we look closely at the men whom Jesus chose to be the Apostles of the Lord. And I think that you're going to find this study of these twelve men very, very interesting. You're also going to find this study to be very, very encouraging because you're going to find that these were very common, ordinary men- called and equipped and empowered for a very powerful and earth changing ministry.

And this is very consistent with the Way that God chooses people. God always deals with the common people- most of the time- God deals with the poor and the uneducated and the unimportant and the weak and the feeble, and God uses the people that the world looks down on and despises to alter the course of history and bring great Glory to His Own Name. And I want you to turn with me to read what the Apostle Paul said about this in **1Corinthians 1:26-29**:

26 For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble;

27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,

28 and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are,

29 so that no man may boast before God.

So we see that God Almighty takes these very unassuming and ordinary people, and God calls them and Sovereignly saves them, and God cleans them and empowers them and He lifts them up to amazing, and inexplicable usefulness. And when their lives do have a very powerful impact on the world- it is very clear to everybody and to them as well, that it certainly is not because of any good or any nobility in them, and that is why all the Glory and all the Honor and Praise goes to God.

So this mini-series will be about the Apostles- the men that God called and chose and used to begin the Christian Church, and the men that God used to receive and write down the final and completed Revelation of God that we call today- The New Testament.

Now one thing about these men that we need to know. These men should have failed in their mission to firstly understand the Gospel and then to articulate that glorious Gospel in the 21 New Testament Epistles, and in the four Gospel Accounts, and in the diary of the Church, and in the final prophecy about the last days. And they should have failed in their mission to leave Jerusalem with this new religion and spread the Gospel as far away as Britain to the West and India to the East. And they should have failed in their mission to begin the Christian Church and to set it up as a real and functioning entity according to inspired Scripture.

But they did *not* fail. They succeeded- and they succeeded against unbelievable odds. They succeeded against intense and relentless persecution from both the Jews and the Gentiles and the Roman Government, and they succeeded even though none of these men ever gained any personal financial benefit from their efforts, and they succeeded even though each one of them- with the exception of John- were brutally martyred for their efforts. And they did not succeed merely for themselves or for their own generation- but today- we preach and we believe and we read and we trust in what God did in and

through and with these men. And 2,000 years later- we stand in the Church that God used these men to establish, and we stand firm in the Gospel that God used these men to articulate, and we stand firm in the Scriptures that in large part- God used these men to write.

And so the fact that these men did *not* fail, and the fact that they did succeed, and the fact that they succeeded to this extent is one of the most astounding facts in all of human history. So go with me on this mini-series as we explore just who these men were.

Now to begin- I want you to notice the opening phrase in verse 12:

It was at this time ...

Now we're not talking about clock time here. This isn't nine o'clock in the morning, or three o'clock in the afternoon. We're not talking about a certain day of the week either. This isn't on a Tuesday or a Thursday- we don't know what day Luke is talking about here.

And we're also not talking about a certain month here. So this statement here by Luke is not about chronology. But if that is true- then just what time is he talking about? The time that Luke is referring to here is in the sense of the season or the era or the period. And it is a period very easily defined for us.

Now in the flow of Luke's record about the Life of Christ, back in Chapter 5:17- we were introduced to the Pharisees and the scribes, teachers of the Law. And ever since we were introduced to them back in Chapter 5:17- all the way through the end of Chapter 5 and through the beginning of Chapter 6- and now into Chapter 6:12- we have been watching this escalating conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of Judaism.

And that conflict has reached a high point in verse 11 of Chapter 6 where Luke says:

... they themselves were filled with rage, and discussed together what they might do to Jesus.

Now the "they" here is referring to the scribes and the Pharisees- who were so filled with rage- they began to discuss together what they might do to Jesus. Now back in Mark's Gospel and Matthew's Gospel it

says that what they wanted to do to Him was destroy Him- they wanted to murder the Prince of Life.

And so it is at this time that we break into the scene that begins in verse 12. It is the time of escalating hostility; It is the time of the hatred of Jesus among the religious leaders of Judaism and this hatred has reached its highest point to date.

So this is precisely at that time that Jesus can feel the heat of His coming death. It is less than two years away from this moment that Jesus will be executed, and after His execution- God will raise Him from the dead, and then He will remain on earth for 40 days, and then He will ascend to the Father and His earthly Work will have to be handed off to somebody else.

So because all this is true- this is the time for Jesus to begin to prepare His official representatives that will pick up His Mantle and carry it forward after Jesus has returned to Heaven.

And so, Jesus- feeling the hatred, feeling the hostility, and sensing the inevitability of His own execution- comes to the realization that He is going to have to choose and call and teach and empower and anoint some key men who will carry on the proclamation of the Gospel for the Salvation of Israel, and the Salvation of a set number of Gentiles, and for the establishment of the Christian Church, and there isn't very much time left before these men are going to have to go out on their own. So now is the time to choose them. Now is the time to begin their very intense training. And so it's in the sense of His own coming death that Jesus realizes that He has to choose some who are going to carry on the Work after He's gone.

Now there's also another striking reality in this- and that is that when Jesus chooses the Twelve to be His official representatives- the official preachers of the Gospel- who will carry not only His Message- the same Message- the one single Message- but who will also act on His Authority- He doesn't choose a rabbi, He doesn't choose a scribe, He doesn't choose a Pharisee, He doesn't choose a Sadducee, He doesn't choose a priest, and he doesn't choose a high ranking Government official- not a single one of them.

And so, it is true to say that the choosing of the Twelve Apostles was not only preparation for His Own Death and the future proclamation of the Gospel- but at the same time- the choosing of these particular men was also a Divine Judgment on Judaism. It was a

Divine Judgment on the current corrupt leaders of Israel's religion because the Lord didn't choose one of them, He chose men who were not theologically trained, who were not scribes, who were not priests, who were not Pharisees, who were not Sadducees, and who were not politically or socially connected. Jesus chose men who were common men.

Four of them were fishermen; One of them was a tax collector; One of them was a money grubber- who turned out to be a traitor. We don't know the occupations of the rest of them, but they were simple and common men. In this choosing of the most important group of men on earth- Jesus totally ignored the elite religious establishment, He totally ignored the theologically trained, and He totally looked past those who saw themselves as the religious nobilities of Israel.

And the reason was because those people resented Jesus- they hated Him; They rejected Him Personally and they rejected His Message completely. The Apostle John put it this way in his Gospel, Account in **John 1:11-14** when he said:

11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

And this was especially true of the religious leaders of Judaism. In fact, in the first official act of Jesus' Ministry that He did when He began His Ministry was He went to Jerusalem at the Passover time when it was most populated of all the times of the year and when the Temple was completely filled with all of the people coming to celebrate the Passover and offer sacrifice- and Jesus went right into the Temple in broad daylight- right in front of all those people and according to **John 2**- Jesus made a whip and He struck a devastating blow at the religion of Judaism. He struck a blow at the religious nobility. He exposed their spiritual bankruptcy, He exposed their false teaching, He exposed their apostasy, He exposed their demonic religion, He exposed their sin, He exposed their corruption, and He exposed their deception.

And He was just getting started because that's how Jesus began His Ministry- by an all-out full frontal assault against the established religion.

And now, many months later- many months into His Galilean Ministry- a long ways from Jerusalem up into Galilee- the resentment that must have been inaugurated at that first event has reached a fever pitch and these religious hypocrites are blood thirsty to the point where they're doing everything they can to come up with a scheme to execute the Prince of Life.

The whole entire religious establishment of Israel is hostile to God's Gospel, hostile to God's Grace to save unworthy sinners, hostile to repentance, hostile to forgiveness, and hostile to faith.

So, in spite of the many, many Divine miracles which have proven beyond any doubt- the full Messiahship of Jesus, in spite of the casting out of demons and literally the destruction of the kingdom of darkness- these men will not accept the fact that Jesus is God in human flesh.

So they totally reject Him Personally; They totally reject His Message of Hope and Salvation- and Jesus has totally rejected them.

And now their hatred has reached the point where they seek to murder God in human flesh- Immanuel- God with us. And so feeling the heat of all that and knowing that His time is short- Jesus knows that now is the time to start training the men who are going to take over after He's gone. And as I said, He can't pick any of these religious men- because they are uniformly in opposition to Him.

So, it's time now. It's time to identify the Twelve Apostles. If you've visited cathedrals here and in Europe you might assume that the Apostles were stained-glass saints who somehow should be exalted to some high degree of spirituality. The fact of the matter is, they were very, very common men.

And it is sad to say that we really don't make much of the Apostles in our day. Oh, we make a little bit about Peter because he's dominant in the Gospel accounts. And we make a lot out of Paul- who was a late Apostle and who was actually a Pharisee- the only Pharisee that Jesus chose. A few people make something out of James and a few more make something out of John- but for the most part- these chosen Apostles are really not heroes to us anymore and that is to our everlasting shame.

Now let me tell you why I say that. I know of very few men in the ministry today who can even name the 12 Apostles. Now they know

about some modern day self-appointed and unaccountable Apostle or Prophet who goes around the country claiming to be what he is not- the men who are in ministry in the modern Church know these yahoos- but very few know very much at all about the real Apostle- and that's real sad.

I've been reading the biography of William Tyndale who was concerned that the people who went to Church in England in his day had to hear the Bible in Latin and not in their own language- English. And so Tyndale was moved by God to translate the Bible into English.

And the religious hypocrites of Tyndale's day didn't want the Bible printed in the language of the common man because they thought it would eventually cause them to lose the power and the sway over the people that they had- and they were right about that.

And this is why I say that we need to realize what price people made to give us our Bibles in English and value the Bible enough to read and study it during the week- because a lot of people paid a very high price to give us this gift, and I think we are going to be hard pressed to get by with the excuse that we were just too busy to read it.

And so they persecuted Tyndale the entire time he labored to give the gift of God's Word in English to the world and they killed William Tyndale after he had done his work of translation. And many of the phrases that we still use in English to this day were devised and developed in his English translation.

But what most people don't know is that one of the reasons that Tyndale was moved upon to translate the Bible into English was that he did a survey of the clergy of his day and the clergy didn't know who the Twelve Apostles were, and that is one of the main reasons why Tyndale translated the Bible into English- so we would know who the 12 Apostles were.

Now those of you who attend this Church know about a lot of the heroes of Christianity because I have gone to great lengths to be faithful to introduce you to giants like Augustine and Justin Martyr and Irenaeus and Tertullian and John Chrysostom and Charles Spurgeon and Jonathan Edwards and Matthew Henry and the Puritans. And it is right for all of us who live in the 21st Century to explore what these men said about the Word of God and to see their earnest effort to comprehend the great mysteries of Scripture and to read what they wrote and to see how they lived their lives- to give us an example of

frail sinful human beings with clay feet who struggled to lead the Church in years gone by. But in the very next breath- I will also tell you that every single one of these giants of our faith would all be very quick to agree that they all pale next to the Apostles.

Because the fact of the matter is that when we get to Heaven some day and we walk through those gates of that City- the New Jerusalem,- the glorious city of New Jerusalem- when you walk through those gates- those twelve gates- three on each side because the city is a four-square city- when you walk through those gates at the top of each gate there's going to be a name, and the name at the top of the gate is going to be one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

But the Bible says that there's also going to be a name at the bottom of every gate and the name at the bottom of every gate is not going to be Jonathan Edwards name or Charles Surgeon or any of the Puritans- no, the name at the bottom of those gates is going to be the name of an Apostle. These men have an eternal tribute in Heaven and so we ought to know about these men and we ought to know all there is about them from the text of Scripture and from history.

And so I believe that you're going to find this small minis-series tremendously encouraging because God was able to do so much with so little- and that should give us all hope.

So here we are in this wonderful text in which Jesus selects twelve men. And I want to get these Apostles out of the stained-glass windows of the cathedrals and back down to earth so we can know them. And I want to get them out of obscurity and into your mind. And I want you always to know exactly who you're talking about when somebody asks... *"Who was Bartholomew?"* Or when somebody asks you, *"Who was James the son of Alphaeus?"* Or when somebody asks, *"Who was Simon the Zealot?"* And I want you to know how to answer those questions and I want you to understand who the great spiritual heroes of the Church really are- the men who will be honored forever in the foundation of Heaven's gates.

So, here we are then at their selection. And because the Lord can't choose any of them from the leadership of Israel- these very common men become the new and the true spiritual leaders for Israel because these men believe in Jesus, and these men believe in the Words of Jesus, and these men are going to go and preach the Gospel, and these men are going to preach the New Covenant.

So these men will now become the new and the true spiritual leaders in Israel and they will preach the new and the true Covenant of Salvation by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Christ alone, and God is going to use these men to bring about a new and a true Israel of God- a genuinely repentant and believing Israel- as well as to give birth to the Christian Church.

So the first thing I want you to know is that none of the religious elite of Israel qualify for this position of Apostle- and so the Lord chooses twelve very, very ordinary men, and that is consistent with the way the Lord always works.

Okay- now back to verse 12.

It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.

So it was at this particular time- this crucial time- that Jesus felt His Death was near, and while He was experiencing the powerful hostility of the religious leaders that He knew it was time to start training the men who were going to be the keys to carrying the Gospel to the world after He was gone.

And so knowing just how crucial a time it was- Jesus goes up to the mountain to pray. And this is something that we've already been introduced to as a Pattern in the Life of Jesus.

Back in **Luke 5:16**- we saw that Jesus would often slip away to the wilderness and pray. He was always under the pressure of the people when He was down in the cities and the towns and villages and the lowlands where He was easily accessible, and often He would have to get away to find tranquility, to find solitude and communion with the Lord. And that's exactly what we find here.

Now we really don't know just what mountain this was- but if it mattered- then the Lord would have told us. But there are lots of hills and mountains around the Galilee area and around the city of Capernaum- which is at the very top of the Sea of Galilee- so there are plenty of places to choose from but we don't really know for sure exactly which one.

But as Jesus often did- He sought out solitude- particularly in anticipation of very crucial events. So here is Jesus in His true humanity. Here is Jesus as the true Man- realizing that He is standing

in a very, very volatile situation. There is very powerful hostility against Him that is going to eventually bring about His death. And so there is a very brief amount of time to train the men who are going to carry the Gospel after He is gone. So the very intense reality of those matters lead Jesus into this mountain to pray to God.

Now this is real important- because as fully Man- Jesus humbled Himself and He set aside His full Divinity and He took upon Himself the form of Man, and He set aside the independent exercise of His Divine Attributes, and Jesus submitted Himself to that which God desired Him to do and allowed Him to do and moved upon Him to do.

Now as fully Divine- Jesus had all Knowledge and all Power and didn't ever need to pray about anything at all. But as a Man- Jesus willingly sets aside His full Divinity and He allows himself to be humiliated by his Human flesh, and He goes as any other Man would go- to ask God what He should do in this crisis. And the Lord obviously directs Jesus to go up in the mountain alone to pray all night long so He could choose the Apostles, and the Lord obviously directed Him as to whom He should choose.

And so, Jesus goes up into the mountain and it says He spent the whole night in prayer to God. If He went up there when it was still light- He would have gone up there somewhere around seven o'clock or eight o'clock at the end of the day. And if He came back when it was dawn- He would have come back at around six in the morning. Luke says that Jesus spent the whole night in prayer, and to spend the whole night is a lot of words in English- but it's only one word in Greek. It's a very interesting word- a very rare word- it's what we call a "hapax logomina"- which means it's only used one time in the whole Bible. And it's the Greek word *dianuktereuo*, and it literally means: *to endure through the night*.

And you wouldn't use this word if you were saying- "*it was dark all night*", or "*I slept all night*". You would only use this word to express some great agonizing effort that went on through the whole night. And so the word that Luke uses here conveys the idea that Jesus was wide awake all through the darkness, and that He was agonizing and enduring and persevering with this immense weight upon His Shoulders all night long- knowing that He was headed for death, knowing that He had to choose the Twelve because the training time was limited, and wanting to pick just exactly the ones that God desired.

So Luke expresses this very powerful moment in the life of Jesus as He picks the Twelve Apostles with the use of that very rare word- and so we now know that Jesus didn't just pray- but that He actually endured through the whole night- agonizing in very intense and powerful prayer.

Now another interesting note in the Greek language that you don't see in the English here is found at the end of verse 12 where it says that Jesus spent the whole night in prayer "TO" God.

Actually in Greek it says that Jesus spent the whole night in the prayer "of" God. The Greek actually says that Jesus spent the whole night in the prayer "of" God- not in prayer "to" God. And so once again- we find that Jesus was not only fully Man- but here Jesus is also fully God. So this prayer is the prayer of God.

And what that indicates to us is that Jesus is now engaged in what is called "an inter-trinitarian communion". So this is not just any kind of prayer, but is, in fact, the very prayer *of* God that is going on as the two members of the Trinity are communing with one another. So here is Jesus in His full humanity- having to pray all night to get clarity on this matter and at the same time- Jesus- in His Deity- is praying the very prayer of God.

So what this all means is, Jesus' prayers were all perfectly consistent with the very Mind and the Will of God, for He Himself was also God. And therein do we see again the incredible mystery of Jesus' full humanity and His full Deity being brought together.

So here as Jesus' Ministry reaches a crisis point- He finds solitude with God- the kind of solitude that requires ten, twelve hours of prayer- all night long in very intense and agonizing communion with God and of God in order to have clarity as to the Will of God. And then verse 13 says,

And when day came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also named as apostles:

Now let me tell you, right here is where the word "disciple" is really not so clear. In reality- the best English word here would be "student", or we could even use the word "follower." This is the Greek word *mathetes*. And I suppose an even more precise word would be "learner." Because sometimes you think of a student as somebody who

simply goes to school but doesn't necessarily learn anything- so maybe "learner" is a better word.

You see, what happened in ancient times- both in the Greek and in the Jewish cultures was when there was a prominent rabbi or a prominent orator or prominent philosopher or prominent teacher- they would attract people. And that is still true today. Only in those days they wouldn't go to an auditorium to hear this person speak, or listen to his tapes or read his books, since those things were not available to them. No, the students of this man would follow this guy around, and typically these men were itinerant teachers who went from place to place and taught the way that Jesus did and they would collect followers.

Now we know that Jesus collected a massive amount of followers because His teaching was absolutely beyond anything anybody had ever heard before- it was without any equal- and so He had a lot of followers because He had the ability to heal diseases and cast out demons and do miraculous things- including controlling the fish in the water, as He did in the fishing incident back in Chapter 5. And so because Jesus had all of this supernatural Power and this profound supernatural Truth- He drew people at a rate that nobody else had ever drawn before. And so Jesus had a great number of people who were around Him and who followed after Him and who *looked* like disciples- but, in fact, they were not truly saved.

So all around Jesus- you have these "followers"- or these "students" who *seem* to be listening to what Jesus is saying and who *seem* to be following Jesus, and the Bible calls these people "disciples" in the sense that they are there and they are following and they are students- but they are not really learning because they are not really saved.

And we will learn later that many of these so called "disciples" got offended and turned around and walked away from Jesus after He said something that didn't sit right with them- which only proves that they were not His sheep to begin with.

And many people take those verses today and they say, "*See there- these people were disciples and yet they walked away from Jesus and never walked with Him after that*"- and they use these verses to try to prove that genuinely saved people can lose their Salvation.

But the truth of the matter is that even though the Bible calls these people "disciples"- they were disciples only in the sense that they were *physically* following Jesus- they were physically in the crowd- but they were not actually loving and serving Jesus. These people were never truly disciples in the sense that they were actually saved and wanting to learn and serve the Lord with gladness.

No, these are the people that are so happy with Jesus as long as Jesus gives them what they want. They come to Jesus for the fishes and the loaves- they are in the crowd- all around Jesus- so that God will bless them or so that God will heal them or so that God will do something wonderful for them.

And they eat and they are touched and they are blessed and they are filled and they rejoice and they leave singing His praises- but the very second Jesus begins to teach, the very second that Jesus begins to actually require something from them, the very instant that Jesus begins to make demands on their lives and to restrict their behavior and to give them Commands- these people will walk away from Jesus in a heartbeat and leave Him standing in the middle of the road.

These people come to Church for convenience- they attend out of guilt or religious obligation - most of the time on Sunday mornings or on Easter or at Christmas or a when somebody is born or somebody dies or when there is a real tragedy in their lives. But as far as actually loving to be in God's Presence in Prayer, or as far as actually desiring to know God's Word in Bible Study, or as far as actually wanting to be around godly people in times of fellowship- these people always have something else to do. And we all need to know- there needs to be no secret about this at all- the reason that these people act this way is because they have never truly been born again and they are yet in their sins.

These are the "hangers on"; the people who are physically *in* the Church but not *of* the Church; these are the people who sit on the pews but whose names are not on the Roll of the Lamb's Book of Life. These are the people who go down front and shake the preachers hand and pray the prayers and get baptized, but they are not born from above and they are not regenerate and they are only deceived into thinking they are saved.

Here is how you know if you have truly been born from above and whether you are truly saved. Please turn with me to **John 8:30-31:**

30 As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him.

31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine;

Those who do what? Those who *continue* in God's Word, those who struggle every day to actually obey the Bible, those who follow after Righteousness, those who actually live in humble submission to the authority of God's Word- those crave to be in God's Presence, those who hunger and thirst after God's Truth, those who desire to be with other godly people rather than the lost and unsaved.

And what does Jesus Himself say about the people who continue in God's Word? That they are His disciples indeed. They are not simply those in the crowd wanting to get something out of Jesus- they come to see what they can do for Jesus. And the rest are lost.

Now back in the beginning of Chapter 6 it says, "Now it happened that He was passing through *some* grainfields on a Sabbath; and His disciples were picking the heads of grain..." and so forth. Now we don't know how many "disciples" there were that day with Jesus- there might have been fifty- there might have been a hundred- there might have been more- but most of these were disciples only in the sense that they were physically with Jesus- and not in the sense that they were His disciples indeed.

So these men would just be ordinary followers. And if you read **John 6-** many people were following Jesus. In John 6- Jesus feeds the five thousand men, and we know that back then- they didn't count women or children, and so this five thousand could have easily been in reality more like fifteen or twenty thousand people. So Jesus fed a huge crowd. It could have been twenty to thirty thousand people.

And they said... "*This is it! This is the Messiah! Oh, praise God- that means free food.*" Now remember- the people back then spent most of their lives working like dogs to just get enough money to buy enough land to raise enough food to feed themselves so they wouldn't starve to death.

But then they had to harvest it and they had to prepare it and they had to cook it, and so most of life back then centered around figuring out how to get the next meal.

And here comes Somebody Who just *creates* food- so this was a real big deal. And so Jesus became very attractive to them. But they follow Jesus for that reason only and not because they loved Him, and

not because they had repented of their sins, and so please turn with me to look at the end of **John 6** because I want to show you the difference between a disciple who follows Jesus to see what they can get out of Him and a disciple who follows Jesus because they are truly saved and they want to serve Him. Look with me at **John 6: 53-66:**

53 So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.

54 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

55 For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.

58 This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.”

59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

60 Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this* said, “This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?”

61 But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, “Does this cause you to stumble?

62 *What* then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?

63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.

64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.

65 And He was saying, “For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father.”

66 As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.

That is how false disciples will *a/ways* act. These people are in total love with Jesus up to the moment that Jesus says something they don't like, or the moment that Jesus does something they don't like, or the moment that Jesus begins to teach something that they don't like.

And at that very moment- at that precise second- these false disciple will leave Jesus in a heartbeat. Because the only reason these people were around Jesus to begin with is so they could get something out of Him.

But now look at a *real* disciple. Look at the contrast between these people and Peter. Read with me **John 6:67-69:**

67 So Jesus said to the twelve, “You do not want to go away also, do you?”

68 Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.

69 We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

Peter was the real deal because He knew that he had no hope at all outside of Jesus. Peter knew that he was a wicked sinner and he understood completely that he deserved the damnation of a Holy God.

So Peter was not trying to hang around Jesus so he could milk Jesus- Peter had been graced by God to see his own sinfulness and the knowledge of his own spiritual poverty had brought about a Divine gratefulness to Peter's soul.

You see, dear friends, the mystery about Salvation is that if you really don't think you're that bad, if you discount or disregard what the Bible says about your sinful condition, if you reject the Biblical Truth that we all deserve God's Wrath, if think underneath it all that your are pretty good person, if you honestly believe that- even though you may periodically do bad things- that basically you're a good person who wants to do right, if you have any hope at all that by going to Church or by taking Communion or by being baptized or by turning over a new leaf or by making a new years' resolution or by putting forth more effort that you can improve your condition before God in the least- as long as you have any of those thought in your head- then there is absolutely no hope at all for you to be saved.

Unless and until God Sovereignly reveals to you the horror of your own sinful condition before God- that you are not good, that you are, in fact, an evil transgressor of the Law and a wicked sinner who loves darkness rather than light, and whose every imagination of the thoughts of your heart are only evil continually- a person who has absolutely no hope of eternal life at all, and that the Owner and the

Creator of the Universe is infinitely angry with you because of your sin, and His Divine Wrath and inescapable Justice is bearing down on you like a freight train at 300 miles an hour and you are chained to the railroad tracks- until God mercifully brings you to that place of utter desperation and hopelessness and despair- . You cannot ever be saved.

As long as you plead your own cause before God, as long as you protest against the Truth of your sin and insist on believing that you are not that sinful, but are, in fact, righteous, as long as you hold out the hope that you can improve your own condition before God, and that by your own efforts and through the intellect of your own mind you can do something or stop something that will cause you to earn favor with God- and that you do not need God's Grace and Mercy- then you will die in your sins.

But if God shines His great Mercy upon you to show you just how evil you really are, if God is gracious to you to show you just how deserving of hell you really are, and if God is kind to reveal to you just how He would be perfectly Just to cast you into that lake of fire right this second- and God has showed you that you have no plea and you have no right and you have nothing to ask God for except to have Mercy on your wretched soul- then the Bible says that God's Hand is upon you and He is drawing you to Jesus for Salvation.

And all who come to Jesus in that spiritual bankrupt condition- without one plea, without any pre-conditions, in total humility, in unconditional surrender over every aspect of their lives- the Holy Bible declares that the glorious Lamb of God- the Darling of the Trinity- will receive you- no matter how bad you have been and no matter how evil you have been- Jesus will receive you and Jesus will forgive you and Jesus will wash you and Jesus will cleanse you and Jesus will pardon you and Jesus will save you to the uttermost.

And the result of that- is that a Divine gratefulness will rise up within you and you will be so thankful that Jesus rescued you from the Wrath of God- because you know all too well that you are guilty, and you will be so grateful that Jesus died in your place and took God's Wrath on your behalf, and you will be so thankful that Jesus saved your soul that it won't matter what Jesus requires of you, and it won't matter how hard it gets and it won't matter how much He demands of you and it won't matter what He commands.

You were lost and headed for hell, and the Mercy of God rewrote your life and rescued you. You were on your way to spend eternity in a devil's hell and Jesus mercifully took you by the hand and brought you up out of that horrible pit. What difference does it make what Jesus wants to do with you now? What difference does it make how Jesus wants to use you? What are your options?

And you will be like Peter, and when Jesus asks you if you are going to join in with the other so called disciples and go back out into sin and return back to your old life, and have no love for the Church and the Word of God, and have no heart to follow after Jesus according to His Demands- regardless of the consequences- you will be able to say to Jesus in that day:

68 ... “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.

69 We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

Let's come and pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.