

*He Loved Me . . .*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

John 6:60-71

Topic

Jesus tells His closest disciples,  
"one of you is a devil"

Title

***"Keep Your Disciples Close,  
and the Devil Closer"***

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**More than 200,000 people volunteered for what some call a 'suicide mission.'**

"We will send humans to Mars in 2023," *Mars One* founder Bas Lansdorp told Fox News in 2015.

Ten volunteers would have a one-way ticket to the Red Planet. Space flight experts said *Mars One* had no chance of succeeding. It didn't.

No worries. *SpaceX* boss Elon Musk has vowed to establish a permanent Mars colony by 2050. He ominously added, "a bunch of people will probably die at the beginning." It's amazing what some people are willing to die for.

**The Jews in our verses were *not* willing to die for Jesus.**

Jesus told a crowded synagogue, "I am the living bread which came down from Heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (v51). That last phrase, about giving His flesh, described a sacrificial death.

"From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more" (v66).

These disciples 'counted the cost' of following Jesus:

- Jesus did not seem to be in any hurry to be their King and establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.
- He was talking about dying. It was Passover, the annual celebration of the Exodus from Egypt. Thousands of lambs would be offered in the Temple. John the Baptist had called Jesus, "the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. It wasn't hard to put two and two together.

Death was too great a cost for the majority.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 When You 'Count The Cost' Of Being A Disciple, Consider What You Receive, #2 When You 'Count The Cost' Of Being A Disciple, Consider Who You Reveal.**

### **#1 - When You 'Count The Cost' Of Being A Disciple, Consider What You Receive (v60-66)**

It is trendy to call believers "Christ followers." I prefer Christian. We might want to start using the name "disciple" more frequently.

The word was loaded with meaning in Jewish culture and custom. Listen to this description:

*The best students continued their study in Beth Midrash (secondary school) taught by a rabbi of the community. A very few of the most outstanding Beth Midrash students sought permission to study with a famous rabbi, often leaving*

home to travel with him for a lengthy period of time. These students were called *talmidim* in Hebrew, which is translated *disciple*. There is much more to a *talmid* than what we call student. A *talmid* wants to be like the teacher, **to become what the teacher is**. That meant that students were passionately devoted to their rabbi and noted everything he did or said. The rabbi-talmid relationship was a very intense and personal system of education. As the rabbi lived and taught his understanding of the Scripture **his student talmidim listened and watched and imitated so as to become like him**.

### **We are to be talmidim in our thinking.**

Joh 6:61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, "Does this offend you?"

"Knew in Himself" doesn't necessarily indicate divine knowledge or a word of knowledge. They had already been complaining earlier in the chapter.

You always have a choice: You can complain, or you can be content in the Lord. If you are not expressing contentment, you're complaining, and it is sin. We are to "[learn] in whatever state... to be content" (Philippians 4:11).

"Offend" is also translated "stumbling block."

- In Galatians 5:11, the apostle Paul writes, "And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, why do I still suffer persecution? Then **the offense of the cross** has ceased.
- Paul and the apostle Peter quote from the Old Testament, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE, A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE."

The "offense of the Cross" is not just the fact that Jesus died on the Cross, but that it convicts human beings as guilty sinners.

The Jews believed they were saved by their self-righteous works according to the Law of Moses. They were therefore offended at the suggestion they were

yet in their sins. The thought that their Messiah must die as a sacrifice for their sins stumbled them.

**The Cross is an offense because it says to every human being, Jew and Gentile, that you are a sinner in need of a Savior to die as your substitute.**

Of all the insults we could level against people, "sinner" is the worst. It describes them as depraved individuals who deserve Hell. You are saying something like, "Do you see Jesus on the Cross? *That should be you, beaten, blooded, naked, dying a slow, shameful, agonizing death.*"

Joh 6:62 *What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?

Jesus spoke of dying and now ascending into Heaven. He would need to be resurrected.

This is all information readily available to us in the New Testament. It would be mind-boggling for a first century Jew.

Joh 6:63 It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life.

Think back to when Jesus met with Nicodemus. The Lord said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (3:6). He informed Nicodemus that he must be born again, born spiritually. Same here, only stated differently.

John has a habit of saying the same thing in many different ways. God wants us to "get it" when it comes to spiritual things.

President Ronald Reagan was known as the Great Communicator. Our God is the Greatest Communicator. "At various times and in various ways [He] spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, [and] has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). S.D. Gordon writes, "Jesus was God spelling Himself out in language humanity could understand."

When you get saved, God the Holy Spirit immerses you into the greater body of Christ, and He comes to live in you. You are so transformed by His presence that you can be described as a new creation. "Therefore, **if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (Second Corinthians 5:17).

Joh 6:64 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 would betray Him.

"From the beginning" is too much like "In the beginning" to be coincidence. Jesus is God, and He was with the Father and the Spirit forever, with perfect knowledge of the future. He obviously knew "who would betray Him." More about that in a minute.

We cannot understand the relationship (for lack of a better word) between Jesus' deity and humanity. Jesus was fully God and fully human. He did not cease to be God while being human. He rose from the dead in a glorified human body and remains the God-man for eternity.

We do know, from His own lips, that while He was on Earth He was 100% subordinate, by choice, to the Father's will. He did only what His Father told Him to do, and said only what His Father told Him to say. He did it without using His deity but by yielding Himself to the Holy Spirit.

### **Jesus was the Father's talmid, the penultimate disciple.**

Joh 6:65 And He said, "Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

"I have said to you" means He was saying the same thing He had earlier when He said, "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him" (v44). If this were all the information we had, we might conclude that Jesus died for a select few people. Let me take this opportunity to mention something scholars call "proof texting." Proof texting uses a verse or verses to prove or justify a theological position without regard for the context of the passage or other verses that clarify.

Jesus will go on to clarify, in chapter twelve, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself." This He said, signifying by what death He would die" (12:32-33). Jesus' death on the Cross draws **all** men in that *whosoever will* believe can be saved. Not all who are drawn will be saved - only those who believe.

I came across this quote that you may find comforting: "God will not hold us responsible to understand the mysteries of election, predestination, and the divine sovereignty. The best and safest way to deal with these truths is to raise our eyes to God and in deepest reverence say, "O Lord, Thou knowest." **Prying into them may make theologians, but it will never make saints."**

Joh 6:66 From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

They identified as disciples until it became clear that Jesus was seeking talmidim. For them, sadly, "the things of Earth grew strangely desirable instead of His glory and grace."

**C**ounting the cost can focus too much on the potential sacrifices a disciple might have to endure. What about what you will receive?

Here is a quick list of what members of the body of Jesus, the Church, receive:

Eternal life... the permanent forgiveness of past, present, and future sins, including the removal of guilt... the indwelling Holy Spirit enabling us to obey God... gifts of the Holy Spirit... a life of discovering God's good works... the commission to share the Gospel that can change a person forever... the fellowship of the saints... the promise of being part of the First Resurrection... a glorified human body with no tendencies of sinful flesh... free-will that is like God's and incapable of disobedience... a place of responsibility in the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth... judging angels... eternal rewards that are secure... mansions in the city, New Jerusalem... reunion with believing loved ones... everlasting life... no more tears... permanent fellowship with the God-head, etc., etc.

Doesn't it seem silly to use the phrase, "Count the cost?" Charles Spurgeon writes,

*Brothers and sisters... See the happiness which is promised to us! Behold the Heaven which awaits us! Forget for awhile your present cares: let all your difficulties and your sorrows vanish for a time; and live for awhile in the future which is so guaranteed by faithful promises that you may rejoice in it even now! The veil which parts us from our great reward is very thin: hope gazes through its gauzy fabric. Faith, with eagle eyes, penetrates the mist which hides eternal delights from longing eyes. "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love him; but he has revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God"; and we, in the power of that Spirit, have known, believed, and anticipated the bliss which every hour is bringing nearer to us.*

## **#2 - When You 'Count The Cost' Of Being A Disciple, Consider Who You Reveal (v67-71)**

There's something fun about people doing impressions of others. Pam and I were able to see Rich Little perform. It was entertainment at its best. The apostle Paul shared his understanding of being a disciple when he said, "Imitate me, just as I also *imitate* Christ" (First Corinthians 11:1).

### **Disciples are privileged to reveal the Savior to sinners as we imitate Jesus.**

Joh 6:67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

The desertion was so substantial that perhaps only the twelve remained. The title "the twelve" is a unique identifier for the twelve apostles of Jesus. It becomes important in the opening chapters of the Book of Acts.

Everything Jesus did, He did for others. He was the servant of all, not to be served but to serve. His question was for the benefit of the twelve.

Joh 6:68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

How much time did you spend going somewhere else looking for peace and joy?

What were the things you pursued hoping to fill the emptiness in your heart?

I would like to address any person here who is not a believer. God has placed what he calls eternity in your heart. He alone can satisfy you, both now and forever. Seeking satisfaction from any other source is like putting diesel fuel in a gasoline engine. You don't get far before you sputter and fail. You were meant for God.

*Alan Redpath writes, "So often multitudes of people gather around some broken cistern of this world, trying to satisfy their thirst for they know not what. They grumble about their troubles and complain about their lot, but how few of them run to the One who said, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' "*

Joh 6:69 Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Previously in the Gospel of John the twelve indicated their belief Jesus was "the Christ," meaning the promised Messiah. A better translation of "Son of the living God" is "the Holy One of God." Jesus spoke of sacrificing Himself. His sacrifice would only be accepted if He was "holy," without sin, spotless. He had to be man, but more than man. He must be the God-man.

Those who quit following Jesus had ulterior motives, e.g., free food, healings, and the overthrow of Roman domination. A.W. Tozer writes,

*Millions call themselves by His name, it is true, and pay some token homage to Him, but a simple test will show how little He is really honored among them. Let the average man be put to the proof. Let him be forced into making a choice*



*between God and money, between God and men, between God and personal ambition, God and self, God and human love, and God will take second place every time. Those other things will be exalted above. However the man may protest, the proof is in the choice he makes day after day throughout his life.*

The twelve were learning that Jesus is not a means to an end, but the end Himself.

Joh 6:70 Jesus answered them, Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

Joh 6:71 He spoke of Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Just when things were getting good Jesus drops this bomb. It should read, "one of you is *the* devil." D. A. Carson writes, "The supreme adversary of God so operates behind failing human beings that his malice becomes theirs. Jesus can discern the source, and labels it appropriately."

Yesterday Jesus was followed by a multitude of folks who identified as disciples. After delivering one sermon, there were twelve left. Of the twelve, one would turn out to be "the devil."

"Keep your friends close, and your enemies closer." Do you really want "the devil" on your team? Is that a choice you would make?

I always like to point out the apparent foolishness of God's plan of salvation. You might call them fragile.

Have you thought about what it would be like for Jesus to have this knowledge? Think of it this way: If you were the leader of a ministry, with twelve assistants, and you knew one of them was going to betray you, could you treat that person the same as all the others? By "betray" we mean *betray you to be murdered*.

- The best in you might want to take him aside and try to avoid betrayal.

- The worst in you would justify almost any negative, extreme action you can think of to eliminate the threat.

Reading the Gospels, it doesn't seem as though the eleven had any indication it was Judas. Jesus didn't wink, or make gestures towards him. He didn't say anything like, "One of you will betray me, and his initials are J Udas."

He didn't tell the inner circle of Peter, James and John to watch His six. He never sent Judas on a mission that might get him killed or arrested.

John tells of Judas' betrayal early in the story, and in the context of being a disciple.

One obvious lesson is that not everyone who *professes Jesus* possesses Jesus. We see that throughout this chapter.

Take another look. Jesus, having set aside the voluntary use of His deity, was the Father's talmid. He was enabled by God the Holy Spirit to treat Judas the way the Father wanted Him to. He was supplied with sufficient grace. He was able to love Judas.

Are there 'problem people' in your life? Jesus can relate. Can you and I treat our Judas' the way Jesus did? We can't, but He can through us as we yield to the indwelling Holy Spirit.

**E**arlier we quoted the apostle Paul, "Imitate me just as I imitate Christ." Our word "mimic" derives from it. A mimic is a person who copies someone else in behavior and speech, really in every way.

I Love Lucy and Harpo Marx performed what is called the Mirror Routine. Lucy was dressed like the famous Marx Brother.

There was no mirror between them. Lucy matched Harpo's movements exactly. It goes on for about three hilarious minutes.

Our Mirror Routine is described this way: "But we all... beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord" (Second Corinthians 3:18).

We are told by James in his epistle that the mirror is the word of God. Read the word in a way to discover Jesus, to see Him reflected in it, revealing to you the nature of God so that you might reveal it to others.

D.L. Moody writes, *"A rule I have had for years is: To treat the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal friend. His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is He Himself we have."*