Between a Rock and a Hard Teaching May 20, 2018

*John 6:60-71 Series: The Saviour Who Fills Our Emptiness*

*I can't believe anybody thinks we're actually going to make it before*

*we destroy the planet. I honestly think it's inevitable. I have no hope.*

*- Joss Whedon, writer and director of The Avengers*

Intro: Hopelessness and its alternatives.

1. We want “Buddy Jesus” on our terms.
2. We want a “Buddy Jesus” who will never disagree with us.

v. 60 *When many of his disciples heard it, they said, “This is a hard saying; who can listen to it?”*

v. 61 *his disciples were grumbling about this*

v. 66 *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*

Matthew 11:2-3 *Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”*

Matthew 11:6 *blessed is the one who is not offended by me.*

1. “Buddy Jesus” leads us farther away from the true Jesus.

vv. 61-62 *“Do you take offense at this? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before?*

1. “Buddy Jesus” never helped anyone.

v. 63 *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all.*

* What makes faith in “Buddy Jesus” so popular?
* How might you be able to tell whether your faith is in “Buddy Jesus” or the Lord Jesus?
* What are some of the Bible’s teachings that you’ve taken offence at? How do you get past the offence?

1. We need the Lord Jesus on His terms.
2. True disciples believe that there’s life in Jesus’ words.

v. 63 *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.*

1. True disciples lean in to Jesus’ hard words.

vv. 67-68 *So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life*

* What does it mean that Jesus’ words are “life?”
* What’s so dangerous about ignoring the parts of God’s Word that we don’t like or don’t agree with?
* Why didn’t Peter and the other disciples want to leave?
* What makes you want to stay when faith is tough?

1. Jesus is still Lord, even when His stocks are falling.
2. The crowd of thousands has been whittled down to a little more than a dozen.

v. 66 *After this many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him.*

v. 67 *So Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?”*

1. Defections aren’t a sign that things are out of God’s control.

v. 64 *Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.*

vv. 70-71 *Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? And yet one of you is a devil.” He spoke of Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray him.*

1. Even faith is ultimately a gift of God.

v. 65 *And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”*

* How would you have felt to be sitting at Jesus’ feet as thousands of people were walking away from Him?
* Why would it be important for the disciples to learn that the unbelief of the crowds and even the betrayal of one of the disciples was all part of Jesus’ foreknowledge?
* Jesus said, *“No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father”* (v. 65). He said something similar in vv. 37, 39, and 44. He seems to be saying that people are so stubborn that unless God first works in a person’s heart they will never trust in Jesus. And also that everyone in whose heart the Father works will certainly come to trust in Him (v. 37). This is a hard teaching for many people. Do you believe what Jesus is saying?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll look at John 7:1-18.

Notes