

TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: John 6: 60-71 (v68)

A Christian is not someone who knows everything but is someone who knows enough about someone, the Lord Jesus Christ, to know that He is worth believing in. When Peter uttered these words, things had reached a critical stage. Support was draining away from the Lord (v60, v66). The Lord had been speaking about deep things. Peter would not have been able then to understand all that the Lord had said to the people. There was pressure on him and the other disciples whether they would stay or whether they too would leave along with the others. There might have been some highly respected people that were among those that had walked away. It would have been something tugging away at him, wondering whether those who had walked away were wrong and that maybe Peter should go with them. But he has seen and heard too much. He knew that the Lord Jesus had the words of eternal life.

1. We are always out of our depth.

In our relationship with God, there is always more to Him than we will ever understand. We are making discoveries about Him late into our Christian life. John Robinson, who gave the farewell address to the Pilgrim Fathers as they set sail on The Mayflower for the New World, said,

I am verily persuaded the Lord hath more truth yet to break forth out of His Holy Word.

We are unfinished works when it comes to our relationship with the Lord. After all we are finite creatures relating to one who is infinite, eternal, high and holy. There will always be things we are learning about the Lord's ways that surprise us, even offend us (v61). Just as in the events recorded here, so He makes no apology to us that this is the state of affairs between. God always works according to logic, but the starting point of that logic may lay hidden in the secret counsels of His will. We often make ourselves the measure of what God ought and ought not to do. Yet so often, we are left saying that we are not sure what the Lord is doing at any given time. When Peter made the declaration in v68, did he understand everything he had heard from the Lord Jesus? The answer is, 'No.' But he knew that no-one else spoke words with such authority and assurance than He did.

2. God is bigger than us.

The fact is that God is, and always will be, bigger than us. We can make no apology for this being how things stand. The people of that day found this difficult to take from Him. All they could see was a man whose family they knew well (vv41-42, v52). They did not see divinity and would not be happy to hear what the Lord said in v69. God is thoroughly supernatural. This is an inescapable part of His being and reality. He it is who gives life to the dead (John 3:3, 5-6, 63). The Bible is a supernatural revelation and is to be supernaturally received. He draws us to Himself supernaturally. As in Doddridge's hymn 'O Happy Day', 'He drew me and I followed on, charmed to confess the voice divine'. It is always a spiritual, and therefore supernatural, work that brings us to the Lord. As aged Simeon was moved by the Spirit in the temple to enter just as the infant Jesus was being brought in by His parents (Luke 2:27), it is the Spirit who still leads us to the Lord Jesus.

He is a supernatural Christ that we believe in. (John 3:12-13; and John 6:63). We are left at times expressing ourselves like Job in Job 42:1-7. We simply do not understand how great and mighty He is and how wondrous His ways are among men. Yet though feeling inadequate, we recognize in what we hear, something unique and meaningful. The words He brings are too wonderful to reject, even though we do not understand all of what He says and is. When He speaks to us it is overpowering, upending, and compelling.

3. We have to be used to people walking away.

As we have seen, this experience of seeing known, and perhaps respected, people shaking their heads and walking away would have been difficult for Peter to watch. Sometimes people we know, and thought were devout and true walk away from the Lord when they encounter some difficulty like bereavement. People sometimes stop walking with the Lord after some hard knock in life. Some have become quite militant and outspoken atheists. It is as if they had some latent atheism that was waiting for the right set of circumstances to express itself.

This is not to say that there are not hard questions in the Christian life where we do not have easy answers (see John 11:37). Some who walk away claim to be still followers of Him but so redefine who He is that He ceases to be the real person of Scripture.

4. We have seen and heard too much.

Peter had observed and heard too much in the life and words of the Lord Jesus Christ to be able to walk away. So have we. We learn, for example, that the Lord is so personal. He knows us by name. He understands exactly who we are and what He is going to do with us (See John 1: 42, 47-48). This is what we see in His dealings with the woman at the well (John 4:27). No other religion has a deity so caring and personal as this. His words are applied so carefully to us as individuals. It is as though He speaks to us by

name (Isaiah 43:1-5). He is able to meet our deepest needs. He is able to forgive our sins and relate us to the infinite and glorious God that He is. No one else is able to say the work of reconciling us to God is finished as He did when He died on the cross. He is also so approachable. Though He is so great as God, yet we can come to Him anytime and at anyplace. He hears and understands our longings and our sighs. To whom else can we go who will do this?